

THE IRAQI REFUGEE AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, RESETTLEMENT, AND SECURITY ACT OF 2008

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2008

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, as Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly, I rise today in strong support of The Iraqi Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement, and Security Act of 2008 (H.R. 6496), a bill which I reintroduced yesterday with a group of 11 bipartisan original co-sponsors.

The bill I am introducing today addresses the impending humanitarian crisis and potential security break-down as a result of the mass influx of Iraqi refugees into neighboring countries, and the growing internally displaced population in Iraq. The bill increases accountable assistance to these populations and their host countries, as well as seeking to facilitate the resettlement of Iraqis at risk.

The plight of Iraqi refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) is worsening by the day. It is heartbreaking to hear the stories of families who fled for their safety, are now unable to work and have subsequently depleted their savings in order to survive.

Madam Speaker, I would like to announce the support that I have received for this very important legislation from prominent non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and religious groups. To date, the following organizations have endorsed this legislation: The Campaign for Innocent Victims of Conflict (CIVIC), Church World Service, Congregation of Divine Providence of San Antonio, Education for Peace in Iraq (EPIC), International Rescue Committee, the Leadership Conference on Women Religious, the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, Mercy Center, Mercy Corps, NETWORK, Open Society Policy Center, Pax Christi USA: National Catholic Peace Movement, the Presbyterian Church (USA), Refugees International, Sisters of Charity of New York, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Sisters of St. Joseph NW PA, and Save the Children.

I thank all of these organizations who have endorsed my legislation and who every single day work tirelessly to make this world a better place. Without their commitment to helping the people devastated by this crisis, the situation in the region would be even worse.

Finally, I would like to thank Congressman DINGELL for his continued leadership in the House of Representatives on this issue and for his help in drafting this legislation as well as the other original co-sponsors supporting this bill. As I have said on many occasions, this must not be a partisan issue, but rather Congress and the Administration have an obligation to work together before the Iraqi refugee crisis further destabilizes the region.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation, which will provide much needed relief for Iraqi refugees and IDPs. I urge the leadership of the House to support this bill and bring it to the floor for its expeditious consideration.

HONORING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF UPPER UWCHLAN TOWNSHIP

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2008

Mr. GERLACH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a wonderful southeastern Pennsylvania municipality celebrating its 150th anniversary.

Upper Uwchlan Township, Chester County, was created in 1858 on a plain between the North Valley Hills and the Nantmeal Hills. Welsh Quakers first settled the rural area in the late 17th century and dubbed the region Uwchlan, which means "upland" or "land above the valley."

The Township is blessed with natural beauty, including the scenic waterways of Pickering Creek, Black Horse Run and Marsh Creek Lake. The Little Conestoga Road running through the Township is believed to be the oldest road in Pennsylvania between the Delaware and Susquehanna Rivers. Pioneers in America's westward expansion traveled through Upper Uwchlan on the Conestoga Turnpike, which also served as a major business route for getting goods into Philadelphia. The Township is also home to the Eagle Tavern, which has been serving patrons since approximately 1727.

Residents, businesses and local officials will mark the Township's 150th anniversary on Saturday, July 19, 2008 with a daylong celebration in the village of Eagle. In doing so, they will celebrate the Township's rich history and outstanding quality of life for residents and businesses.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today in congratulating the Township on its historic anniversary.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS 40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JERRY MORAN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2008

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Special Olympics for 40 years of extraordinary service to individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Beyond giving 2.5 million athletes a chance to compete, it gives their families a way to involve their sons, daughters, brothers and sisters. A chance for them to cheer. A chance to coach. A chance to connect in a special way. A chance to see their family member be accepted and respected in their communities.

Originally an initiative of Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the first Special Olympic Games were held on July 20, 1968 at Soldier Field in Chicago, Illinois. Participation in Special Olympics develops improved physical fitness and motor skills, greater self confidence and a more positive self image. Through competitions like power lifting, cycling, track and field, aquatics, tennis and gymnastics, athletes exhibit endless courage and enthusiasm and enjoy the rewards of friendship.

Last month I had the great privilege of addressing the athletes, fans, and families during

the opening ceremony of the Special Olympics Kansas 2008 Summer Games in Wichita. This year's Summer Games theme was "Be a Fan of Courage." This theme reflects the sentiments of the athlete oath, "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt." These words were uttered by gladiators in ancient Rome, and are equally appropriate for modern-day gladiators overcoming their own adversities.

After 40 years, there are now millions of stories of courage in the Special Olympics, but one athlete who has taken the oath and that embodies this year's theme is LP Esquibel from Dodge City, Kansas. He is more than a fan of courage. He is courageous and because of his courage he was awarded the Most Inspirational Athlete award at the Summer Games this year. Cerebral palsy kept him from walking until he was 5 years old, but it has not kept him from becoming a 13-year veteran of the Special Olympics. It also has not kept a smile from his face. From all accounts, LP is more than a great athlete in his events of basketball, shot put, and the 100-yard walk, he is an encouragement to his fellow teammates and helps them on the court.

