

aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center.

I am pleased that we are making progress on this legislation, and I appreciate all of the work that has gone into the bill by all of the parties involved. I particularly want to thank Speaker PELOSI and the Democratic Leadership for helping to coordinate and focus our efforts. I am aware that more work remains to further refine the bill, but we are well on our way to finalizing an excellent piece of legislation that will help thousands of victims of the September 11 attacks. I am hopeful that Congress will be able to act swiftly to move this bill by the seventh anniversary of the attacks, and that the bill will be signed into law before the end of this Congress.

HONORING BENJAMIN DYE

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2008

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and express my pride in Mr. Benjamin Dye for winning first place in the 2008 Holocaust Remembrance Project essay contest with his essay, "Choices." I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Mr. Dye success in his future endeavors.

Mr. Dye resides in Modesto, California and is a recent graduate from The Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Connecticut. As a high school student, Mr. Dye was an involved and passionate young man who excelled in many activities, but above all, committed himself to academic excellence.

In the award-winning essay, "Choices," which is printed below, Mr. Dye discusses the Holocaust and its effect on three individuals, author and Holocaust victim Elie Wiesel, newspaper editor-cum-rescue organizer Varian Fry, and a young Jewish man who would become the (former) United States Ambassador to Denmark, John Loeb.

This fall, Mr. Dye will begin a new chapter of his academic career as an honors student at University of California at Irvine. He will study political science and economics, in preparation for his goal of one day continuing his education in law school.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Benjamin Dye for winning the Holocaust Remembrance Project essay contest. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Mr. Dye continued success.

CHOICES

(By Benjamin Dye)

One Saturday night in fall 1944, a crowd of boys packed into the auditorium of their boarding school for the weekly movie, preceded as usual by a newsreel. But this week's footage was not just another montage of Allied victories; tonight, it contained some of the first publicly-released photos of the Holocaust, taken by Soviet soldiers liberating the Majdanek concentration camp. Tonight, the boys saw heaps of skulls, rows of genocidal crematoria, and processions of emaciated survivors. How did they react? John L. Loeb, Jr., one of the few Jewish students present, remembers with painful clarity: "[i]t's hard to believe, but when they first showed those terrible pictures, the entire school cheered." (Kolowrat, 265)

As these teenagers cheered, another teenager thousands of miles away lived in con-

stant terror on the brink of starvation. In fall 1944, sixteen-year-old Elie Wiesel struggled to maintain his humanity in the Auschwitz III-Monowitz labor camp as he subsisted on meager rations, endured arbitrary beatings, and watched his father's health deteriorate. (Wiesel, 66-78) After the Red Army took Warsaw in January 1945 and its resumed race to Berlin, the S.S. force marched Wiesel, his father, and 66,000 other prisoners to Gliwice (Gleiwitz), Poland, where they were herded into cattle cars and taken to the Buchenwald camp. (Wiesel 82) Shortly thereafter, Wiesel's father—whom Elie believed was his last living relative—died. When liberation finally came a few months later, Wiesel found himself utterly alone, his family, his possessions, and his faith incinerated by Nazi hatred. He had one thing left: a choice. How would he respond to his horrific experience? Would he despair and bury his ordeal as society tried to forget its nightmarish past? Or would he hope, remember, and speak out?

Wiesel chose the latter. As he recalls in the preface to the new translation of *Night*, in postwar Europe, "[t]he subject [of the Holocaust] was considered morbid and interested no one"; even in the Jewish community, "... there were always people ready to complain that it was senseless to 'burden our children with the tragedies of the Jewish past.'" (Wiesel xiv.) Nonetheless, he chose to bear witness, concluding that "... having lived through this experience, one could not keep silent no matter how difficult, if not impossible, it was to speak" (Wiesel x.) And he spoke of his ordeal without succumbing to despair; as he noted 41 years later in his Nobel lecture, "Because I remember, I despair. Because I remember, I have the duty to reject despair." (Wiesel (2)) The consequences of his choice have been far-reaching; by calling attention to the Holocaust Wiesel has likely done more than any other individual to promise the children of tomorrow that "his past [will not] become their future." (Wiesel xv.)

Five years before Wiesel's liberation, Varian Fry arrived in France, 14 years after leaving the aforementioned school. He had been sent to Marseille by the Emergency Rescue Committee (ERC), a private American organization established in 1940 to secretly evacuate 200 intellectuals sought by the Nazis. Immediately upon arrival, Fry realized that there were many more than 200 people in imminent danger. Like Wiesel, Fry had a choice to make.

As Elie Wiesel rejected despair, Varian Fry rejected indifference. His original mission called for three weeks in Marseille, but he chose to stay as long as possible saving as many as possible. With only \$3000 from the ERC and no clandestine operations training, Fry set up a latter-day underground railroad, helping Jews and dissidents intellectuals escape into Spain, on to Portugal, and by boat to the U.S. By the time the Gestapo expelled Fry in September, 1941, his choice had saved nearly 4000 lives.

