

CONGRATULATING THE DILLARD  
HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS' BASKET-  
BALL TEAM ON THEIR STATE  
CHAMPIONSHIP

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 3, 2011*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the girls' basketball team of Dillard High School in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Led by Coach Marcia Pinder, whose 776–171 career record is top among all Florida basketball coaches, male or female, the Panthers crowned a 22–7 season by winning the Florida state championship for the second consecutive year. Under Coach Pinder's tutelage, the Dillard girls have consistently been recognized for being among the best at their sport, having won six titles overall.

In this year's title game, the Panthers led most of the way and, with their key rebounds and clutch free throws, the game, which went to overtime, and the title ultimately belonged to Dillard.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the Lady Panthers and Coach Pinder, who have once again reached the pinnacle of success in their sport, and I am glad that they represent my district. They are all fine sportswomen and people of whom we can all be very proud. It is my distinguished honor to recognize their achievements.

23RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE MAS-  
SACRE OF ARMENIAN CIVILIANS  
IN AZERBAIJAN

**HON. BRAD SHERMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 3, 2011*

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I speak today in solemn remembrance of a dark chapter in modern history. This past weekend marked the 23rd anniversary of the massacre of Armenian civilians in Azerbaijan. On the evening of February 27, 1988, a three-day rampage against Armenian civilians living in Sumgait, in Soviet Azerbaijan, began.

Armenian civilians were maimed, raped, beaten, and burned alive at the hands of rioters. International media outlets reported that Armenians were "hunted" down and killed in their homes.

The calls for help for those innocent Armenians were ignored by the local police, and the victims' fate was left to those who ruthlessly and senselessly ended their lives.

The official figure from Soviet authorities, who had prohibited journalists from entering the area, was just over 30 people dead and over 200 injured. However, many believe that in fact hundreds were murdered.

Sadly, Sumgait was not the end to the tragedies. Anti-Armenian pogroms followed in Kirovabad on November 21, 1988 and in Baku on January 13, 1990. During the Nagorno-Karabakh War of 1988 to 1994, Armenian civilian population centers were indiscriminately attacked.

If we hope to stop future massacres, and conflicts, we need to acknowledge those hor-

rific acts of the past, make sure they do not happen again, and make sure that we do not have renewed war between Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Nagorno-Karabakh. That is why I would like to commemorate the victims of the Sumgait massacre.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 3, 2011*

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, February 18, 2011, had I voted, I would have voted "no" on rollcall No. 93.

Additionally, on February 16, 2011, it was my intention to vote "yes" on rollcall No. 57.

WE HAVE LOST A FRIEND

**HON. FRANK R. WOLF**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 3, 2011*

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because of a tragic event—the March 2 assassination of Pakistan's Federal Minister for Minority Affairs Shahbaz Bhatti, a heroic man of faith whose courageous and outspoken leadership against his nation's draconian blasphemy law made him a prime target of extremist Islamist elements in his country.

Bhatti was the only Christian member of the Pakistani cabinet.

We have lost a friend and an ally and our prayers are with Bhatti's family and those in Pakistan who mourn his loss and who stood with him in his fight against injustice and intolerance. Bhatti devoted his life to defending the most vulnerable—he is literally a modern day martyr.

Among those whose causes he championed were Asia Bibi, a young Christian mother of five, who was sentenced to death under Pakistan's blasphemy law. Only after international intervention was her execution delayed. Her fate, however, remains unclear.

Pakistan's blasphemy laws are often used to victimize both religious minorities and Muslims. In fact, Punjab's influential governor, Salman Taseer was shot and killed by his own bodyguard who reportedly told police, "that he killed Mr. Taseer because of the governor's opposition to Pakistan's blasphemy law."

With Bhatti's life tragically cut short, a critical moderating voice in Pakistan has been lost. And I fear others will be silenced if justice is not brought to bear in Pakistan. Bhatti spoke of the importance of these voices during a recent Washington Post editorial board meeting. I submit for the RECORD a piece by Post editorial page editor, Fred Hiatt, who recalled Bhatti's message, "that millions of Pakistanis remain committed to a vision of a Muslim country living in peace with its neighbors and with non-Muslims within its borders." Hiatt continued, "As it became increasingly dangerous for such people to speak up, they were becoming decreasingly visible. But they are still there, Bhatti told us, and he urged Americans not to forsake or forget them."

This must be our clarion call in the days to come.

I urge the Government of Pakistan to seek justice in this case and to give Bhatti a state funeral, reflective of the import of his life and legacy. Similarly, I urge our own government to send a high-ranking delegation to attend the funeral and to carry Bhatti's torch in continuing to press for the repeal of the blasphemy laws in Pakistan.

I also submit an Associated Press story which references the fact that Bhatti was "aware of the danger he faced, saying in a videotaped message that he had received death threats from al-Qaida and the Taliban." The video was recorded several months before his ultimate assassination and can be viewed at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/mar/02/pakistan-minister-shot-dead-islamabad>.

