

Sarepta a will be honored by the Manufacturing Extension Partnership of Louisiana (MEPOL), with the Fifth annual Platinum Award for Continued Excellence, PACE Award.

MEPOL, a non-profit business resource based at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, serves to provide business and technical assistance to emerging and established manufacturing firms throughout the State of Louisiana. Since 1997, MEPOL, based on a philosophy of education, encouragement, and empowerment, has worked with manufacturers such as CSP-Sarepta to increase their productivity and profitability.

HONORING SAVAGE PRECISION
FABRICATION

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 30, 2010

Mr. HALL of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Savage Precision Fabrication for being named the Small Business Subcontractor of the Year.

Savage Precision Fabrication, and its owner W.T. Gardner, represent the very best of the American entrepreneurial spirit. The company is a Native American and Veteran owned business, founded by W.T. Gardner and his business partner and wife, JoAnn. The company started as a one man shop fabricating sheet metal components with only \$2,000 worth of tools and equipment, and now boasts over \$4 million in annual sales, and is a preferred manufacturer in the aerospace and defense industry.

I am proud to have a company like Savage Precision in my district. Small businesses like this are what make America great, and I would again like to congratulate Savage Precision for their accomplishments and service to our country.

HONORING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR BRAD
OWEN, RECIPIENT OF THE 2010
GEORGE FRANCIS TRAIN INTER-
NATIONAL BUSINESS COMMEMO-
RATIVE AWARD

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 30, 2010

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Lieutenant Governor Brad Owen for his contribution to the growth of international trade in Washington State.

Brad Owen has served as Washington State's 15th Lieutenant Governor, first elected to the position in 1996. Since taking office, Lieutenant Governor Owen has been a leader on trade, conducting many foreign trade missions and advocating for stronger economic and international ties for Washington State.

The Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce presented Lieutenant Governor Brad Owen with the 2010 George Francis Train International Business Commemorative Award on June 2, 2010. Given at the annual Tacoma Globe Awards Dinner, hosted by the

World Trade Center Tacoma, this award is presented annually to honor businesses' and individuals' contributions to the region's strong international economy.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Lieutenant Governor Brad Owen on this impressive achievement, and celebrate his many contributions to growth of international trade in Washington State.

RECOGNIZING 50TH ANNIVERSARY
OF "TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD"

SPEECH OF

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 26, 2010

Ms. RICHARDSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 1525, which recognizes the 50th anniversary of the classic novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which was written by Nelle Harper Lee of Monroeville, Alabama. This novel has become an American classic and every year thousands of students across the country read it and grapple with the significant moral issues that it raises.

I thank Chairman TOWNS for his leadership in bringing this bill to the floor. I would also like to thank Congressman BONNER for introducing this important measure.

Growing up in Monroeville, Alabama, Harper Lee was no stranger to the racial injustice of the American South in the first half of the 20th Century. In 1960, she decided to publish a novel channeling the racial climate she experienced during her youth. This novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, is considered one of the greatest American novels of our time. Its depiction of racial inequality as seen through the eyes of a child offers a unique and insightful view of American race relations in the segregated South.

Madam Speaker, when I was growing up, students across the country read *To Kill a Mockingbird* in high school. While discussing the novel with one of my interns, Brittni Hamilton, I learned that she read the novel as early as middle school. I guess such a classic novel that raises such important issues about the social and moral character of our nation cannot wait until high school any longer. In any case, I am pleased that all the young people in our nation are exposed to the timeless moral lessons of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Madam Speaker, Harper Lee's novel is classic. In addition to winning a Pulitzer Prize, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has also earned Harper Lee induction into the American Academy of Arts and Letters as well as the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Since first being published in 1960, it has sold over 30 million copies. I am proud that our nation continues to cherish and appreciate this landmark literary achievement.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution.

THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO:
FRIEND OR FOE?

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 30, 2010

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of my colleagues to a letter

I recently sent to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton as well as reports from nongovernmental organizations, NGOs, regarding human rights and religious freedom in Morocco and the Moroccan occupied territory of Western Sahara.

Since March, dozens of U.S. citizens and foreign nationals have been expelled from Morocco without due process on charges of proselytism. In the wake of this action, I have repeatedly called on the board of the Millennium Challenge Corporation to suspend the \$697.5 million compact with the government of Morocco. As Americans deal with tough economic times, it is unacceptable for U.S. taxpayer dollars to continue to flow into a country which flagrantly disregards the rights of U.S. citizens.