It is stories like LP's that has sold me on the power and benefits of the Special Olympics. Since 2007, I have served as the Honorary Chairman for the Kansas Law Enforcement Torch Run. The Torch Run covers hundreds of miles throughout the State and raises thousands of dollars in support of Special Olympics Kansas programs. This year-round fundraiser and awareness initiative was implemented by Wichita Police Chief Richard LaMunyon in 1981. It became an international event three years later in 1984 when Chief LaMunyon presented it to the International Association of Chiefs of Police. The Law Enforcement Torch Run is now the largest grassroots fundraiser and public awareness vehicle for Special Olympics around the world.

It was an honor to help raise money this past summer to help send Kansas athletes to compete in China at the World Olympics. I enjoyed meeting them and hearing of their success.

Special Olympics does remarkable work, both in the State of Kansas and across the globe. I would like to commend the leaders and volunteers of Special Olympics for 40 years of outstanding service and wish them continued success in the future.

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT IN FOND DU LAC, WISCONSIN

HON. THOMAS E. PETRI

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2008

Mr. PETRI. Madam Speaker, I have always agreed with that famous quotation from former House Speaker Tip O'Neill, who noted "all politics is local." I also subscribe to the adage that "all government is local."

Wisconsin is particularly proud of its strong tradition of local government, formally dating back to the ratification of the Wisconsin State Constitution in 1848. The Wisconsin State Constitution contains at least four references to local government and clearly grants the

Wisconsin State Legislature the authority to enact legislation to create local government and establish the framework within which local governments operate.

Ten Wisconsin cities currently have the council-manager form of government which was first authorized in 1919.

This year, the city of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, celebrates the 50th anniversary of its adoption of the council-manager form of government. The council-manager system has served the city well, and I am pleased to congratulate Fond du Lac on this significant milestone.

Interestingly enough, Fond du Lac was the last city in Wisconsin to have the commissioner form of government, which featured three commissioners and a mayor, all elected, with the commission directly supervising city departments. Fifty years ago there were increasing questions about the effectiveness of this form of government. While local political issues made some sort of change appealing, there was growing popularity across the country at that time for the council-manager form of government, which the city of Fond du Lac ultimately adopted.

Often cited as an advantage of the council-manager model is the balance achieved between professional management of daily operations and policy decisions made by elected officials. While ultimate control of the government lies with elected officials, functional experts provide professional management of daily operations.

Robert McManus was the first city manager appointed by the city council in 1958. Mr. McManus was followed by Henry Buslee, Myron Medin, Daniel R. Thompson, Jack Howley, Stephen T. Nenonen, and Tom Ahrens. Thomas Herre, who was most recently appointed in 2005, currently serves in this key leadership role. Of this group, Myron Medin was Fond du Lac's longest serving city manager, serving from November of 1967 through August of 1983.

On the occasion of this noteworthy anniversary, it is important to commend the members of the Fond du Lac city council over the last

50 years for the care they have taken in appointing those who have served as city manager and in efficiently and effectively supervising the city's affairs. Of historical interest, it is fitting to note that James Megellas, a highly decorated World War II hero and native son of Fond du Lac, was the first city council president to preside under this new form of government.

I hope you will join me in congratulating the City of Fond du Lac and its citizens on the 50th anniversary of their adoption of the council-manager form of government.

IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA, WEST IN ACTION AGAINST FREMANTLEMEDIA NORTH AMERICA

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2008

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, the most successful and profitable television show in this country is "American Idol", produced by FremantleMedia North America. "American Idol" and other FremantleMedia productions entertain many millions worldwide with the promise of providing an opportunity for young talented people to display their abilities and be rewarded for their hard work.

That is why it is such a shame that FremantleMedia refuses to offer the same basic opportunity to its writers and other employees. The California Labor Commissioner has recorded claims from "American Idol" and other FremantleMedia employees totaling more than \$300,000 in unpaid wages and unsafe working conditions. The State Labor Commissioner has conducted serious investigations into FremantleMedia productions and has even been forced to cite the company for failure to pay overtime to their employees.

Madam Speaker, I have watched "American Idol" with my teenage daughter on many oc-

casions. I am well aware of its impact on society and the enormous profits it generates for Fox Television and its producers and advertisers. In 2007, the show allegedly generated over \$200 million in profits for the Fox network, while FremantleMedia's worldwide profits exceeded \$1.8 billion.

Why then, are they unable to pay a fair and equitable wage to its employees who provide the written content or other services that make these shows so successful? In an April 2008 filing with the California Department of Labor Standards, "American Idol" employees reported working 15–20 hour days, 7 days a week and FremantleMedia avoided paying any overtime by declaring that a substantial majority of their employees are "exempt." In addition to failing to abide by California's wage and hour statutes, FremantleMedia refuses to offer most of their employees access to health coverage. For such a popular and profitable show, I find this behavior reprehensible.

American reality show fans should not be confused. The reality is, "reality" shows are written. The plot lines, the banter between personalities, the contests that are at the heart of the shows; all are created by talented members of the creative community. These individuals should be paid fairly and like other American workers, allowed to join a guild to collectively bargain on their behalf.

Madam Speaker, no one wants to shut "American Idol" down. All I am asking, all the American people are demanding, is that those talented Americans who create content for these vastly profitable enterprises be paid fairly with industry-standard benefits and in accordance with federal and state laws. We are asking that one of the country's most popular and profitable shows treats its employees with the respect and dignity they deserve. You can bet that the on-air personalities who read the words are paid dearly. It's time that Fremantle allow those who put the words in their mouths simply be allowed to be represented at the bargaining table.