

phrase taken out of context from a letter written by Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury Baptists on January 1, 1802. In the letter, Jefferson simply reassures the Baptists that the First amendment would preclude an intrusion by the federal government into religious matters between denominations. It is ironic and sad that a letter defending the principle that the federal government must stay out of religious affairs, should be used two hundred years later to justify the Supreme Court telling a child that he cannot pray in school!

The Court completely disregards the original meaning and intent of the First amendment. It has interpreted the establishment clause to preclude prayer and other religious speech in a public place, thereby violating the free exercise clause of the very same First amendment. Therefore, it is incumbent upon Congress to correct this error, and to perform its duty to support and defend the Constitution. My legislation would restore First amendment protections of religion and speech by removing all religious freedom-related cases from federal district court jurisdiction, as well as from federal claims court jurisdiction. The federal government has no constitutional authority to reach its hands in the religious affairs of its citizens or of the several states.

As James Madison said, "There are more instances of the abridgement of the freedom of the people by the gradual and silent encroachment of those in power, than by violent and sudden usurpation." I sincerely hope that my colleagues will fight against the "gradual and silent encroachment" of the courts upon our nation's religious liberties by supporting this bill.

IN PRAISE OF SPECIAL AGENT
GERARD B. ALEXANDER

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 12, 2002

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, Special Agent Gerard B. "Jerry" Alexander recently retired after 26 years of service to the communities of Southwest Michigan. An employee of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and assigned to the Kalamazoo field office, Jerry was an asset to the community that will sorely be missed.

A graduate of American University, Jerry boasts an impressive law enforcement record both in the United States as well as the world at large. Dedicated, intelligent, and responsible, Jerry is a well-rounded law enforcement official with experience working on numerous case genres. Jerry specialized in white-collar crime, an area of law enforcement that he found especially challenging and prevalent in our corner of the state of Michigan. His impressive talents and exemplary work ethic are just two of the qualities that come to mind when recalling Jerry's work with the Bureau.

A strong communitarian, Jerry spent much of his free time as a volunteer in the Kalamazoo area. His service as a coach and manager for the West Portage Little League will not be forgotten by the countless youngsters who enjoyed a rewarding athletic experience. Jerry's love for children also led him to take an active role in the Portage Central High School Band, which he supported in numerous fundraisers.

I would like to take this opportunity to echo the respect and admiration Jerry Alexander has gained within the communities of Southwest Michigan. His personal qualities and numerous skills are certain to facilitate success in all of his future endeavors.

HONORING FRANCES BACA ON
LAND DONATION TO SANTA FE
NATIONAL FOREST

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 12, 2002

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the Santa Fe National Forest has received a donation of approximately 154 acres of private land from Ms. Frances Baca, of Circleville, Ohio. This undeveloped forested land has been in the Baca family for over 50 years. The Baca property was the last remaining private parcel of land in Santa Fe Canyon located within the boundaries of the Santa Fe Municipal watershed, just east of the City of Santa Fe.

Ms. Baca inherited the parcel from her mother, Antoinette Hanna Baca—the first woman commissioned Officer in the National Guard and later appointed Assistant Adjutant General—who owned a larger parcel in the watershed but sold part of it to the renowned artist Randall Davey. Eventually, Randall Davey left his property and houses to the Audubon Society—which uses the facility as a conference and education center.

After this donation, either the City of Santa Fe or the United States of America own all of the lands within the watershed. With the recent release of the Santa Fe Municipal Watershed Management Plan to improve forest conditions through thinning and burning portions of the municipal watershed, having access to this property is considered key to the successful implementation of the project.

Among the most valuable assets in northern New Mexico are its deep-rooted culture and pristine beauty. Together, they are a large part of why generation after generation has chosen to live here and why new neighbors arrive every day. This new land will only add to those treasures.

I know how grateful the Santa Fe National Forest Supervisor Leonard Atencio is for this generous donation. I, too, want to thank Ms. Baca for this unprecedented gift on behalf of all New Mexicans and visitors to the Land of Enchantment. This land will forever serve as a testament to the legacy of your family and symbolizes the special connection that our citizens feel to the land.

TRIBUTE TO VICTOR WAHBY, MD,
DIRECTOR OF THE VA-MEDICAL
MUSICAL GROUP

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 12, 2002

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a distinguished and unique individual—Victor S. Wahby, M.D., Ph.D., founder and director of the VA-National Medical Musical

Group, the largest medical chorale and symphony orchestra in America. The musicians of this award-winning group are healers and medical clinicians, scientists or medical administrators by profession, but they are all also extremely talented and well-trained musicians. They embrace Dr. Wahby's vision of "music that heals."

A renaissance man, Dr. Wahby is a physician, scientist, musician, poet, and a leading medical practitioner and administrator at the Veterans' Health Administration in Washington, DC. Dr. Wahby has had an extraordinary career. In his younger years at the Mayo Clinic, he provided critical medical care to such notables as the Rev. Billy Graham, Dr. Charles Malik and Corrie Ten Boom. Subsequently, while on faculty of Yale University, he published research on the hormonal correlates of depression and appetite. In his current position as a leading VA physician-executive, he has received many national recognitions. Just this year he and his team won the prestigious Government Executive Technology Award, the e-gov Pioneer Award, the Knowledge Management World Award, as well as numerous others.

Mr. Speaker, in 1996 Dr. Wahby and the VA-National Medical Musical Group initiated a unique patriotic event that has become an annual tradition here on Capitol Hill—the Congressional Flag Day Concert. This program of word and music is sponsored by the prayer breakfast organizations of the House of Representatives and the Senate. It is held on or around Flag Day (June 14) for the past six years. The seventh in this annual concert series will take place tomorrow, Thursday, June 13, at 1:00 p.m. in the Cannon Caucus Room.

The Congressional Flag Day Concerts have been embraced by members of both houses of the Congress and their staff, and it has enjoyed wide public support and strong media interest. Many leaders from different fields and varied backgrounds have endorsed and participated in this program, which emphasizes national healing and unity. I have personally had the honor of participating in several of these concerts, and I always come away entertained, refreshed and inspired.

The 2002 Concert Honorary Committee is chaired by First Lady Laura Bush, and the vice chairs are my wife, Annette, and Mrs. Patricia Lott, the wife of Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott. Others who serve on the committee include Lynne Cheney, former President Bill Clinton, former Senator Bob Dole, Dr. Henry Kissinger and other distinguished Americans.

Mr. Speaker, these Flag Day Concerts have emphasized the honoring of America's veterans and the men and women serving in our nation's armed forces. This year, the choir and orchestra will perform the "Veterans Hymn"—composed by Dr. Wahby.

It is a tribute to the energy, enthusiasm, patriotism, and showmanship of Dr. Wahby that the VA-National Medical Musical Group has been awarded the 2002 Congressional Medal of Honor Society's Bob Hope Award.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Dr. Victor Wahby for his service to our nation and for his outstanding leadership and dedication to healing through medicine and through music. And, Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues and their staff to join me tomorrow afternoon in the Cannon Caucus Room for the 2002 Annual Flag Day Concert.