

So, Mr. Speaker, this was a wonderful team effort, I think perhaps a model for the country. We have a few rough edges to work on for the next one, a few reforms to make, and we are going to do that. But we had a wonderful, wonderful taking up of this enormous challenge. Our challenge now is to rebuild; and, similarly, we will all work together as a team to do that. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

□ 1600

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I reserve my time.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, so I will simply close for our side by saying these were fires and evacuations of historic proportions. They were handled in absolutely the best way possible, and I commend everyone involved in responding to these disasters and urge passage of this resolution. I think it is something that all of our colleagues can enthusiastically support.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to unanimously support this resolution and show full support to the victims of these wildfires, the people of Southern California. I urge swift passage.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 778.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECOGNIZING ANNIVERSARIES OF MASS MOVEMENT FOR SOVIET JEWISH FREEDOM AND FREEDOM SUNDAY RALLY FOR SOVIET JEWRY

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 759) recognizing the 40th Anniversary of the Mass Movement for Soviet Jewish Freedom and the 20th Anniversary of the Freedom Sunday Rally for Soviet Jewry on the Mall in Washington, DC.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 759

Whereas, in 1964, the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry (AJCSJ) was founded to spearhead a national campaign on behalf of Soviet Jewry;

Whereas, in 1964, the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry was founded to demand freedom for Soviet Jewry;

Whereas, in 1964, thousands of college students rallied on behalf of Soviet Jewry in front of the United Nations;

Whereas Israel's victory in the 1967 Six-Day War inspired Soviet Jews to intensify their efforts to win the right to emigrate;

Whereas, in 1967, Soviets launched an anti-Zionist propaganda campaign in the state-controlled mass media, and a crackdown on Jewish autonomy, galvanizing a mass advocacy movement in the United States;

Whereas, in 1970, the Union of Councils for Soviet Jewry was founded as a coalition of local grass-roots "action" councils supporting freedom for Jews of the Soviet Union;

Whereas, in 1971, the severe sentences, including death, meted out to nine Leningrad Jews who attempted to hijack a plane to flee the Soviet Union spurred worldwide protests;

Whereas, in 1971, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ) succeeded the AJCSJ;

Whereas, in 1971, mass emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union began;

Whereas, in 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed into law the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the Trade Act of 1974, prohibiting the extension of trade benefits to countries that limit emigration, and otherwise infringe basic human rights;

Whereas, in 1978, the Congressional Wives for Soviet Jewry was founded;

Whereas, in 1982, President Ronald Reagan enacted Public Law 97-157, expressing the sense of the Congress that the Soviet Union should cease its repressive actions against those individuals who seek the freedom to emigrate or to practice their religious or cultural traditions, drawing special attention to the hardships and discrimination imposed upon the Jewish community in the Soviet Union;

Whereas, in 1983, the bipartisan Congressional Human Rights Caucus was founded to advance the cause of human rights;

Whereas, in 1984, the Congressional Coalition for Soviet Jews was founded;

Whereas, in 1987, an estimated 250,000 people demonstrated on the Mall in Washington before the start of the Reagan-Gorbachev summit, in an unprecedented rally that helped give the issue added visibility on the national scene;

Whereas, in 1989, the Soviet Union opened its doors to the millions of Soviet Jews who had been held as virtual prisoners within their own country;

Whereas, in 1991, the Supreme Soviet passed a law that codified the right of every Soviet citizen to emigrate, precipitating massive emigration by Jews from the Soviet Union, primarily to Israel and the United States;

Whereas the hundreds of thousands of immigrants from the Soviet Union and former Soviet republics have greatly enriched their new-found homes in areas as diverse as business, professional sports, the arts, politics, and philanthropy;

Whereas, in 1992, Congress passed the Freedom Support Act, making aid for the fifteen former Soviet republics contingent on progress towards the implementation of a democratic system, and respect for human rights;

Whereas, since 2000, more than 400 independent Jewish cultural organizations and 30 Jewish day schools have been established in the former Soviet Union, giving rise to a renewal of Jewish life;

Whereas NCSJ and its partners have performed exceptionally by continually promoting the safety and security of Jews in the former Soviet Union;

Whereas continued acts of anti-Semitism and xenophobia in the former Soviet Union are reprehensible and respect for democracy,

religious freedom, and human rights in the former Soviet republics needs promotion and strengthening; and

Whereas it is the 40th anniversary of the mass movement for freedom by and on behalf of Soviet Jewry: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That Congress recognizes the 20th anniversary of the Freedom Sunday Rally for Soviet Jews in Washington, DC, which embodies the American principle of citizen activism for the greater good.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleagues in the consideration of H. Res. 759, a bill that recognizes the 40th Anniversary of the Mass Movement for Soviet Jewish Freedom and the 20th Anniversary of the Freedom Sunday Rally for Soviet Jewry on the Mall in Washington, D.C. H. Res. 759, which has 57 cosponsors, was introduced by Representative HENRY WAXMAN on October 18, 2007. House Resolution 759 was reported from the Oversight Committee on October 23, 2007, by voice vote.

