

INTRODUCTION OF THE LIBRARIAN INCENTIVE TO BOOST RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN AREAS OF NEED (LIBRARIAN) ACT OF 2007

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. BECERRA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce bipartisan legislation, the Librarian Incentive to Boost Recruitment and Retention in Areas of Need (LIBRARIAN) Act of 2007, with Representatives VERNON EHLERS (MI-3), RAÚL GRIJALVA (AZ-07), and JOHN SHIMKUS (IL-19). Senators JACK REED (RI) and THAD COCHRAN (MS) will also be introducing a companion measure today in the Senate. The LIBRARIAN Act of 2007, which is endorsed by the American Library Association, will offer much needed help to recruit and retain librarians in schools and public libraries located in low-income areas. We accomplish this by establishing a loan forgiveness program for college students who obtain a master's degree in library science and latter commit to serve as librarians in disadvantaged communities.

The introduction of the LIBRARIAN Act is timely since today we celebrate National Library Workers Day. Our Nation's public and school libraries and the people who keep them open are national treasures. Every day, these libraries provide an invaluable public good to our communities. Together they offer crucial access to education, skills training and unique information. These services are particularly important in low-income communities where resources are often scarce.

Unfortunately, libraries are losing their most valuable asset: librarians. According to a 2002 School Library Journal survey, 30 states and the District of Columbia reported either a severe or extremely severe librarian shortage. The librarian shortage is attributed to two principal factors. First, an alarming number of librarians have reached the age of retirement and the number is expected to increase dramatically in the next decade. The American Library Association, the oldest and largest library association in the world, projects that between 60 to 65 percent of currently practicing librarians will retire by the year 2020. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that more than three out of five librarians are aged 45 years or older—many of these librarians will become eligible to retire in the next 10 years.

The second factor causing the librarian shortage is that libraries are now in direct competition with highly salaried private sectors needing workers with librarian skills such as those in multimedia technology, database administration and systems analysis. Today it is not uncommon to encounter a librarian earning less than \$29,000 annually, despite the fact that the position is highly specialized and requires a master's degree in library science. Not surprisingly, librarians are increasingly leaving their profession and using their invaluable education and experience in other more lucrative employment arenas.

Sadly, low-income community libraries will suffer most from the coming librarian shortage. While well-funded suburban libraries can afford to recruit and retain librarians, low-income

area libraries lack the resources to attract well qualified staff. Moreover, most librarians look to relocate to highly desirable areas creating an even greater difficulty for low-income area libraries to attract qualified candidates to fill job openings.

Earlier this year, I received first-hand confirmation that if the LIBRARIAN Act passed we could attract more students to the profession. A young student in my district who had learned about the LIBRARIAN Act wrote to me stating that she would now consider a career as a librarian and gladly work in a low-income community. Previously, this student had not entertained the idea of becoming a librarian.

There is strong precedent in law for canceling student loans under the Federal Perkins Loan program. Several categories of professionals who service low-income areas currently receive such a benefit. Teachers working in special education, Head Start and educationally disadvantaged schools under the Title I Program, special education and Head Start, as well as members of the armed services, law enforcement officers, Peace Corps volunteers, medical technicians and nurses can qualify for forgiveness of their Federal Perkins student loans.

Specifically, the LIBRARIAN Act allows Federal Perkins loan cancellation for full-time librarians with a master's degree in library sciences who are employed in: a public library that serves a geographic area that contains one or more schools eligible for educationally disadvantaged school funding under Title I; or an elementary or secondary school library that is eligible for educationally disadvantaged school funding under Title 1.

Librarians working full-time in these areas would qualify for up to 100 percent Federal Perkins loan forgiveness depending on their years of service as a librarian in the disadvantaged schools or public libraries. Specifically, they would qualify for: 15 percent loan forgiveness for each of the first and second years of such service; 20 percent loan forgiveness for each of the third and fourth years of such service; and 30 percent loan forgiveness for the fifth year of such service.

Since loan forgiveness would apply to the years of services that are completed after the enactment of this Act, students entering a library sciences program and librarians with outstanding Federal Perkins loans stand to benefit. In the end, the susceptible communities that are detrimentally affected by a librarian shortage stand to benefit the most from this bill.