Bhatti pointedly says he will continue to speak out for persecuted Christians and other religious minorities. In a chilling allusion to future events, he says, "I will die to defend their rights."

Indeed Bhatti's convictions cost him his life. He must not have died in vain.

ANOTHER MODERATE IN PAKISTAN IS  
ASSASSINATED  
(By Fred Hiatt)

Shahbaz Bhatti, who was assassinated outside his home in Pakistan today, came to visit a few of us at The Post one month ago. He was soft-spoken and matter-of-fact about the dangers he faced—and about his refusal, almost his inability, to trim his sails to lessen those dangers. The risks he faced, as a voice for tolerance in an increasingly intolerant country, were risks that Pakistan faced—and if he and like-minded figures stopped speaking up, what future would the country have?

Bhatti was a Christian in an overwhelmingly Muslim country, a minister in the government in charge of minority affairs, and most of all an unimaginably courageous voice of moderation. He opposed the nation's anti-blasphemy law, which increasingly is being used to silence and oppress. When another moderate leader, Punjab governor Salman Taseer, was killed two months ago, his assassin frighteningly became a hero for many in Pakistan. Bhatti was one of the few public figures willing to forthrightly condemn the murder.

Now Bhatti, too, is gone. There will be investigations, I suppose, into why his police guard was absent when gunmen surrounded his Toyota sedan this morning, despite calls from many (including Americans like Virginia Republican Rep. Frank Wolf) for increased security. There will be tributes and mourning, but they will be muted. Hopefully there will be deep thinking inside the U.S. government about what it can do to better support the forces of moderation.

On that subject, I remember two essential messages from Bhatti's visit. He said Americans maintained too little contact with the part of Pakistani civil society that believes in interfaith tolerance, that sees Islam as a peaceful religion willing to live alongside others. Bhatti himself had organized a network of such people, he told us, but U.S. officials were too busy dealing with the government, army and intelligence agencies to show support or even establish much contact.

His second message was that millions of Pakistanis remain committed to a vision of a Muslim country living in peace with its neighbors and with non-Muslims within its borders. As it became increasingly dangerous for such people to speak up, they were becoming decreasingly visible. But they are still there, Bhatti told us, and he urged Americans not to forsake or forget them.

# MILITANTS KILL CHRISTIAN MINISTER IN PAKISTAN

(By Nahal Toosi and Chris Brummitt)

ISLAMABAD.—Militants gunned down the only Christian in Pakistan's government outside his widowed mother's home Wednesday, the second assassination in two months of a high-profile opponent of laws that impose the death penalty for insulting Islam.

Shahbaz Bhatti was aware of the danger he faced, saying in a videotaped message that he had received death threats from al-Qaida and the Taliban. In it, the 42-year-old Roman Catholic said he was "ready to die" for the country's often persecuted Christian and other non-Muslim minorities.

The slaying in Islamabad followed the killing of Salman Taseer, a liberal politician who was gunned down in the capital by one of his guards. Both men had campaigned to change blasphemy laws in Pakistan that impose the death penalty for insulting Islam and have been loudly defended by Islamist political parties.

The Taseer slaying triggered fears the country was buckling under the weight of extremism, especially since the government, fearful of militants and the political parties that champion their causes, did not loudly condemn the killing or those who publicly celebrated it.

Wednesday's slaying will only reinforce those concerns and further undermine confidence in the government, which appears paralyzed by political rivalries and unable to fix a stagnant economy or provide basic services for the country's 180 million mostly poor people.

The turmoil comes despite attempts by the Obama administration to support Pakistan, which it sees as key to ending the war in neighboring Afghanistan and defeating al-Qaida, whose leadership is believed to reside in the mountainous northwestern regions.

Pakistani government ministers usually travel with police escorts, but Bhatti was without such protection when he was killed as he and a driver left his mother's home. Bhatti, who was minister for religious minorities, had been given police and paramilitary guards but had asked them not to accompany him while he stayed with his mother, said Wajid Durrani, a senior police official.

A friend of the politician, Wasif Ali Khan, said Bhatti was nervous about using guards after the Taseer killing and had requested a bulletproof car, but had not received one.

Bhatti had just pulled out of the driveway when three men opened fire, said Gulam Rahim, a witness. Two opened the door of the car and tried to pull Bhatti out, Rahim said, while a third fired a Kalashnikov rifle repeatedly into the dark-colored Toyota, shattering the windows.

The gunmen then sped away in a white car, said Rahim, who took shelter behind a tree.

Bhatti was hit with at least eight bullets and was dead on arrival at hospital.

In leaflets left at the scene, al-Qaida and the Pakistani Taliban Movement in Punjab province claimed responsibility. They blamed the government for putting Bhatti, an "infidel Christian," in charge of an unspecified committee, apparently in reference to his support for changing the blasphemy laws.

"With the blessing of Allah, the mujahdeen will send each of you to hell," said the note, which did not name any other targets.