Wiesel's and Fry's stories show that we must remember the Holocaust above all for its lessons about human nature. While we may know that the Nazis killed 6 million Jews, accounts like Wiesel's *Night* personalize and sharpen this statistic. And though putting individual faces on the victims helps us emphasize with victims of current crimes against humanity, it is perhaps even more important to humanize the perpetrators. It is easy to think of the Holocaust as a uniquely terrible deed committed by "them"—ruthless incarnations of evil, with sinister black uniforms and totenköpfe on their caps—but if we are to avert the Holocausts of the future, we must remember that the men responsible for the slaughter were once as human as their victims. If men born

into one of the world's most "civilized" societies could become genocidal automatons, so could we.

However, the Holocaust also reminds us of humanity's tremendous capacity for good. Varian Fry was a normal newspaper editor before the war, but confronted with evil, he became a hero, rising above the anti-Semitic conditioning of his high school years and risking his life to act "beyond himself." (Isenberg, ix.) And Elie Wiesel's commitment to raising awareness of humanitarian issues—a commitment forged as a direct result of the Holocaust—is equally heroic, although it is impossible to calculate how many lives he has saved. While the Holocaust is generally seen as a grim reflection on humanity, we must remember it also as a reminder that ordinary individuals can choose to rise above any evil.

Examining Wiesel's and Fry's experiences and choices, we see that we too have a profound choice to make. We can choose the path of least resistance, or we can follow Elie Wiesel in rejecting despair and Varian Fry in rejecting indifference, and in doing so empower ourselves to combat prejudice, discrimination, and violence today's world. In order to make a difference, however, not everyone needs to be a Wiesel or Fry. In the long term, the subtle choices we make to fight indifference and despair within our immediate communities are crucial in ensuring that "never again" is not an empty promise. We must, of course, stand up against modern day atrocities like the genocide in Darfur, but for deeper change, we must work in our everyday lives, doing what is right before crisis strikes.

A final example demonstrates the power of this focus. John Loeb, after witnessing the callous anti-Semitism that night in 1944 at his and Varian Fry's alma mater, ultimately became the United States Ambassador to Denmark and a delegate to the United Nations. Despite his high profile work for peace, Loeb never forgot the seeds of hatred and indifference sowed that Saturday in the auditorium. So in 1993, he subtly helped uproot them by establishing the John L. Loeb Jr. prize, awarded annually at his former school for the best essay on tolerance and mutual respect. We will never know how much bigotry Loeb's action prevented, but quiet aggregation of such contributions brings about immense change to places like the Nazi-applauding prep school—change evident to me as a current student at this institution. I recently participated in a school sponsored trip to Poland, touring the camp where Wiesel thought his life would end and seeing ruins of the crematoria that had turned his mother and sisters to ash. A few weeks later, I saw Wiesel in person as he addressed the student body that 60 years earlier would have cheered his death, but which now empathized deeply with his suffering.

HONORING SERGEANT SAMSON AUGUSTO MORA, U.S. ARMY

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2008

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the bravery and service of Army National Guardsman Sergeant Samson Augusto Mora. SGT Mora, from the village of Dededo, was assigned to the 3rd Platoon, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 294th Infantry, deployed to Babo Kehyl, Afghanistan. He was killed in action when his vehicle hit an improvised explosive device on July 10, 2008. He

was twenty-eight. SGT Mora is Micronesia's twenty-eighth loss during the War on Terror.

SGT Mora, born August 13, 1979 to Abraham and Angelina Mora, lived a life of honor and respect. Known to his friends and family as "Sam" or "Champion," SGT Mora is remembered for his devotion to those he loved, and for his dedication and commitment to his fellow soldiers. He also demonstrated exemplary bravery during a recent conflict in Afghanistan. During an ambush SGT Mora risked his life alongside others in the Company to bring an injured soldier back to safety while under enemy fire.

I join our community in mourning the loss of SGT Mora, and I offer my condolences to his parents, Abraham and Angelina; his brothers, Army Reserve Major Michael Mora and Air Force Reserve Master Sergeant Abraham Mora, Jr.; his sister, Katherine M. Aquino, and his fiancée Rosanna Castro. SGT Mora served with honor and distinction, like the many sons of Guam who served before him and gave their lives in defense of our country. He lost his life answering the call to duty of our nation, fighting in Afghanistan in order to help make the United States more secure. For his sacrifice on our behalf, we will always be eternally grateful.

God bless the family and friends of Sergeant Samson Augusto Mora, God bless our uniformed men and women protecting our freedoms, God bless Guam, and God bless our country, the United States of America.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR
NATIONAL GEAR UP DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2008

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of the resolution honoring The Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program. I would also like to thank Mr. FATTAH for introducing this bill. He has been a wonderful advocate for the GEAR UP program.

Madam Speaker, The Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP) is designed to increase the number of low income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Over the last ten years, this program has met with unprecedented success. As we all know, postsecondary education contributes to the well-being of individuals and their communities and helps to build a more vibrant, open-minded and stronger society. The GEAR UP staff members work with students to help them create personal accounts that allow them to explore colleges and careers, discover ways to plan and pay for college, and apply for colleges online. Even more significantly, students participating in GEAR UP programs have a high school graduation rate almost ten points above other low-income students who are not in the program.