Mr. Speaker, the former Soviet Union today has the third-largest Jewish community in the world. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the Russian Empire was home to the world's largest Jewish community. In the late 19th century, over 5 million Jews lived as a persecuted minority in Czarist Russia. This indifference towards Jews continued throughout the 20th century under the leadership of Secretary General Joseph Stalin and Prime Minister Nikita Khrushchev of the Soviet Union.

In the mid-1960s, Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin was reported to have said "the road is open and no problem exists" for Soviet Jews who might want to leave for Israel. This remark sparked an increase in the efforts of Jews to leave the Soviet Union and helped initiate international efforts to facilitate their mass movement from Soviet Russia.

In 1967, in response to earlier Soviet Jewry advocacy efforts, Russian authorities allowed some Jewish citizens to leave for family reunification in Israel. Due to the lack of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Soviet Union, most emigres traveled to Vienna where Israeli authorities flew them to Israel. By March 1976, the majority of emigres who left on visas for Israel chose to resettle in the United States and other Western countries.

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague Representative WAXMAN for seeking to recognize the 40th Anniversary of the Mass Movement for Soviet Jewish Freedom and the 20th Anniversary of the Freedom Sunday Rally for Soviet Jewry on the Mall in Washington, D.C., and urge the swift passage of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my fellow Members of Congress in recognizing the 40th Anniversary of the Mass Movement for Soviet Jewish Freedom and the 20th Anniversary of the Freedom Sunday Rally for Soviet Jewry on the Mall in Washington, D.C.

As with many other peoples of faith, Jews suffered under the oppressive yoke of communism in the Soviet Union. Their struggles inspired American Jews to establish the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry and the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry in 1964 in order to campaign on behalf of their fellow Soviet brethren.

After the Six-Day War in 1967, the Soviets intensified the persecution of the Jewish community through state-controlled media and by reducing Jewish autonomy. Soon a mass exodus, a mass emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union began. These developments helped to galvanize the advocacy movement within the U.S.

Over the following years, this mass advocacy movement helped spur the U.S. Government to achieve much. Perhaps most notably, in 1975 President Ford signed into law the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the Trade Act of 1974. This amendment prohibited the extension of trade benefits to countries that limited immigration and otherwise infringed human rights. It was drafted specifically with the plight of Soviet Jews in mind. Later, President Reagan signed a law drawing attention to the hardships imposed on the Jewish community of the Soviet Union.

In 1987, an estimated 250,000 people demonstrated on the Mall before a Reagan-Gorbachev summit. This rally increased the issue's national visibility. Partly due to these efforts, the Soviet Union finally opened the doors of emigration to its Jewish population in 1989. Two years later, the Soviet Government codified the right of every Soviet citizen to emigrate, prompting massive flows of Jews to Israel and to the United States.

This serves as an example of the great American tradition of citizen involvement for the greater good. I ask my colleagues to join me in support of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN).

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago, on December 7, 1987, there were 250,000 people gathered in Washington,

D.C., to rally for the plight of Soviet Jews. I vividly remember participating in that rally, which took place on the eve of the Reagan-Gorbachev summit. It was a major turning point that helped compel the Soviet Union to open its doors for the millions of Soviet Jewish emigres who had been held as virtual prisoners within their own country.

I think back to congressional delegations to the Soviet Union where I met with Jewish refusniks who were suffering under communist repression. These brave dissidents were blacklisted from their jobs, socially ostracized and, in some cases, jailed, only because of their desire to practice their religion and live in freedom.

I remember meeting with young couples in and around Moscow who called us their lifeline. They were so desperate about their circumstances. They said our visits gave them hope that they were not forgotten, that they would one day be free.

When the Iron Curtain fell, many of these families came to the United States to live the American Dream of religious liberty and personal freedom. Over 1 million more resettled in Israel. The historic human rights campaign to free Soviet Jewry was built on decades of activism. Launched in the 1960s by groups like the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry and the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, it galvanized human rights leaders around the United States and the world. The movement helped build the momentum for the adoption of the Helsinki Accords and the passage of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which, for the first time, linked trade policy and human rights.

