

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CELEBRATING ORLANDO ELKS LODGE 1079'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MAXWELL FROST

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2024

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, today, I celebrate the significant contributions of Orlando Elks Lodge to the Central Florida region. Starting in New York City, The Elks organization has grown to over 1,900 lodges throughout the United States and Canada. The Orlando Elks Lodge was established in 1907 and is now celebrating over 100 years of service.

Every year, the Orlando Elks Lodge spends over \$50,000 on programs that benefit special needs children, nourish our marginalized communities, and support our veterans. They also contribute significantly to the Edgewater Children's Ranch to help children from the Central Florida community who come from vulnerable homes.

The Elks remain steadfast in their founding principle of charity, justice, brotherly love, and fidelity. I thank Orlando Elks Lodge for their century-long dedication and service. Their contributions make a profound difference in our community, and we are grateful for their support and commitment to make Central Florida a better place for all.

HONORING THE PINECREST PATRIOTS ON WINNING THEIR EIGHTH MENS GOLF STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2024

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Pinecrest Patriots Men's Golf team, Athletic Director Jeff Hewitt, and Principal Stefanie Phillips on winning their eighth North Carolina High School Athletic Association Championship (NCHSAA) 4A Men's Golf title.

The men of Pinecrest Highschool's golf team have brought this years NCHSAA championship back home to Southern Pines. The Patriots defeated the next closest competitor by 14 strokes, setting a new NCHSAA record.

The coaches and players of the Pinecrest Men's Golf Team have brought great pride to both their school and all of Moore County. I wish them all the best and hope to see them continue their great success next season. Go Patriots.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in congratulating the coaches and golfers of Pinecrest High School on their victory in this year's N.C. High School Athletic Association 4A Men's Golf State Championship.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF REP. GEORGE NETHERCUTT, FORMER CONGRESSMAN FOR WASHINGTON'S FIFTH DISTRICT

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2024

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of former Congressman George Nethercutt, who passed away recently.

Former Congressman George Nethercutt served in the United States House of Representatives from 1995 to 2005, representing Washington's Fifth Congressional District.

Congressman Nethercutt was an influential force who led with character and conviction and embodied what it truly means to be a member of Congress. He proudly served the Fifth District for a decade, traveling around the state and back and forth to D.C. to serve his constituents and deliver on issues important to our state. During his time in Congress, he sat on the House Appropriations Committee and co-founded the Congressional Diabetes Caucus.

After serving in Congress, Congressman Nethercutt spent much of his time working to promote civic education and government service among our younger generations, an effort that demonstrated his commitment to public service.

Congressman Nethercutt is a shining example of leadership for elected officials in Washington State and across the country. My thoughts are with his loved ones and our entire state as we mourn this incredible loss.

CONGRATULATING EDWARD LEWIS ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2024

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great Marylander: Ed Lewis. He and his wife, former Maryland Democratic Party Chair Yvette Lewis, are two of my dearest friends. After an impressive, decades-long career in communications and government relations, Ed recently decided to retire. We ought to pay tribute to his many accomplishments and contributions to our community over the years.

An expert communicator with a deep understanding of public policy, Ed started to hone his skills at Howard University, where he earned his bachelor's degree in journalism, and later at the University of Maryland, where he earned a master's degree in public policy management. Ed began his career as a reporter for the Memphis Commercial Appeal. While there, he helped come up with innovative new journalism tactics, developing a best

practices handbook for online interviews. Ed has always maintained strong ties to the journalism community. He was the first Black person to serve on the National Press Club's Board of Governors. From the National Press Club Journalism Institute to the Press Club's Speakers Committee to the Corporate Advisory Council of the National Press Foundation, he's held leadership positions at a variety of other press organizations. That includes his role as a founding member of the Washington Automotive Press Association.

Ed Lewis remains a towering figure in the public relations and automotive industries. He held senior positions at the Tire Industry Safety Council, the American Automobile Manufacturers Association, Nissan, Ford, and other leading automakers. For the past 18 years, Ed served as the Director of Public Policy Communications for Toyota. These companies always knew they could count on Ed to craft a compelling message and to distill complex policy into simple terms that the public could understand. Ed also cultivated close relationships with leading figures in government and the press that proved invaluable to his work. Whether it was handling crisis communications, navigating complex interactions between the public and private sectors, or helping guide high-level business decisions, Ed proved to be one of the very best professionals in his field.