Madam Speaker, it is time to take steps towards alleviating this shortage of librarians in America. The loan forgiveness provisions of the LIBRARIAN Act will be a valuable tool in attracting some of our brightest and best students to become tomorrow's educators in the communities where they are most needed. I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting the passage of this important legislation.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ERNEST GALLO

SPEECH OF

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2007

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, this week the House voted to honor Mr. Ernest Gallo, a pio-

neer and innovator in winemaking and exceptional example of the American entrepreneurial spirit. Born on March 18, 1909 near Modesto, California, Ernest Gallo grew up working with his brother, Julio, in a vineyard owned by their immigrant father. With less than \$6,000 and a pamphlet from the Modesto Public Library, the brothers founded E & J Gallo Winery in 1933. From these humble beginnings, Ernest and his brother built a wine empire, bringing a love of wine to the U.S. customer and permanently establishing California as the epicenter of America's wine industry. Today, E & J Gallo Winery produces approximately 900 million bottles annually, selling them under 40 different labels and distributing to 90 different countries. Throughout the years, Gallo received honors for his achievements in winemaking by a host of organizations ranging from the American Society of Enologists Merit Award for outstanding leadership in the wine industry to the Gold Vine Award from the Brotherhood of the Knights of the Vine wine fraternity and the 1983 Distinguished Service Award from The Wine Spectator. In recent years, Gallo Winery has continued this trend of excellence, being named Winery of the Year in 1996 and 1998 by the San Francisco International Wine Competition and being named "Wine of the Century" at the Los Angeles County Fair wine competition. These honors are owed in no small part to the passion and innovation of Ernest Gallo. In his passing, we have lost an American legend and a dear friend.

TRIBUTE TO SHAWNEE MISSION UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, the Shawnee Mission Unitarian Universalist Church has been an important presence in the City of Overland Park and Johnson County, Kansas, since 1967.

In 1970 the Church, sited on historical grounds that date to the 1871 Breyfogle Farm, the 1913 Mathey Farm, and the 1948 Burgdorfer Farm, purchased the house and barn, vintage 1913, from a previous church congregation. This site will be the location of the Church's 40th anniversary celebration, following its worship service on May 20, 2007.

The Church has provided liberal religious services and education for adults and children, has sponsored forums with knowledgeable speakers on public issues, has initiated a pathfinding Coming of Age program for youth in the denomination, and has presented a nationally-recognized World Religion Series. Additionally, the Church has promoted democracy by serving as a voting site in the community and has encouraged members to support many local, national, and international charitable efforts including SafeHome, Johnson County Interfaith Hospitality Network, Habitat for Humanity, Crosslines, American Indian Center, Million Voices for Darfur, UNICEF, and many others.

Through the years the Church has been a good neighbor to the surrounding residential area through its maintenance of buildings and

grounds, including the front garden which has been recognized as a Certified Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. The Church also is a member in good standing of the Unitarian Universalist Association [UUA], the international umbrella group of UU congregations and has been certified as a Welcoming Congregation by UUA.

Madam Speaker, the members of the Shawnee Mission Unitarian Universalist Church are celebrating the past and present successes of their church community and are planning for the future of their church community. I am pleased to join with, Johnson County, the City of Overland Park and with men and women of goodwill throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area in recognizing and congratulating the Shawnee Mission Unitarian Universalist Church upon its 40th anniversary as a vibrant member of the metropolitan area's interfaith communities.

IN MEMORY OF DR. GURCHARAN SINGH, HUMANITARIAN AND FREEDOM ACTIVIST

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I was distressed to learn that Dr. Gurcharan Singh, a Sikh scholar from Long Island, was killed March 31 in a hit-and-run traffic accident. Professor Singh was on his way to the Gurdwara (the Sikh place of worship) at the time. The driver has not yet been found.

Professor Singh was a professor at Marymount Manhattan College and a leader in the Sikh community in New York. He was a father and grandfather. According to WNBC-TV, he was "a counselor to New York's Sikh community and a philanthropist devoted to bringing people of different faiths and nationalities together." He was also an activist in support of Sikh freedom, serving as an advisor to the Council of Khalistan, which leads the effort to free the Sikh homeland, Khalistan, from Indian occupation. In that capacity, he would accompany the Council's President, Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, when he would go to the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

Prior to teaching at Marymount, Dr. Singh had been a professor at Columbia University. He taught political science and international studies.

The Council of Khalistan issued a press release about Dr. Singh's passing. It was also reported on WNBC Channel 4 in New York, on Yahoo News, on several Sikh and South Asian news outlets, and around the Internet.

On behalf of all my colleagues, I wish to extend the sympathies of the U.S. Congress to Dr. Singh's family, friends, and students. I'm sure that everyone joins me in this. I know that he will leave a void that will be very difficult to fill.

Madam Speaker, the best tribute we could pay to Dr. Singh is to continue his work, as Dr. Aulakh points out. This Congress can help by stopping aid to India and trade with that country until all people there enjoy human rights and by going on record in support of self-determination for Dr. Singh's Sikh Nation and for the Nagas, Kashmiris, and all the people seeking freedom in India. Self-determination is the essence of democracy.

PLAINVIEW SCHOLAR, LEADER MOURNED AFTER HIT-AND-RUN DEATH

GURCHARAN SINGH, 77, TAUGHT AT COLUMBIA, MARYMOUNT MANHATTAN COLLEGE

PLAINVIEW, N.Y.—A family and a community were mourning Saturday night the death of beloved professor and role model killed by a hit-and-run driver on Long Island, NewsChannel 4's Aimee Nuzzo reported.

