

Systems [CAREERS] Act, H.R. 1617, under the guise of reform, repeals the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, most of the Job Training Partnership Act, and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act, among others.

In addition, the CAREERS Act cuts funding for youth career development by 20 percent. The 70 percent of students in Macomb and St. Clair counties who don't go to college need the advanced technical training that will be threatened by this bill. Our students' earnings in the future will be based on what they learn today. We should be increasing the opportunities they will have in the future, not cutting the very educational tools that help them get ahead.

School-to-work and job-training programs are vital for preparing those who don't go to college for the highly skilled, good paying, technical jobs of the future. I believe the best investment this country can make is in the education and training of our next generation. We must be thoughtful in our approach, consolidate where needed and cut wasteful programs that don't work, but we must also ensure that we are providing our young people with the opportunity to earn and learn for the future. I don't believe the approach taken by this CAREERS Act guarantees those opportunities.

I believe we do need to reform, improve, and demand better performance from our employment training programs. The local school boards, elected officials, and business leaders must have the input to produce effective job-training programs, yet we all have a role to play. We ought to be building on the strong local, State, and Federal partnerships that we've established over the years to help our students, not destroying them.

While we need to fix education, employment, and job-training programs that don't work, we should not eliminate the ones that do. The blanket approach that starts from scratch and gives our Governors final authority over all school-to-work and job-training programs established by this bill is a serious error which will turn back the clock. For these reasons and others, I oppose this block grant approach.

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 20, 1995

Mr. HAMILTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, September 20, 1995 into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT

For most Hoosiers I meet with, religion is very important. Religion helps form the values and character critical for strong families and communities, and faith has played an important role in the history of our nation. Today, more Americans believe in God and attend religious services than any other industrialized nation. Yet many Hoosiers worry that our political culture does not take religion seriously. This is a legitimate concern.

The First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees the free exercise of religion. To do so, it prohibits Congress from establish-

ment of religion. At some periods in our history the concern was that religion had too much influence over public policy, but today the concern is that we do not permit enough religious influence in public policy. I think we should take religion seriously, and do not agree with those who trivialize matters of faith. I agree with Hoosiers who want to seek guidance from religion on moral decisions—including decisions about politics and government. As the son and brother of ministers, faith has always been important to me and my family, and there is no question my faith has a strong influence on my actions as an individual and as a public official.

There is a great deal of misunderstanding over the proper role of religion in government, and government in religion. Most agree that the government should not be in charge of any religious activity—in churches, public schools, or elsewhere. Most also agree that government officials should not tell us how to pray, what to pray, or when to pray. At the same time, an individual's right to practice his or her religion should be sacrosanct.

Our founding fathers were deeply suspicious of too much government involvement in religion. Over the years the Supreme Court has made clear that neither states nor the federal government can set up a church, pass laws to fund religion, or favor one religion over another. Unfortunately there are still gray areas in the law that need to be resolved—particularly regarding religion and public schools. Uncertainty over what the Constitution permits has led many schools to suppress religious activity and has prompted hundreds of lawsuits that could have been avoided. This newsletter is simply an effort to identify what is permissible under current law and what is not, and what areas need clarification.

The First Amendment imposes two equally important obligations on public schools. First, schools may not forbid students from expressing their personal religious views solely because they are religious in nature. For example, the 1984 Equal Access Act, which I cosponsored, requires schools to give the same access to student religious groups as other extracurricular student clubs. The Court recently upheld the constitutionality of this law. Second, schools may not endorse a particular religious activity or doctrine, nor may they coerce participation in religious activity. For example, school officials may not tell students what to pray in class.

Many people believe the law requires schools to be religion-free zones. I do not think that is an accurate view; there are many acts of religious faith in school that are both appropriate and constitutional.

PERMITTED ACTIVITY

According to recent Justice Department guidelines, students today in public schools have the right to pray and study religion individually, to discuss religion with other students, to read the Bible or other religious texts, to say grace before meals, to be taught about the importance and influence of religion, to meet in religious clubs before and after class hours, to express their religious beliefs in classwork, and to wear clothing or jewelry bearing religious messages or symbols.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITY

These actions are not allowed: religious services organized by school officials, religious harassment, teaching students to practice a particular religion, teaching or officially encouraging religious or anti-religious activity, and denying school rooms to religious groups if they are provided to other private groups.