Here in Congress, we founded the Congressional Coalition for Soviet Jews, and my wife Janet helped organize and found the Congressional Wives for Soviet Jewry. Other organizations, like the National Conference on Soviet Jewry and the Union of Councils for Soviet Jewry are still at work today fighting anti-Semitism and safeguarding the religious freedom of Jews in Russia and other parts of the former Soviet Union.

Today, we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Freedom Rally with pride in the history and accomplishments of the effort to free Soviet Jews. Let it serve as a lasting reminder that we have an obligation to sustain the fight against political and religious repression wherever it exists.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this resolution.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY).

Ms. BERKLEY. I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership on this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution and in support of the human

rights movements worldwide. This movement for Soviet Jewry demonstrated that a small group of people who are dedicated and committed to principle can make an enormous difference, not only in their home countries but throughout the world.

Just this past weekend, I attended a meeting in Philadelphia where Natan Sharansky spoke. Sharansky has been a hero to so many of us in the United States in his struggle for freedom from Soviet oppression. He and his fellow refusniks embody the spirit of determination and unbelievable courage to stand up for human rights and freedom and demand that Soviet Jews be able to leave the Soviet Union and immigrate to Israel or the United States or other countries of their choice.

Sharansky told us the movement for Soviet Jewry not only freed him and other refusniks, but that it set in motion the process that ultimately brought down the Soviet Union. By demanding human rights for some, we hastened the demise of one of the most repressive, most dictatorial regimes in history.

This movement demonstrated that human rights questions do not exist in a vacuum separate from larger questions of global politics or trade. We have a tremendous capacity to be global leaders by tying questions of human rights to other issues that we deal with in the international arena, whether in trade or the environment or immigration policy. While we do business with other countries, we should not, we must not, turn a blind eye to human rights abuses. It is as true today as it was 40 years ago.

While human rights are trampled on in so many parts of the world, from Darfur, North Korea, to the Arab world, we look to the movement for Soviet Jews as a shining example of how we as a country can succeed in bringing human rights issues to light through citizen activism for the greater good.

Mr. Speaker, when I was in Philadelphia listening to Natan Sharansky, they showed films of the March on Washington for Soviet Jewry, and it put me in mind of the fact that Members like Mr. WAXMAN who were here 20 years ago were in the forefront of this fight.

As a point of personal privilege, the next speaker on our side of the aisle, Mr. ELIOT ENGEL, Congressman from New York, before he was a Member of Congress, he was on that stage fighting for the basic human rights and dignity of Soviet Jews and human rights worldwide, as was our very good friend JERRY NADLER.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I yield back, and I thank the gentleman once again for bringing this to the floor of the House for a vote.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, we have no other speakers on this side, so I will simply urge support for this resolution and yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

Mr. ENGEL. I thank my friend from Missouri, and I rise in strong support of H. Res. 759, which recognizes the 40th Anniversary of the Mass Movement for Soviet Jewish Freedom and the 20th Anniversary of the Freedom Sunday Rally for Soviet Jewry on the Mall in Washington, D.C.

The gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) is so right when she says that these rallies inspired the cause of human rights all over the world. And as we fight for human rights all over the world, we must continue to fight for human rights wherever bad things raise their ugly heads.

□ 1615

For decades, Jews in the Soviet Union faced serious restrictions on their right to practice their faith. In response, a campaign developed in the United States and around the world to pressure the Soviets to end the abuses and permit their Jewish population to emigrate. In 1964, the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry was founded to spearhead a national campaign on behalf of Soviet Jewry. Israel's victory in the 1967 6-Day War inspired Soviet Jews to intensify their efforts to win the right to emigrate to Israel and other places, but the Soviets followed with an anti-Zionist propaganda campaign in the state-controlled mass media and a crackdown on Jewish autonomy.

A key event in the campaign to free the Soviet Jews occurred in 1982 when President Reagan enacted Public Law 97-157, expressing the sense of the Congress that the Soviet Union should cease its repressive actions against those individuals who seek the freedom to emigrate or to practice their religious or cultural traditions. This law drew special attention to the hardships and discrimination imposed upon the Jewish community in the Soviet Union.

After so many years of captivity, the Supreme Soviet passed a law in 1991 that codified the right of every Soviet citizen to emigrate, precipitating massive emigration by Jews from the Soviet Union, primarily to Israel and the United States. The hundreds of thousands of immigrants from the Soviet Union and former Soviet republics have greatly enriched their new-found homes in areas as diverse as business, science, the arts, politics, and philanthropy.