I am continuing to press the MCC to act decisively to suspend the compact with Morocco until the government of Morocco agrees to the return of all United States citizens affected by the expulsions, thereby sending a clear message that these actions by a purported ally will not be tolerated.

Morocco's recent actions may seem surprising to many, but to those who have followed events in the Moroccan occupied territory of the Western Sahara, this is business as usual for the Moroccan government.

Yet the Obama administration has remained notably silent on these issues despite repeated calls from within the Congress to address these grave injustices. Just yesterday, the Senate Appropriations Committee passed its version of the FY 2011 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations measures which "directed the Secretary of State to submit a report not later than 45 days after the enactment of this act, detailing steps taken by the Government of Morocco in the previous 12 months on human rights, including deportation of U.S. citizens in Morocco without due process of law, and whether it is allowing all persons to advocate freely their views regarding the status and future of the Western Sahara through the exercise of their rights to peaceful expression and association, and to document violations of human rights in the territory without harassment."

I submit for the RECORD my letter to Secretary Clinton as well as reports by highly respected NGOs clearly illustrate Morocco's disregard for the basic principles of human rights and religious freedom as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, July 28, 2010.

Hon. HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON,
Secretary of State,
Washington DC.

DEAR SECRETARY CLINTON: I write today to express my continued concern about the situation involving Americans in Morocco and urge you to issue a strong statement in support of the American citizens whose lives have been uprooted by the Moroccan government's recent actions. I ask that either you or President Obama call on the Moroccan government to unconditionally allow all those expelled or denied reentry to return to Morocco.

Just yesterday, yet another U.S. citizen, Mike Hutchinson, was denied reentry into Morocco. This came after repeated assurances by the Moroccan government to the U.S. Embassy in Rabat that the expulsion order issued to Mr. Hutchinson last month had been suspended and he was free to reenter the country at a time of his choosing.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Embassy in Rabat remained blissfully unaware of the events unfolding at the airport. It is my understanding the U.S. Embassy had been contacted and was fully aware of Mr. Hutchinson's intentions to reenter Morocco and had in its possession the details of his flight itinerary. However, embassy officials failed to communicate Mr. Hutchinson's planned reentry to the Moroccan government to ensure his passage into the country.

The U.S. Embassy in Rabat has an obligation to defend and protect American interests in Morocco. This instance demonstrates a clear failure by U.S. government officials to carry out their basic duties. An American embassy should be an island of freedom which vigorously represents the interests of the United States and its citizens. These events clearly reflect that the U.S. Embassy in Rabat is falling short of its obligations.

Despite all this, U.S. taxpayer dollars continue to pour into Morocco through the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). The stated purpose of the MCC is to form "partnerships with some of the world's poorest countries, but only those committed to: good governance, economic freedom, and investments in their citizens." As a precondition to receiving MCC funds, the government of Morocco was evaluated on 17 key indicators of eligibility.

A recent report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) on the Millennium Challenge Corporation found that on the 17 key indicators "Morocco met MCC's eligibility criteria in 2005 and 2006 but has failed each year since." The failure of the government of Morocco to meet the criteria for four consecutive years shows a clear unwillingness to live up to the pledges made when awarded the MCC compact. The recent expulsion and denial of reentry to U.S. citizens engaged in work which provided humanitarian services to the people of Morocco should erase any doubt about Morocco's commitment to the core principles of the MCC.

It is unacceptable for U.S. taxpayer dollars to continue to flow into Morocco under these circumstances. By failing to suspend the MCC compact with Morocco, the United States sends a message to the world that we are willing to turn a blind eye to injustice, even when the interests of our own citizens are at stake.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and I look forward to your response.

Best wishes,
Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Member of Congress.

[From the Economist, July 29, 2010]

STOP PREACHING OR GET OUT

Evangelical Christians in the poor world are rarely accused of undermining public order. All the more surprising, then, that in recent months around a hundred have been deported from Morocco for just that. The Christians, mostly from the United States and Europe, have been accused of trying to convert Muslims to Christianity, a crime punishable by imprisonment under Moroccan law, which protects the freedom to practise one's faith but forbids any attempt to convert others.

Rules against proselytising are quite common in Muslim countries but Morocco has long enjoyed a reputation as a bastion of religious tolerance in the region. Almost all the country's 32m citizens are Sunni Muslims but churches and synagogues exist, alongside mosques, to cater for the 1% of the people who are Christian or Jewish.

