

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

## PROPOSED HISTORY STANDARDS CRITICIZED

### HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 23, 1995

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, there has been much controversy surrounding the national history standards proposed by the National Center for History in the schools at the University of California, Los Angeles. As many others have pointed out, these proposed standards contain many obvious omissions and present a slanted view of American history. This Member commends to his colleagues an editorial which appeared in the Omaha World-Herald on January 19, 1995.

#### HISTORY STANDARDS ARE FAR OFF THE MARK

The academic committee that produced national standards for teaching history will take another look at its work. Certainly another look is in order. A number of historians and teachers have condemned the standards as anti-European and anti-American.

Two sets of standards were produced, one for American history and one for world history. Both have been widely criticized. Gary Nash, a University of California at Los Angeles history professor who was involved in both projects, said, "We will look for examples of ideological bias or imbalance and will make appropriate changes."

The group shouldn't have to look far. Liberal academics in the project snuffed attempts by others on the committee to include time-honored mileposts in U.S. history and world history. The resulting standards consist of a dizzying list of politically correct concepts, including detailed attention to marginal events and people who seem to have been included mainly as examples of white, European, male imperialism.

A gathering of early feminists in Seneca Falls, N.Y., is mentioned nine times in the U.S. history standards. Nowhere do the standards acknowledge the first meeting of Congress. The Ku Klux Klan is mentioned more frequently than George Washington. Sen. Joseph McCarthy, whose memory is hated because of his often-imprecise charges of communist infiltration in American institutions, receives more attention than Thomas Paine and other early leaders whose words continue to inspire freedom fighters around the world.

However, other societies escape the harsh criticism directed at the United States. In the world history standards, the Aztec culture is praised for its achievements in astronomy and agriculture. But the historians give the Aztecs a free pass on the subject of their practice of human sacrifice. It isn't mentioned.

The world history standards focus disproportionately on long-dead cultures that contributed little to life as it is currently lived in most parts of the world. But the standards treat almost as an afterthought the main sweep of civilization that stretched from the Fertile Crescent through Greece and Rome, through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and the Enlightenment to the ultimate flowering of democracy across much of the globe.

Defenders of the standards say that they are only a guide. Even if adopted by President Clinton's Goals 2000 program, the defenders say, the standards are merely advisory.

But "advisory" standards have a way of becoming mandatory. They need to be reviewed before they take effect.

Eliminating anti-Western and anti-American bias, even if the original authors were able to do that, wouldn't solve all the problems. The standards also sneer at the traditional process of learning facts about important people, ideas and events. Rather, a sloppy, game-playing approach is encouraged. Students are to "learn" by making up imaginary conversations among historical figures. Or they are to speculate about what it was like to be a member of an oppressed group in the Middle Ages. One suggestion is to conduct a mock trial of John D. Rockefeller.

It is absurd to suggest that accurate historical insights can be achieved by people who don't have their facts straight.

Indeed, as one critic suggested, the standards appear to be "seriously flawed in concept, in tone and in content throughout." The drafters of the standards have far to go in addressing the serious concerns that have arisen.

## TRIBUTE TO NEWTON AND ROCHELLE BECKER

### HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

### HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 23, 1995

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, we ask our colleagues to join us in recognizing Newton and Rochelle Becker for their generous support of the House of Justice, Bet Tzedek Legal Services in Los Angeles.

Newton and Rochelle Becker have made the largest single private contribution to Bet Tzedek in its 20-year history. They have specifically earmarked this gift for the purchase of state-of-the-art computer equipment and software to bring Bet Tzedek's quality legal services to an even higher level of excellence. In honor of their profound commitment and generosity, Bet Tzedek is naming its library in their honor.

Newton and Rochelle Becker have a tremendous devotion to quality legal representation for the disadvantaged and have played a significant role in providing legal services for tenants, consumers, employees, and victims of fraud. They believe that equality before the law is an empty slogan as long as access to quality legal services is denied those without financial means. Their work for Bet Tzedek has advanced in a most tangible way the ideal of equal representation under the law.

We ask our colleagues to join us in thanking the Beckers for their great contribution to our community and in wishing them great success in all future endeavors.

## IN HONOR OF CHIUNE AND YUKIKO SUGIHARA

### HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 23, 1995

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of the Congress the work of an extraordinary couple, Chiune and Yukiko Sugihara, who against their own government and amid a sea of hostility, saved the lives of thousands of Jewish men, women, and children from the horrors of the Holocaust. Together, they will be remembered, as Raoul Wallenberg and Oskar Schindler are, for their isolated acts of defiance and extraordinary courage and resistance against the Nazi horrors.

In the summer of 1940, Chiune Sugihara, a minor official in Japan's Foreign Ministry, was stationed in the Japanese Consulate in Kaunas, Lithuania. After the Nazi blitzkrieg of Poland, thousands of Jewish refugees fled to that tiny country. In Kaunas, rumors began that the Consulate was issuing transit visas, and crowds of hopeful applicants gathered outside the consulate gates. At this time, it is unclear what the Sugiharas were feeling. According to the Holocaust Oral History Project, it is possible that Sugihara was introduced to the brutality of the Nazi regime and to the plight of the Jewish refugees in Lithuania after befriending a young Jewish boy, named Solly Ganor, who had gone to the consulate asking for stamps. Whatever the motivation, the need for action, in the Sugiharas' mind, was clear: without action, many of the Jewish refugees would die.

Chiune Sugihara cabled his government three times, asking permission to grant visas. Each time, permission was denied. After consulting with his wife, Sugihara simply chose to issue the visas on his own authority. His wife recalls: "He told me, 'Yukiko', I'm going to issue the visas. I'm going to go against the Foreign Ministry. On this, my husband and I were one." The record of his actions is undeniable: the records of the Japanese Foreign Ministry show that Sugihara issued 2,139 visas in the time between July 9 and August 31, 1940. Each visa was for a household, and it is estimated that between 6 to 10 thousand people may have received passage out of the path of the darkness befalling other Jewish populations throughout Europe. Those who received the precious paper left Lithuania by way of the Trans-Siberian Railway, then by ship to Japan, where most stayed only briefly before leaving, via China, to other destinations.

When the Soviets invaded Lithuania, all the consulates were ordered closed, yet Sugihara obtained an extension to continue his work. He issued visas from a nearby hotel. His wife massaged his hands to enable him to continue writing each handwritten visa. Even as he and his wife were finally forced to leave Kaunas,

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