Gurcharan Singh, 77, a scholar and a professor, was also a counselor to New York's Sikh community and a philanthropist devoted to bringing people of different faiths and nationalities together, according to family and friends.

"He is the gem of our community," said friend Paul Kandhari. "If there was a family problem, he'll be there. If the father and son have a problem, he'll be there."

The Plainview father of three and grandfather was struck and killed by a hit-and-run driver while walking from his home to church Friday night.

Dr. Singh was crossing Old Country Road in Plainview just after 8 p.m. headed for the Sikh temple, when a red or maroon car traveling westbound ran a red light, struck him and kept going, police told Nuzzo.

Singh was airlifted to Nassau University Medical Center with multiple fractures and head trauma, but he did not survive.

"My father was a very selfless man who served his community and society with all his heart, and we'd really love any assistance in finding the individual who did this," said Surinder Singh, the victim's son.

Anyone with information about the mishap was asked to call Nassau County Crime Stoppers at 1-800-244-TIPS.

Once a professor at Columbia University, Singh taught political science and international studies at Marymount Manhattan College for more than three decades and continued to teach part-time, Nuzzo said.

A statement from Marymount Manhattan College said the "community is deeply saddened by the news of Professor Singh's death. He served as a devoted teacher at the college for many years, and his loss will be felt by all of our faculty, staff, students and alumni. Our thoughts are with his family during this difficult time." Dr. Singh's friends said they have no doubt the selfless humanitarian would have forgiven the hit-and-run driver who took his life. They said they hoped that would help whoever is responsible to come forward.

[Council of Khalistan Press Release]

DR. GURCHARAN SINGH, ADVISOR TO COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN, KILLED IN HIT-AND-RUN TRAFFIC ACCIDENT

LEADING SIKH SCHOLAR, TEACHER, HUMANITARIAN

WASHINGTON, DC, Apr. 4, 2007—Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, today expressed "deepest sympathies" to the family and friends of Professor Gurcharan Singh, a leading Sikh scholar and a teacher at Marymount Manhattan College. Professor Gurcharan Singh was killed by a hit-and-run driver about 8:00 p.m. on the evening of March 31 as he was heading to the Gurdwara.

"Professor Gurcharan Singh leaves a vacuum that will be hard to fill, not only within the Sikh community and Nassau County, but for his family, friends, students, and the many whose lives he touched," said Dr. Aulakh, "He will be greatly missed. I am proud that he was my friend."

"Only God gives life and takes life. As human beings, we are helpless. 'Ghale Aawe Nanka Sadhe Uthin Jai.' We can only mourn his loss but the best tribute to Dr. Gurcharan Singh will be to continue his mis-

sion which he worked for, that is serving humanity and working hard to liberate Khalistan from Indian occupation. Only in a free Khalistan will the Sikh religion flourish and the Sikh Nation prosper."

Professor Gurcharan Singh was well known as a humanitarian on Long Island. "My father was a very selfless man who served his community and society with all his heart," said his son Surinder Singh. He served as a counselor to the New York Sikh community and was a philanthropist.

Professor Gurcharan Singh was also a strong supporter of Khalistan, the independent Sikh homeland that declared its independence from India on October 7, 1987. In that effort, he served as an advisor to the President of the Council of Khalistan, which leads the peaceful, democratic, nonviolent effort to liberate Khalistan. He accompanied Dr. Aulakh whenever he went to talk to the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

His death was reported on WNBC-TV New York and on its website; on Indo-Asian News Service; on Sikh media outlets; on a variety of websites; and on other media outlets.

"Professor Gurcharan Singh's passing is a loss to the Sikh Nation, to the people of Long Island and America, to his family and friends, and to friends of freedom," said Dr. Aulakh. "May God bless this departed soul."

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES FOR RESEARCH IN ASTRONOMY

HON. GABRIELLE GIFFORDS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Ms. GIFFORDS. Madam Speaker, this month marks the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy AURA. In 1957, seven universities banded together to form a new type of consortium that would establish a national astronomical observatory available to all astronomers on a merit basis. This new consortium, AURA, sought access to the clearest skies and best observing sites available. They established their headquarters in Tucson, AZ, and over the ensuing years built the Kitt Peak National Observatory and a sister observatory in Chile known as the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory.

The establishment of AURA took place in an environment in which the National Science Foundation was only 5 years old and the establishment of a space agency was still to come. AURA saw the need for the astronomical community to organize itself, to work toward common goals, and to create scientific opportunities for all. AURA and other public observatories helped advance the field of U.S. astronomy.

From these beginnings, AURA has extended our view of the universe and ourselves with its visionary planning for what is now the Hubble Space Telescope, which AURA operates from its Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore. It also paved the way for the giant ground based telescopes known as the International Gemini Observatory, in Hawaii and Chile.

AURA has helped astronomy move to a central position in national and international scientific research with increasingly strong ties to many other areas of the physical sciences and the fundamental questions that they address.