Such open-mindedness presumably appealed to the Christian missionaries who ran

the "Village of Hope" home for children 80km (50 miles) south of Fez, a former capital known for religion and scholarship. The 16 aid-workers had cared for abandoned children for over a decade when, in March, the Moroccan authorities sent inspectors to the orphanage, then gave the workers a few days' notice to leave the country. Witnesses reported distraught farewells between the Moroccan children and the foreigners who had acted as foster parents.

Morocco's communications minister, Khaled Naciri, said the missionaries "took advantage of the poverty of some families and targeted their young children". The aid-workers deny pumping the children with Christianity. But sympathisers say that even if they did, a few hours of preaching was a small price to pay for education and pastoral care. There have been further expulsions since then, most recently of an evangelical Spanish teacher.

Local residents are quick to point out that it is not only Christians who have been targets; last year a similar campaign was waged against Morocco's even smaller population of Shia Muslims. But the motivation for the crackdowns is probably political more than religious. Morocco's constitution is based on the hereditary position of the king as "commander of the faithful". Any drift of Muhammad VI's subjects away from the dominant stream of moderate Sunni Islam might, his advisers fear, diminish his authority.

The American branch of an evangelical organisation, Open Doors, which speaks up for persecuted Christians across the world, is backing a campaign by a Republican congressman, Frank Wolf, to press the Moroccans to be kinder to the evangelicals. Seeing that Morocco is one of America's closest Arab allies, the American administration has been notably silent.

[From the Star Tribune, July 24, 2010]

IS OUR MAN IN MOROCCO UP TO THE JOB?

(By Katherine Kersten)

Minneapolis lawyer Sam Kaplan—a DFL fundraiser extraordinaire—was a member of Barack Obama's national campaign-finance committee. In 2009, Obama rewarded him by naming him ambassador to Morocco.

The exotic posting must have seemed a plum job. Morocco has been known as an oasis among Arab nations—largely free of the repression that mars so many other Muslim countries. It's "the opportunity of a lifetime for a guy from Minnesota," Kaplan enthused to the Star Tribune in April.

But since Kaplan's arrival, Morocco has turned from a diplomatic dream job to a depressing despotic reality. Since March, it has expelled about 100 foreigners, including 50 U.S. citizens. Among the deportees were foster parents at an orphanage, businesspeople and aid workers who taught the poor to grow their own food.

Their crime? Christian "proselytizing"—against the law in this Muslim monarchy.

On June 17, some deportees told their heart-wrenching stories at a hearing convened by Rep. Frank Wolf, R-Va, cochairman of Congress's Human Rights Commission.

Witnesses included Eddie and Lynn Padilla, foster parents at Village of Hope orphanage. The orphanage—which has both Christian and Muslim staff—cared for 33 abandoned children and had operated for 10 years with official approval. But in March, the police moved in and swept through children's bedrooms while they slept, searching for Christian literature.

After three days of grilling, the Padillas and others were given two hours to clear out, as their children sobbed in anguish. Though no evidence was presented, their assets were seized and their bank accounts frozen. Since

their departure, there is evidence that some children have been beaten or drugged.

Witness Michael Cloud, also a Christian, founded 12 centers that treat Moroccan children with cerebral palsy. Cloud testified that authorities barred his reentry as he tried to return from Egypt (where his wife was being treated for cancer). He was held for 13 hours and deported with no explanation. The "hard work" of 14 years was lost, he stated.

So how's our man Sam Kaplan doing defending American citizens from these egregious human-rights violations?

The Padillas testified that the U.S. Embassy had no time for them during their ordeal: "They just told us, 'Do what they are telling you to do.' They offered no help . . . [or] any kind of counsel, just pack and go." Cloud testified that when he sought help, the embassy just gave him a list of lawyers.

At the hearing, international-law expert Sandra Bunn-Livingstone stated that despite victims' pleas, Kaplan refused to release a Moroccan government diplomatic note with a list of deportees, citing protocol. As a result, "Americans who would like to appeal under Moroccan law . . . have been refused that right" since they lack written proof of expulsion, she said. The British and Canadian governments did hand over such notes, she added.

Perhaps Kaplan had other priorities. "A few weeks ago," Cloud testified, "the American embassy in Rabat brought Moroccans to Washington, D.C., and fed them and housed them to help them brainstorm on how to build businesses in the Muslim world."

