

COMMEMORATING THE GREEK
REVOLUTION OF 1821

HON. JOHN F. TIERNEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 6, 2005

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the Greek Revolution of 1821, which marked the beginning of a protracted struggle fought and eventually on by a people firmly committed to achieving freedom for themselves and liberation for their country.

It is a day that bears personal significance to—and instills pride in—generations of Greek Americans, who still feel a strong sense of nationalism toward Greece even though they or their ancestors may have moved away long ago.

Furthermore, irrespective of ethnicity, I believe it is a day of particular importance to all Americans, as we share a special kinship with the people of Greece. Whenever we promote democracy, civil liberties, and the principles of self-determination, we pay testament to our countries' shared values.

Mr. Speaker, on this occasion, I also rise to welcome the honorable Mayor of Messina, Messina, Greece, Christos Christopoulos, to the City of Peabody. On March 23, 2005, in a gesture of solidarity, Mayor Christopoulos and Peabody's Mayor Michael Bonfanti signed a sister-city pact. I extend my congratulations to the mayors, the Saint Vasilios Greek Orthodox Church community, and all Greek Americans of Peabody, many of whom descend from Messina, on this important event.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF ALDERWOMAN HILDA
CALVILLO

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 6, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Alderwoman Hilda Calvillo for her public service to the city of Charlotte, Texas.

Hilda Calvillo was born, raised, and educated in the city of Charlotte. As an active participant in local events, she understands the specific needs of her community.

As the first woman to ever be elected, Mrs. Calvillo has served in her city as Alderwoman since 1999. She spends much of her time working in school functions and focusing on local community projects. Having graduated from local schools, she works passionately to ensure that quality education is kept a priority.

Also working to keep our communities beautiful, Hilda Calvillo has recently been instrumental in the recent building of a Charlotte city park.

Hilda Calvillo lives in Charlotte with her husband. She has three children and two grandchildren. Mrs. Calvillo and her family enjoy sports and spending time with the rest of the community.

Mr. Speaker, I am deeply proud to have this opportunity to recognize Alderwoman Hilda Calvillo of Charlotte for her dedicated public service.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF ALDERMAN BUDDY LEE
DAUGHTRY

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 6, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize alderman Buddy Lee Daughtry for his public service to the city of Charlotte, Texas.

Buddy Lee Daughtry is a hard working alderman in the City of Charlotte. Raised on a small farm, Mr. Daughtry is a family man who continues to help his parents whenever the need arises. While in high school he won numerous awards in science, and later graduated from Charlotte ISD.

Working for the prison system, Buddy Lee Daughtry works tirelessly to keep our streets safe. He has served the city of Charlotte as Alderman for the past eight years and has been involved in numerous local programs. It is important to recognize the contributions of citizens like Buddy Lee Daughtry. Their hard work has vastly improved our local communities.

Buddy Lee Daughtry lives with his wife Karen in Charlotte and enjoys spending time with his family. Their daughter studies at A&M Commerce.

Mr. Speaker, I am deeply proud to have this opportunity to recognize Alderman Buddy Lee Daughtry of Charlotte for his dedicated public service.

SIKHS ABOUT TO CELEBRATE
VAISAKHI DAY

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 6, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, April 13, which is the birthday of Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, is Vaisakhi Day for the Sikhs. I wish all the Sikhs around the world a happy Vaisakhi Day.

Vaisakhi Day is the anniversary of the day in 1699 when Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the ten Sikh Gurus, created the Khalsa Panth. At that time, he said, "I give sovereignty to the humble Sikhs." Yet over 300 years later, they still struggle for that sovereignty while they suffer under severe repression from "the world's largest democracy."

More than 250,000 Sikhs have been murdered at the hands of the Indian government, according to figures compiled by the Punjab State Magistracy. The Movement Against State Repression reports that 52,268 Sikhs are being held as political prisoners under the repressive TADA law. How can this happen in a democracy?

Sikhs have an opportunity this Vaisakhi Day to reclaim their sovereignty. In January, 35 Sikhs were arrested for simply raising the Sikh flag and making speeches in support of Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence on October 7, 1987. Political leaders are coming out for Khalistan. All of India's efforts to suppress the Sikhs sovereignty movement have just given it new life.

What can we do to support this worthy cause? We should stop our aid and trade with

India as long as it continues to kill ethnic minorities, hold political prisoners, and engage in other wholesale violations of the most basic human rights. We should go on record in support of self-determination in the form of a free and fair plebiscite on independence in Khalistan, in Kashmir, in Nagaland, and wherever the people are seeking freedom. These measures will help bring a new glow of freedom to all people in the subcontinent.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to place the Council of Khalistan's Vaisakhi Day message into the RECORD for the information of my colleagues.

VAISAKHI DAY SHOULD BE CELEBRATED IN
FREEDOM

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family and friends and all Sikhs a Happy Vaisakhi Day. As you know, Vaisakhi Day is the anniversary of the founding of the Khalsa. On Vaisakhi Day in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh baptized the Sikhs and required them to keep the five Ks. He made the Sikhs into saints and soldiers, giving the blessing "In grieb Sikhin ko deon Patshahi" ("I give sovereignty to the humble Sikhs.") Just two years after his departure from this earthly plane in 1708, the Sikhs established our own independent state in Punjab.

Today we struggle to regain the sovereignty that Guru Gobind Singh bestowed upon us over 300 years ago. Yet the Jathedar of the Akal Takht, Joginder Singh Vedanti, was quoted as saying that "We don't want a separate territory." Does Jathedar Vedanti, like every other Sikh, pray "Raj Kare Ga Khalsa" ("the Khalsa shall rule") every morning and evening? Has he forgotten our heritage of freedom? How can the spiritual leader of the Sikh religion deny the Sikh Nation's legitimate aspiration for freedom and sovereignty? Is he not stung by the words of one of his predecessors, former AkalTakht Jathedar Professor Darshan Singh, who said, "If a Sikh is not a Khalistani, he is not a Sikh"? Is Akal Takht occupied by a person who does not believe in Sikh values and Sikh aspirations?

The flame of freedom continues to burn brightly in the heart of the Sikh Nation. No force can suppress it. On Republic Day, Sikh leaders raised the Sikh flag in Amritsar and made speeches in support of Khalistan. 35 Sikhs were arrested for raising the Kesri Nishan. Eleven of them continue to be held and they have been denied bail. Is this the freedom that Guru Gobind Singh bestowed upon us? Is this the "glow of freedom" that Nehru promised us when Master Tara Singh and the Sikh leaders of the time chose to take our share with India?

Punjab's Chief Minister, Captain Amarinder Singh, was declared a hero of the Sikh Nation for asserting Punjab's sovereignty and preserving Punjab's natural resource, its river water, for the use of Punjab farmers by cancelling Punjab's water agreements. In so doing, Amarinder Singh and the Legislative Assembly explicitly declared the sovereignty of the state of Punjab. In December former Member of Parliament Simranjit Singh Mann again reverted to public support of Khalistan. He pledged that his party will lead a peaceful movement to liberate Khalistan. Obviously, Mr. Mann is aware of the rising support of our cause. Mann joins Sardar Atinder Pal Singh, Sardar D.S. Gill of the International Human Rights Organization, and other Sikh leaders in Punjab in supporting freedom for Khalistan openly. Jagjit Singh, President of Dal Khalsa, was quoted in the Deccan Herald as saying that "the Indian government can never suppress the movement. Sikh aspirations can only be met when they have a separate state." There is no other choice for the