As Ms. BERKLEY mentioned, I was proud to be part of the effort to liberate the Jews of the Soviet Union and remember the historic Freedom Sunday Rally for Soviet Jews in Washington, DC 20 years ago before I was a Member of Congress. I remember meeting Natan, then Anatoly Sharansky, at the gathering of approximately 250,000 people prior to the start of the Reagan-Gorbachev summit. This event helped increase the awareness of the plight of

Soviet Jews throughout the world. Earlier, I demonstrated in front of the Soviet mission to the U.N. in New York in an effort to demonstrate how deeply I felt about religious freedom and the right of the Jews of the Soviet Union to emigrate.

In conclusion, I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 759 and remember the campaign to liberate the Jews of the former Soviet Union. And, again, may we have many, many more resolutions like this to help all oppressed people all over the world.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 759, introduced by the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), marking the 40th anniversary of the Mass Movement for Soviet Jewish Freedom and the 20th anniversary of the Freedom Sunday Rally for Soviet Jewry on the National Mall in Washington, DC.

Mr. Speaker, in 1967 the plight of Soviet Jews was severe and largely unknown to the outside world. State-sponsored anti-Zionism and a widespread culture of anti-Semitism made daily life difficult for the millions of Jews living in the Soviet Union. Worst of all, these Jews had no right to leave the country for more welcoming parts of the world, namely, Israel and the United States.

Mr. Speaker, in answer to this reality, 1967 saw the rise of an organized movement to rescue the Soviet Jews, the Mass Movement for Soviet Jewish Freedom. Looking back 40 years later, we can all chart the profound success of that movement which lifted hundreds of thousands of people out of persecution and poverty and into freedom. Beginning in 1971, this movement made possible the mass exodus of Soviet Jews from the Soviet Union to the shores of Israel, the United States and elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, I am gratified to represent the largest community of former Soviet emigres in the United States, and I have the great fortune of knowing many of those leaders and entrepreneurs who owe their livelihoods and freedom to the success of that movement organized in 1967.

The former Soviet Jewish community of Brooklyn, New York, from Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Uzbekistan and elsewhere has returned the humanity and kindness shown to them years before in their new capacity as industrious, law-abiding, and dynamic members of American society. In neighborhoods like Brighton Beach, Coney Island and Bensonhurst, you can witness every day how hard they have worked in order to secure happiness for their families and how they strive to give back to the Nation that rescued them from persecution.

Mr. Speaker, no discussion of this movement of Soviet Jews would be complete without mention of Jacob

Birnbaum, an exceptional leader and human being who worked night and day to bring this issue to the forefront of our minds so many years ago. Earlier this year, I was very proud to introduce a resolution honoring Mr. Birnbaum, and I am pleased that Congress passed it, thereby bringing official recognition to a leader who made an incalculable difference for the lives of many thousands of Soviet Jews and others throughout the world.

In addition to the courageous work of Mr. Birnbaum, tribute ought to be paid to the other pioneers and national organizations who fought so strenuously for the liberation of Soviet Jews, people like Malcolm Hoenlein who is now executive vice president of the Conference of Presidents of American Jewish Organizations but who pioneered much of the work in the Soviet Jewish movement.

I am pleased today to join with my colleagues to mark the accomplishments of the Soviet Jewry movement and to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Freedom Sunday Rally for Soviet Jews and the 40th anniversary of the founding of the movement to free Soviet Jews. I am proud to have been part of this movement beginning in the late 1960s in many marches and demonstrations and picketings of the Soviet embassy. I was here on the Mall 20 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, at this time we have no additional speakers. I urge my colleagues also to support the 40th anniversary of the Mass Movement for Soviet Jewish Freedom and the 20th anniversary of the Freedom Sunday Rally for Soviet Jewry by unanimously adopting this resolution.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 40th anniversary of the Mass Movement for Soviet Jewish Freedom and the 20th anniversary of the Freedom Sunday Rally for Soviet Jewry on the Mall here in Washington. This mass advocacy movement formed following the anti-Zionist campaign launched by the Soviet government in 1967 and worked tirelessly for over two decades to gain Soviet Jews the freedom to emigrate from the Soviet Union, where they had been held as virtual prisoners since World War II.

In 1987, on the eve of the Reagan-Gorbachev summit, more than 250,000 people gathered in Washington to rally for the plight of Soviet Jews. This event was a major turning point in compelling the Soviet government to open its doors for millions of Soviet Jewish émigrés who were being held prisoner in their own country. Finally in 1991, the Supreme Soviet passed a law codifying the right of every Soviet citizen to emigrate, leading to a massive emigration by Jews from the Soviet Union, mostly to Israel and the United States.

As a sponsor of House Resolution 759, I want to recognize these two anniversaries and praise the efforts of all the organizations involved in this important movement, including the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry, the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, and the Congressional Coalition for Soviet Jews. These and many other organizations