Often actions to suppress legitimate activity are a result of school administrators who

are simply not clear about complex court decisions and who fear litigation. There are isolated examples where students were told they could not say grace before lunch, or carry a Bible in class. The school was wrong in these cases. While I understand the difficulties confronting administrators in understanding the law, the suppression of religious expression is just as much a violation of the First Amendment as imposing a religion on students.

Of course, there are issues that still need clarification. For example, does a graduation prayer by a student amount to state-sponsored action? Courts have issued contradictory opinions on this issue, and the implementation varies from region to region. Ultimately, this issue should be resolved by the Supreme Court or Congress. In the meantime, many students have organized independent prayer services before or after graduation.

Some Members of Congress have suggested amending the Constitution to clarify some of these gray areas. Others believe Congress should act by statute, as it has in the past. Congress has previously considered provisions to protect moments of silent prayer and to allow students to engage in voluntary vocal prayer during noninstructional periods. Yet these issues have not been resolved, and further clarifications are necessary.

I am encouraged by the new dialogue on religion and public education. We are certainly getting a better understanding of what can and cannot be done. There is absolutely no reason to think that religious expression has to be left behind at the schoolhouse door. With the help of clergy, parents, teachers, and students, Congress should continue to clarify current law to avoid misunderstanding.

It is important to recognize that our founding fathers knew that religion gave our people the character and virtue without which a democracy cannot survive. They also recognized that, in a free country, government must not be permitted to coerce the conscience of any person. Our challenge is to maintain religion's protection from heavy-handed state interference while preserving the environment that has made the United States the most religious nation in the world.

TRIBUTE TO MSGR. DAVID A. GERNATT

HON. JACK QUINN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 20, 1995

Mr. QUINN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Msgr. David A. Gernatt, better known simply as Father Dave. Father Dave is retiring this year after nearly 50 years as a Catholic priest and over 25 years as the first and only pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Roman Catholic Church in West Seneca, NY.

Father Dave was the 6th of 10 children born to John and Martha Gernatt, immigrants from Austria and Germany. It was while growing up on the farm in Collins that Father Dave first learned his committed work ethic and deep devotion to his religion.

Father Dave entered the Josephinum Pontifical College of Worthington, OH at the age of 14. He spent 12 years there, studying through his high school years, his college years and 4 years of graduate courses in theology. Father Dave never received a high school or college diploma because his goal was not to graduate, but to become a priest.

Father Dave served at five parishes throughout western New York before returning to the Josephinum in 1966 to serve as spiritual director. At this time, Father Dave was invested as a monsignor. His time back at the college was short lived because in 1967 he resigned in order to become a pastor; however, it did teach him valuable lessons about the new things going on in the church after the Second Vatican Council.

On October 22, 1967, Bishop James McNulty of Buffalo assigned Father Dave with forming the new Parish of St. Catherine of Siena. Church services were first held in the West Seneca Town Hall while the new church building was built on the former farm at 4928 Seneca Street. The ground breaking ceremony took place in October of 1967. The first mass was said there on June 1, 1970.

Father Dave had a vision of developing a family-like community. He believed that there were no distinctions between priests and lay people and both should work together. Father Dave always believed in his parishioners and worked to encourage involvement of everyone in the parish. Father Dave knew and believed that everyone has different gifts to offer and the entire community could only benefit from everyone offering their gifts.

This parish and Father Dave holds such a special place in many peoples' hearts. A small example of this is the fact that the membership of this community out stretches my Congressional District. The benefits of this small community that gathers throughout the week in West Seneca have literally been felt throughout the world.

Father Dave will always be a part of St. Catherine's. His vow of no bingo will long echo through St. Catherine's. Father Dave's belief that mass is no place to talk about money will continue to be carried on through the tradition of not passing a basket. Father Dave's goals will still continue to be met when night after night the church building is being used, not just Sundays. Father Dave's work will continue to be seen at every gathering at St. Catherine's when there is every age group represented offering its own gift at every meeting and function. The plain, simple structure of St. Catherine's will always be a mirror image of the exterior of Father Dave, just as the inner warmth, compassion, and love of Father Dave will continue to be felt inside St. Catherine's.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have this opportunity to recognize Father Dave. I wish him a happy and healthy retirement. I also wish the people of the parish he built continue the ways that Father Dave laid down for them. I thank Father Dave for the strong and lasting positive effect he has had on the western New York community.

CONSTITUTION WEEK

HON. JAN MEYERS

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 20, 1995

Mrs. MEYERS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, September 17–23 is Constitution Week commemorating the 208th anniversary of the Constitution of the United States. I commend the Daughters of the American Revolution for its efforts to remind all Americans of the importance of the U.S. Constitution.