Government officials and political party workers condemned the killing, but made no reference to the blasphemy law controversy. Muslim clerics contacted by The Associated Press or interviewed on Pakistani TV either offered a tepid condemnation or claimed the assassination was part of an American-led

conspiracy to drive a wedge between Muslims and Christians.

Bhatti, a soft-spoken minister who rose to prominence defending a Christian woman sentenced to death for blasphemy, often spoke of the threats against him from extremists. Very few Pakistani politicians were willing to talk about changing the blasphemy law because of the danger.

"They (the Taliban) want to impose their radical philosophy in Pakistan. And whoever stands against their radical philosophy, they threaten them," he said in the video message, which was posted on the website of the First Step Forum, a Finland-based group that promotes religious harmony, rule of law and democracy.

"These threats and these warnings cannot change my opinions and principles. I'm living for my community and suffering people," said Bhatti, who was an adviser to the group and had asked that his message be released in the event of his death.

The slaying robbed Pakistani Christians of their most prominent advocate.

"We have been orphaned today!" wailed Rehman Masih, a Christian resident of Islamabad. "Now who will fight for our rights? Who will raise a voice for us? Who will help us?"

Christians are the largest religious minority in Pakistan, whose population is 95 percent Muslim. They have very little political power and tend to work in lower-level jobs, such as street sweeping.

As Christians took to the streets Wednesday to protest in several cities, relatives and friends went to Bhatti's home to pay their respects. "Tell the mullahs that the man who was the voice of the Christians is silent. Where are they now?" Samuel David, one of the visitors, shouted to a television crew.

The assassination drew condemnation from Christian and government leaders.

A Vatican spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, called the slaying a "new episode of violence of terrible gravity," saying it "demonstrates just how justified are the insistent statements by the pope regarding violence against Christians and religious freedom."

Lombardi noted that Pope Benedict XVI had met with Bhatti in September.

President Barack Obama condemned the slaying, saying Bhatti "fought for and sacrificed his life for the universal values that Pakistanis, Americans and people around the world hold dear"—including rights to free speech and religious freedom.

In Britain, leaders of the Anglican Church expressed shock and sorrow and urged Pakistan's government to do more to protect Christians.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the attack was "not only on one man but on the values of tolerance and respect of all faiths and backgrounds."

The blasphemy laws were originally framed by the Asian subcontinent's British colonial rulers but were toughened in the 1980s during the military rule of Gen. Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, who pushed a politicized, austere brand of Islam.

Human rights groups have long warned that the laws are vaguely worded and open to abuse because people often use them to settle rivalries or persecute religious minorities.

Right-wing Islamist parties, looking for an issue to rally their supporters, have campaigned against any change to the laws, accusing those who seek to amend them of blasphemy—and creating an environment that led to the latest killings.

"Bhatti's murder is the bitter fruit of appeasement of extremist and militant groups both prior to and after the killing of Punjab Governor Salman Taseer," said Human

Right Watch. "An urgent and meaningful policy shift on the appeasement of extremists that is supported by the military, the judiciary and the political class needs to replace the political cowardice and institutional myopia that encourages such continued appeasement despite its unrelenting bloody consequences."

Another prominent opponent of the blasphemy laws, ruling party member Sherry Rehman, recently dropped her bid to get them changed. Rehman, who has said she had to abide by party leaders' decisions, faces death threats and has been living with heavy security.

## RECOGNIZING EMILY McMILLAN AS THE 2012 ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2011

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Emily McMillan as the 2011 Escambia County, Florida Teacher of the Year. Ms. McMillan joined the Escambia County School District in January 2008. From day one she has inspired her students to strive for excellence, and I am honored to recognize her achievements.

Ms. McMillan was identified as an exceptional candidate for the teaching profession years before she stepped into the classroom. In high school, Ms. McMillan began taking dual enrollment courses at a local college. Her dedication to achieving scholastic excellence during her high school career put her on track to graduate from the University of West Florida in just two years. Ms. McMillan's undergraduate studies were completed on an accelerated time frame; however, during her time at UWF she received myriad awards and scholarships, including the Florida Retired Educators Association's Scholarship for Teachers of Tomorrow.

Ms. McMillan arrived at Ferry Pass Elementary School ready to teach; nonetheless, she also knew that even the best teachers always have room to improve and new methods to employ. She joined the Reading Leadership Team, which meets on a monthly basis to create and implement reading goals for the entire school. She now serves as the Reading Committee Chairwoman, meeting with teachers from each of the seven grade levels at Ferry Pass Elementary and Middle School to work on the implementation of the Reading Leadership Team's goals. She also works with the Media Specialist to develop innovative methods to foster a love of reading.

While the overall goal of education remains the same, teachers today must be able to adapt to the changing needs of their students. Ms. McMillan serves her students and, as a result, she incorporates a variety of instructional strategies to ensure that every student meets their specific learning needs. Her sedulous dedication to her students facilitates learning and creates an educational environment where students are given the time and support to ensure that they meet their goals.

Ms. McMillan realizes that parents are fundamental to the educational success of their children. She creates lines of communication between herself and parents by sending home