That would make sense. According to the embassy website, Kaplan's goal as ambassador is "to help fulfill President Obama's vision of a new beginning for U.S. relations with the Muslim world based on mutual respect and . . . mutual interest."

In April, Kaplan responded to critics. He told the Star Tribune he had released a statement saying that the embassy was "distressed" by the expulsions. "We hope to see meaningful improvements in the application of due process," he wrote.

What's Kaplan doing to alleviate distress and promote due process?

A top priority seems to be to impress the Moroccan media, which complained that his statement had "stepped over the diplomatic line," according to the Star Tribune. "When your press has been almost unanimously positive for 5½ months, the change is something that is different," Kaplan explained.

Cozy relations with the Moroccan monarchy are another priority. According to the Star Tribune, "Kaplan noted that King Mohammed has spoken about judicial reform in the past."

"We're not speaking out in contrast to what the government has said," Kaplan told the paper. "We're simply joining with His Majesty and saying if we can be helpful, we'd like to do that."

Wolf rejects this. "An American embassy should be an island of freedom" in the country where it's located, vigorously advocating for its citizens, he says. "Every ambassador has to decide whether to represent Americans' interests in the country they're in or whether to represent the country they're in to America."

Looks like Kaplan has made his choice.

[From Freedom House]

FREEDOM IN THE WORLD—WESTERN SAHARA (2010)

Talks between the Moroccan government and the pro-independence Polisario Front continued in 2009, but the two sides remained at odds over whether to allow a referendum on independence. Pro-independence activists continued to be detained and harassed, and

the conditions on the ground for most Sahrawis remained poor.

Western Sahara was ruled by Spain for nearly a century until Spanish troops withdrew in 1976, following a bloody guerrilla conflict with the pro-independence Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (Polisario Front). Mauritania and Morocco both ignored Sahrawi aspirations and claimed the resource-rich region for themselves, agreeing to a partition in which Morocco received the northern two-thirds. However, the Polisario Front proclaimed an independent Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and continued its guerrilla campaign. Mauritania renounced its claim to the region in 1979, and Morocco filled the vacuum by annexing the entire territory.

Moroccan and Polisario forces engaged in a low-intensity armed conflict until the United Nations brokered a ceasefire in 1991. The agreement called for residents of Western Sahara to vote in a referendum on independence the following year, to be supervised by the newly established UN Mission for a Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). However, the vote never took place, with the two sides failing to agree on voter eligibility.

Morocco tried to bolster its annexation by offering financial incentives for Moroccans to move to Western Sahara and for Sahrawis to move to Morocco. Morocco also used more coercive measures to assert its control, engaging in forced resettlements of Sahrawis and long-term detention and “disappearances” of pro-independence activists.

In 2004, the Polisario Front accepted the UN Security Council’s Baker II plan (named after former UN special envoy and U.S. secretary of state James Baker), which called for up to five years of autonomy followed by a referendum on the territory’s status. However, Morocco rejected the plan, as it could lead to independence, and in 2007 offered its own autonomy plan.

Because the Polisario Front remained committed to an eventual referendum on independence, the two sides failed to make meaningful progress in several rounds of talks that started in 2007 and continued through 2009. Also in 2009, some UN Security Council members expressed concern about the human rights situation and proposed that the council consider expanding MINURSO’s mandate.

POLITICAL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

As the occupying force in Western Sahara, Morocco controls local elections and works to ensure that independence-minded leaders are excluded from both the local political process and the Moroccan Parliament.

Western Sahara is not listed separately on Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index, but corruption is believed to be at least as much of a problem as it is in Morocco.

According to the Moroccan constitution, the press is free, but this is not the case in practice. There is little in the way of independent Sahrawi media. Moroccan authorities are sensitive to any reporting that is not in line with the state’s official position on Western Sahara, and they continue to expel or detain Sahrawi, Moroccan, and foreign reporters who write critically on the issue. Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that in October 2009, plainclothes police told two Morocco-based Spanish journalists to leave the El-Aaiun home of Sidi Mohamed Dadach, who heads the Committee to Support Self-Determination in Western Sahara (CODAPSO). Online media and independent satellite broadcasts are largely unavailable to the impoverished population.

Nearly all Sahrawis are Sunni Muslims, as are most Moroccans, and Moroccan authori-

ties generally do not interfere with their freedom of worship. There are no major universities or institutions of higher learning in Western Sahara.