The success with which Americans secured their liberty through representative government is unparalleled. Our Republic was built upon the foundation of limited government in which a written Constitution preserves individual freedoms and opportunity for all citizens. The ideals upon which this document is based are reinforced each day by the success of the system to which it gave birth. The political system established by our Constitution stresses the need for each citizen to know their rights, freedoms, and duties.

Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to thank the Prairie Rose Chapter of the Kansas Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution in my district who have committed a tremendous amount of time and effort in helping all Americans better understand the Constitution.

COMMEMORATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF MEDGAR EVERS COLLEGE

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 20, 1995

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to salute Medgar Evers College as a beachhead of enlightenment in urban America which offers an institutional point-of-light as a model for all who care about education. Medgar Evers College is a liberal arts college, a community educational resource, and a pivotal cultural center for Central Brooklyn in New York.

Twenty-five years ago, the college, named for the martyred civil rights leader, was established with a clear mandate—to provide access to higher education for the residents of Central Brooklyn.

On September 28, the college will mark its 25th anniversary with a Founder's Day celebration that will include a commemorative ceremony in honor of the founders and a benefit dinner that will raise funds for student scholarships.

In offering outstanding academic programs and a wide range of services designed to meet the needs of the community, Medgar Evers College, a unit of the City University of New York [CUNY], has amply demonstrated that it is fulfilling its noble mission.

The college should be commended for the caliber of its innovative, career-oriented programs and the foresight it has demonstrated in providing needed services to area residents. Typical is the Small Business Development Center, which was created to deliver management assistance to small and minority-owned businesses in Central Brooklyn through courses, counseling, conferences, and seminars.

With great personal pride, I have watched the birth, growth, and mature refinement of Medgar Evers College. As a commissioner of the Community Development Agency under Mayor John Lindsay, I assisted in the selection of the first Community Advisory Committee for the college. Several years later, as a member of the Higher Education Committee of the New York State Senate, I led the fight to retain the status of the youthful Medgar Evers College as a senior college. This fight was successful; however, in later negotiations with the chancellor of CUNY, a compromise re-

duced the institution to a community college with a few senior college programs. Medgar Evers College must be congratulated for waging a long struggle which culminated in its 1994 redesignation by the New York State Legislature as once more a full-fledged senior college.

Special tribute must be paid to the leadership of this fine institution—its distinguished president, Dr. Edison O. Jackson; its capable and concerned administrative staff; and an experienced and dedicated faculty.

At the benefit dinner, the college will present its first Uhuru Awards to Mrs. Myrtle Evers-Williams, chairperson of the board of the NAACP; Mrs. Coretta Scott King, chairperson of the board of the Center for Non-Violence in Atlanta; Dr. Betty Shabazz, the college's director of public affairs and cultural attaché; Dr. Ramona Hoage Edelin, founder and CEO of the National Urban Coalition; and former Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm.

Dr. Jackson assumed the presidency of the college in 1989. These have been exciting years, as evidenced by the fact that during this time, enrollment nearly has tripled; bachelor's degree programs in environmental and computer science have been introduced, as well as an associate degree program in nursing; and a core curriculum has been created to strengthen liberal arts education.

Just as significant is the ongoing effort by the college to internationalize its curriculum and thereby better prepare students to be a part of the global marketplace.

In a recent report in which he articulated his vision for the future, President Jackson spoke of the need to chart the proper course, "to ensure that Medgar Evers College achieves the greatness to which it is destined." He said further:

[O]ur quest is to become one of the premier institutions in this city, state and nation . . . our intent is to create an institution that will provide high quality academic programs and student support services in response to the many educational, social and economic contemporary challenges facing the community they serve. This unique role which Medgar Evers College is carving out for itself is adding to the richness and diversity of the City University of New York.

Mr. Speaker, its achievements in its relatively brief but eventful history bodes well for a bright future for Medgar Evers College, and as it prepares for the 25th anniversary celebration, the college merits our congratulations and sincerest good wishes for continued success. This relatively new but vibrant institution is truly a Point-of-Light for urban communities throughout the Nation.

TRIBUTE TO MARIE WHIPP

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 20, 1995

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to Marie Whipp, a close associate, good friend, and a leader in the California Federation of Teachers for more than 30 years. I worked extensively with Marie during the 1960's and early 1970's, when I was a lawyer for the CFT. I found her to be hard working, diligent, and an excellent advocate for teachers and public education.