Ed has received more honors and awards than I could ever list in full, but they include the Public Relations Society of America's Platinum Award and the National Press Club's Vivian Award—among many others.

What I most admire about Ed is his commitment to giving back to our community in Prince George's County. Although his corporate career may be coming to an end, I have no doubt that his commitment to serving Prince Georgians never will. I was pleased to see him and Yvette roll out their new Fresh Start initiative in partnership with Bowie State University just this past April. The program will provide financial aid to formerly incarcerated individuals to help them attend BSU. Ed and Yvette want to give these men and women an opportunity to build a better life as well as a better community for all. For that, they have our thanks.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all my colleagues join me in congratulating Ed on his retirement and in thanking him for his service to our community—service that will surely continue for many years to come.

FRANK WOLF'S COMPELLING REFLECTION ON THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN AND ADVANCE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2024

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, at home and overseas, Frank Wolf—my good

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

friend and former colleague here in the House of Representatives—has been an indefatigable defender of human rights and human dignity.

To add to the list of his many accomplishments, Frank recently finished his term on the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, which was established by the landmark International Religious Freedom Act he authored in 1998.

Upon completion of his term, Frank wrote a compelling reflection on what remains to be done to strengthen and advance our work to ensure religious believers worldwide can faithfully practice their beliefs. As Frank's profound insights provide an excellent blueprint for religious freedom advocates the world over, I include in the Record his statement in its entirety.

In May I finished my term on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) and I want to offer some thoughts for action going forward which I believe could help promote religious freedom internationally and domestically.

The recently released Pew Survey on religious freedom reports that over 80% of the world's population lives in a religiously repressive environment, up from 70% in 2009. We see religious persecution in China, North Korea, Iran, Nicaragua, Cuba and many other countries. All one has to do is look at the 2024 USCIRF Annual Report, which documents that people of all faiths and beliefs are being persecuted in many places around the globe.

In our own country, we see troubling violations of religious freedom—Christian schools and churches facing threats, assaults on parental rights, the FBI visiting pro-life families, some businesses canceling people and organizations because of their political and religious beliefs, and Jewish students facing rampant antisemitism on American college campuses. We witness an insidious relativism that teaches that concepts of right and wrong are old-fashioned and even judgmental. Vices are elevated, virtues are mocked, and faith is squeezed out of the public square. Our culture is coarsened because of it.

The late Cardinal Francis George, former president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Archbishop of Chicago, predicted in 2012, "I expect to die in bed, my successor will die in prison, and his successor will die a martyr in the public square." At the time I thought this was alarmist, but seeing what is happening today, his statement gives me pause.

Cardinal George went on to say, "This tendency for the government to claim for itself authority over all areas of human experience flows from a secularization of our culture. If God cannot be part of public life, then the state itself plays God."

Chuck Colson warned us of many of these things in his later writings, especially "My Final Word," which was published posthumously and was almost prophetic about the world we now face.

I believe the following three ideas would help in the fight for international and domestic religious freedom.

First.

There should be a total ban on lobbying for China. One of the recommendations on China in the 2024 USCIRF Annual Report reads "The U.S. Congress should: Ban foreign lobbying by agents representing the Chinese government and its state-affiliated commercial entities that undermine religious freedom and related human rights." At the end of the China section, there is an additional view signed by all nine Commissioners, both Republican and Democrat, that shows how

China is involved in the persecution of all religious groups in their own country and shows their influence around the world. It states:

"It is imperative to ban lobbying for the Chinese government, its state-affiliated commercial entities, and their interests while the government continues its egregious acts of religious persecution. These harsh actions impact every faith group in China with the leaders of the Catholic Church and Protestant house churches imprisoned and even 'disappeared.' Cultural genocide devastates Tibet where Buddhist monks die in prison. Physical genocide ravishes Uyghur Muslims, with millions in detention camps and children taken from their parents. Organs are harvested from Falun Gong and Uyghurs, some while still alive. Hong Kong represses Christians, including 92-year-old Cardinal Zen. China's influence spreads worldwide. China supports Iran, which provided training and weapons for the attacks on Israel by Hamas and they supply arms to Hezbollah and the Houthis. China aids Russia in its war on Ukraine and supports North Korea, one of the world's worst religious persecutors. China supports both Nicaragua and Cuba where Christians are being aggressively persecuted. Concerns are rising over China threatening to attack Taiwan, which many experts believe may lead to direct U.S. involvement and the loss of American military lives. Amidst all of this, the words of 18th-century British parliamentarian William Wilberforce about the evils of the slave trade come to mind:

'You may choose to look the other way, but you can never say again that you do not know.' Congress cannot look the other way. For the good of our country and religious freedom worldwide, Congress must ban lobbying for the Chinese government and its interests."

Recently I attended the ROTC commissioning ceremony at the University of Virginia for all military service branches. I was impressed that these young men and women are stepping forward to serve our country. To think that anyone could lobby for an adversary like China that could lead us into war and put these young people in peril is unacceptable. There must be a total ban on lobbying for China.

Second.

Do everything possible to help and support groups like Alliance Defending Freedom, First Liberty, the Becket Fund, and other outstanding groups that pursue legal action in defense of religious freedom so they can bring more cases to protect individuals and groups facing religious discrimination and establish legal precedent that carries the weight of law. Frankly, these groups have been more effective than Congress in preserving religious freedom and they need the resources necessary to expand their work. This should include fighting the rapidly rising antisemitism we are seeing around the world.

We currently have the best Supreme Court we are likely to have for a generation. This is leading to dangerous efforts to pack the court which must be resisted. Religious freedom cases reaching the Supreme Court today are generally successful, but these cases can take up to five years to work their way through the courts. It is an expensive proposition to carry a case from pre-filing through many appeals and to the Supreme Court. That is why these groups need help and support for the long term.

Many people of faith are unaware that they can protect their First Amendment freedom of religion through the active use of the courts. Many people and houses of worship do not have the resources to bring cases on their own. The fact that people don't

know their rights, nor have the resources to defend those rights, encourages school boards, government agencies, the military, employers, and others to discriminate as they believe their actions will not be challenged.

For a more in-depth study of this, see Judge Ken Starr's excellent book, "Religious Liberty in Crisis."

Perhaps an 800-telephone number and email address could be set up and advertised on Christian and other religious media for people to contact for help with their religious discrimination complaints.

Third.

While many groups have their own government affairs outreach, which is good, many groups are too small to support their own lobbying efforts. I believe there should be a lobbying firm set up in Washington to focus entirely on international and domestic religious freedom issues. The firm should be staffed by former high-level Congressional Hill staffers from both the House and Senate who know the inner workings of the Congress and government agencies. These would be people who worked on key committees and in Senate and House leadership offices.

Working with religious freedom advocacy groups they would be another set of eyes and ears on the Hill, following and helping shape legislation dealing with international and domestic religious freedom. A board of directors made up of various religious freedom groups could oversee the work of this firm. I believe this would be a direct help to all groups working on these issues.

There have been very few successes lately on Capitol Hill to further religious freedom. In the international arena, some countries that have been designated by USCIRF as egregious violators of religious freedom have been given massive amounts of U.S. foreign aid and some have expensive lobbying efforts in Washington. USCIRF has worked in a bipartisan way and has been faithful in its mission of researching, reporting, and naming international religious rights violators. Yet at the same time, USCIRF has seen its budget frozen, even cut, and it has not received the necessary permanent or long-term reauthorization from Congress.

Having worked on religious freedom issues for many years, I believe these steps would make a significant difference here in the United States and around the world. I share these thoughts with the hope that the religious freedom community will take on some of these ideas to help advance the cause of religious freedom and improve the lives of those who are persecuted.

Frank Wolf, June 2024.

RECOGNIZING PAUL AND SANDY PIMENTEL

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2024

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Paul and Sandra "Sandy" Pimentel. Both raised in Quincy, Massachusetts, Paul and Sandy first met as kids and began a friendship that would last a lifetime and eventually grow into a marriage spanning five decades. After graduating high school, Paul went on to attend Harvard University, where he received a degree in engineering and applied physics, before serving in Vietnam as a lieutenant in the United States Army. Sandy went on to attend the University of Massachusetts Boston and the Lynn Hospital School of Nursing, where she respectively received her