Sahrawis are not permitted to form independent political or nongovernmental organizations, and their freedom of assembly is severely restricted. As in previous years, activists supporting independence and their suspected foreign sympathizers were subject to harassment in 2009. HRW, which has documented several violations, reported that Moroccan authorities referred seven Sahrawi activists to a military court in October after charging them with harming state security; there were no verdicts at year’s end. Moroccan officials appear to be particularly wary of Sahrawis who travel abroad to highlight the plight of their people and argue for independence. According to HRW, police in October 2009 began breaking up visits by foreign reporters and human rights activists to the homes of Sahrawi activists, rather than simply monitoring them; the police said the visits required clearance from Moroccan authorities.

Among Sahrawi activists themselves, HRW documented the case of Naama Asfari of the Paris-based Committee for the Respect of Freedoms and Human Rights in Western Sahara (CORELSO), who has been detained and harassed on numerous occasions over the years. In August 2009, he was sentenced to four months in jail after an argument with a police officer over the Sahrawi flag that Asfari had on his keychain. Asfari’s cousin, who was with him during the encounter, was also sentenced to jail time. In another high-profile case, activist Aminatou Haidar, head of the Collective of Sahrawi Human Rights Defenders (CODESA), returned in November to Western Sahara from the United States, where she had received a human rights award. She indicated on her reentry paperwork that she lived in Western Sahara, and when she refused to change the document to indicate Morocco, she was detained and eventually deported without a passport to Spain’s Canary Islands. Haidar was able to return home in December 2009 after a month-long hunger strike and considerable diplomatic pressure, but the authorities continued to monitor her and restrict her movements.

Sahrawis are technically subject to Moroccan labor laws, but there is little organized labor activity in the resource-rich but poverty-stricken territory.

International human rights groups have criticized Morocco’s record in Western Sahara for decades. A highly critical September 2006 report by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights—intended to be distributed only to Algeria, Morocco, and the Polisario Front—was leaked to the press that October. The human rights situation in the territory tends to worsen during periods of increased demonstrations against Moroccan rule. The Polisario Front has also been accused of disregarding human rights.

Morocco and the Polisario Front both restrict free movement in potential conflict areas. Morocco has been accused of using force and financial incentives to alter the composition of Western Sahara’s population.

Sahrawi women face much of the same cultural and legal discrimination as Moroccan women. Conditions are generally worse for women living in rural areas, where poverty and illiteracy rates are higher.

5TH ANNIVERSARY OF HURRICANE KATRINA

HON. ANH “JOSEPH” CAO

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 30, 2010

Mr. CAO. Madam Speaker, August 29th of this year will mark five years since the day Hurricane Katrina made landfall along the Gulf Coast. Tragically, 1,822 lives were lost in the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, and Alabama.

As a result of what was one of the greatest disasters this nation has ever seen, more than 1.2 million people were under some type of evacuation order, 3 million were left without electricity for weeks, and hundreds of thousands were left jobless.

Yesterday, with the support of the members from the Louisiana delegation, I introduced a resolution observing the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina’s landfall.

This resolution honors and remembers the lives lost on that fateful day. It also salutes the dedication of those who responded in our darkest hour and those who have stood by our sides during our recovering and rebuilding. We simply could not have done it without the thousands who answered the call and recognized our need. Our rebuilding continues and we take each new challenge one day at a time. We are strong, and we will recover.

On behalf of my constituents in Orleans and Jefferson Parishes and all those across Louisiana and the Gulf Coast, I thank the American people for their generosity and support.

HONORING THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 30, 2010

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, next month the United States celebrates the 90th anniversary of women’s suffrage. On August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment gave women in the United States the right to vote, and for 90 years, women have been actively participating in the democratic process.

The battle for women’s suffrage was not an easy one. It took the courage and steadfast leadership of trailblazers like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and all the women who gathered at Seneca Falls so many decades ago and began advocating for the right to express their views and let their voices be heard at the ballot box.

As we celebrate this important anniversary, I urge women across our great nation to continue taking an active role in the democratic process and politics, and to exercise their right to vote, as they have for so many years.

In March, the House celebrated Women’s History Month and remembered the accomplishments of women in our nation and around the world. August 26th allows us yet another opportunity to celebrate the history of American women and their accomplishments. Today women everywhere are breaking barriers and reaching new heights not only in the political arena, but also the business world,