While the GEAR UP program across the nation has met with tremendous achievement, I would like to draw attention to my home state of Oklahoma which has been one of the front runners in GEAR UP programs. Oklahoma began this program in 1999, making it one of

the oldest GEAR UP Programs in the nation. Since Oklahoma has one of the strongest GEAR UP programs in the country, other educators from other states regularly visit Oklahoma to learn about new and innovative ways to implement the program. So far, the efforts have served over 31,000 students throughout the state.

Madam Speaker, as a result of GEAR UP, participation in Postsecondary Education has increased 10 percent over the last 10 years overall in the state, and there has been a dramatic increase in participation by minority students. The number of African American students going to college in Oklahoma is up 41 percent, Native Americans attending college has increased 55 percent, and the number of Hispanic students attending college is up 80 percent! These figures are just amazing.

Also, fewer students in Oklahoma are taking remedial courses during their first year of college. In fact, Oklahoma has one of the lowest remediation rates in the nation. The GEAR UP Program has also significantly increased the number of students enrolled in Oklahoma's Promise scholarship program which targeted at low income students. Participation in the scholarship program is up 50 percent since 2005.

In addition to the overall state grant, Oklahoma's universities and local school districts have 8 GEAR UP partnership grants. These partnership grants serve local school districts and have over \$10 million in funding annually from a combination of state and federal dollars that will go towards Oklahoma's educational system.

Madam Speaker, one of these partnership schools, Eastern Oklahoma State College, hosted a summer camp for students enrolled in the program. The camp is designed to establish a positive direction for the students' future and encourage them to make positive decisions. Recently, our office received literally hundreds of letters from Middle and early High School students detailing their experiences with the GEAR UP summer camp. These low-income youth all detailed that they fully enjoyed the programs that GEAR UP guided and that some are now considering college as an option. The vast majority of these letters said that the students would participate again and hope to continue GEAR UP through high school.

The results of GEAR UP are clear. This program has helped thousands of students reach college over the last ten years, and I urge my colleagues to vote for this resolution commending its marked success.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES
ON S. 2062, NATIVE AMERICAN
HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND
SELF-DETERMINATION REAU-
THORIZATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 17, 2008

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate the remarks of my colleague from Massachusetts, as the only Native American currently serving in this Congress, I would like to clarify a few of his assertions.

As you know, the Federal Government's relationship with Indian tribes over the first couple hundred years of our history was tragic. Continually, it was the policy of the Federal Government to not only exclude Indians from American society through broken treaties, but also to completely eradicate their culture. It would be nothing short of a tragedy for this Congress to carry on that policy.

During the early 19th century, the Cherokee did hold slaves, like thousands of other individuals throughout America at the time. Of course, there is no justification for such a barbaric practice. When the U.S. Government forced the tribe to relocate on the Trail of Tears, to Oklahoma in the 1830s, many slaves accompanied the Cherokees on this journey. After the Civil War, though the Government did not sign any official treaties with the Confederacy, the Federal Government did sign a Treaty with the Cherokee Nation. The Treaty of 1866 states that all the Freedmen and their descendants should retain the rights of Native Cherokees. At no point did this treaty use "citizenship" as the fulfillment of that provision. However, the important point is that the Cherokees honored this treaty and even exceeded the terms by amending their Constitution of 1866 to grant Freedmen, members of other tribes and inter-married whites tribal citizenship. The Cherokee have not failed to keep their part of the bargain.

Even so, Mr. Speaker, this 1866 treaty, which my colleague from Massachusetts insists the Cherokee have broken, was actually broken by the United States several times. For example, the Curtis Act of 1898, The Five Tribes Act, The Dawes Act, and the Enabling Act of the State of Oklahoma all violated the Federal Government's side of the Treaty of 1866. More significantly, however, this Treaty was once again rendered moot, in 1902 when Congress passed a law that fully changed the nature of tribal citizenship in its entirety and eliminated tribal citizenship across the board. Furthermore, the Dawes Commission, which was assigned to change tribal land into Indian allotment land removed the Freedmen from the Cherokee, but still gave them separate allotment land.

When the Cherokee Nation decided to reconstitute itself in 1975, it did so with a new Constitution and a new vision to return to its roots—a family of descendants of Indians. The Cherokee could make this decision because they were unconstrained by the Article IX obligation of the past. It was now up to the Cherokees to begin an era of Federal policy that promoted self-determination under the leadership of President Richard Nixon.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the courts have continually recognized that one of an Indian tribe's most basic powers is the authority to determine its own citizenship, for they are independent political authorities. That being said, the Cherokee have one of the smallest blood quantum requirements in Indian Country. To be a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, an individual has to simply prove that they have only one Indian ancestor on the Dawes Rolls of 1906. To that end, the Cherokees are one of the most racially diverse tribes in the Nation, with thousands of African-American members. Because of the pending court litigation, the Cherokee have allowed the Freedmen to retain the benefits of tribal membership and have even hired genealogists to assist this group in finding an ancestor on the Dawes Rolls.