

“an assault as much on civil rights as on human dignity.”

John Daya, secretary-general of the Christian Council in New Delhi, said: “In fact, the only inducements by fraud and fear are those being carried out by [Hindu organizations] in the tribal belt, where innocent tribals are being forced to become Hindus.”

Muslims, too, are concerned. “How can conversions be prevented if an individual is attracted to another religion because of his or her faith in it? Force is never used to convert one to Islam because it is against the basic tenets of [Islam],” said Maolana Siddikullah Chowdhury, general secretary of the Jamiat-e-Ulema party in Calcutta.

He added that low-caste Hindus converted to Islam simply to “escape discrimination and ill treatment” and not under any coercion.

#### A TRIBUTE TO JOHN LAFALCE

### HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 14, 2002*

Mr. FRANK. Mr. Speaker, for the past several years, I have had the privilege of working under the leadership of our colleague from New York (Mr. LAFALCE) in his role as Senior Democrat on the Committee on Financial Services (as it is now officially called, after our Republican colleagues gave a hint of their policy preferences by excising from the Committee's title any reference to cities, urban affairs or housing).

In his leadership of the minority on this important committee, Mr. LAFALCE has been a committed, creative, forceful advocate of policies that combined support for a strong free market with concern for fairness for consumers and social justice for people with low incomes. No opposition was strong enough to deter him from fighting for an America that was both prosperous and fair, and he helped people understand that these goals are mutually supportive, not exclusive.

Personally, I have been the beneficiary of his ability to lead in a cooperative spirit, and to perform both his partisan and bipartisan roles with great skill. That is, when possible, he worked constructively with the majority party to improve legislation, when necessary he led the minority in an effective and cohesive way.

The financial community, the House, and I personally will miss him. As an indication of this, I ask that the well-merited tribute contained in a recent editorial from the official publication of America's Community Bankers be printed here. And, I thank America's Community Bankers for this gracious—and entirely accurate—summation of JOHN LAFALCE's work.

#### THE LAFALCE LEGACY: THREE DECADES OF LEADERSHIP FOR BANKS

Congressman John J. LaFalce (D-N.Y.), who represented western New York's 29th Congressional District since he was elected to Congress in 1974, will retire at the end of the current Congress. His departure represents the end of an era.

Congressman LaFalce has been a good friend of the banking industry. In his years of service, from the U.S. Army Adjutant General Corps, to the New York State Senate and State Assembly, to the House of Representatives, John LaFalce personified the best in public service.

He listened to those on all sides of an issue, staking out his position and, as a pragmatist, using his skills as a politician to craft compromises on both sides of the aisle to move needed legislation.

In his leadership role as the ranking Democrat on the House Financial Services Committee, John LaFalce exercised extraordinary influence over the outcome of financial services and housing legislation. He contributed greatly to the historic Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act by first introducing his own bipartisan bill and then by helping to craft the final product. In his long career, Rep. LaFalce was involved in all of the major legislative initiatives on banking and financial services.

John LaFalce is a consumer and community advocate, and a staunch defender of the Community Reinvestment Act and financial privacy. And yet bankers also found him to be a champion of balance.

As chairman of the House Small Business Committee, John LaFalce paid special attention to the needs of women who are small business leaders and entrepreneurs. He wrote the Women's Business Ownership Act, which improves access to credit for women.

Rep. LaFalce's public service career was aptly summarized in a citation by Niagara University when it awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. It read, in part, “Three qualities emerge as best describing the man: honesty, energy and conviction.”

These qualities, along with his integrity, leadership, and good humor, will be missed in the halls of Congress. John LaFalce leaves behind a legacy of outstanding achievement. America's Community Bankers extends its best wishes for the future.

#### POLICE AGAIN ENTER GOLDEN TEMPLE COMPLEX

### HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 14, 2002*

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, in June 1984, Indian forces invaded the Golden Temple, the most sacred Sikh shrine, and other Sikh Gurdwaras around Punjab, killing 20,000 people. As Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale said, this helped lay the foundation of Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence in 1987. Now the police have again invaded the Golden Temple complex on the pretext of searching the three buildings in the complex in connection with the upcoming elections for the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC), which oversees all the Gurdwaras in India.

The police were accompanied by Indian political officials, including the Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister, Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa.

People of all religions and from all over the world have been welcomed to worship at the Golden Temple. Now even members of the SGPC may well be blocked from entering it. Some SGPC workers had a verbal altercation with two of the invading police officials, according to the Tribune newspaper out of Chandigarh. The article reports that SGPC members have already had to sneak into the Golden Temple complex.

Mr. Speaker, this is further proof that there is no religious freedom in “the world's largest democracy.” India has already been added to our government's list of countries that violate

religious freedom. Now sanctions should be implemented to help ensure real religious liberty in India.

This is just the latest chapter in a long history of repression of Sikhs by India. Over a quarter of a million Sikhs have been murdered since 1984. More than 52,000 are being held as political prisoners, according to a report by the Movement Against State Repression. Another 50,000 have simply been made to “disappear.” The police picked up 50,000 Sikh youth, tortured them, murdered them, declared their bodies “unidentified” and secretly cremated them, and refused to hand the remains over to the families. Christians, Muslims, Dalits, and other minorities have seen similar atrocities committed against them, yet the world treats India as a respectable, democratic country.

Mr. Speaker, we must stop our aid to India now. We must declare our support for self-determination for the Sikhs of Khalistan, for predominantly Christian Nagaland, for Kashmir, and for everyone in South Asia. The cornerstone of democracy is the right to self-determination.

I would like to place the Tribune article on the police invasion of the Golden Temple complex into the RECORD at this time. I think my colleagues will find it very informative.

[From the Tribune (Chandigarh), Nov. 11, 2002]

#### POLICE ENTERS GOLDEN TEMPLE COMPLEX

(By Prabhjot Singh)

CHANDIGARH, Nov. 10.—Less than 24 hours before a five-member NDA team, led by union minister Sahib Singh Verma, could fly into the Holy City of Amritsar to oversee the conduct of next Tuesday's annual election to the SGPC executive committee, Punjab policemen in plain clothes entered the Golden Temple complex on the pretext of searching all three serais (inns) there.

Accompanying the team would be not only Union Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister, Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa, who is also a SAD General Secretary, but also 100-odd SGPC members owing allegiance to SAD chief Parkash Singh Badal.

Though preventive arrests continued throughout the state and Golden Temple complex was put under police siege with the deployment of hundreds of anti-riot policemen in anti-combat gear, some of the Akali leaders, including former Finance Minister Kanwaljit Singh managed to sneak into the sanctum sanctorum.

Talking to The Tribune over the telephone, Mr Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa said the names of four NDA observers—Mr Sahib Singh Verma, Mr Thomas (MP, Samata), Mrs D'Souza (MP, Samata), and Mrs Anita Arya (MP, BJP)—have already been cleared, the Union Civil Aviation Minister, Mr Shah Nawaz, is also expected to be a part of the special NDA team to oversee the SGPC elections. The observers and the SGPC members would take a chartered flight from New Delhi to Amritsar tomorrow afternoon.

Mr Dhindsa further said that on the basis of the complaint lodged by the Shiromani Akali Dal with the Union Home Minister yesterday, the Union Home Secretary today called Punjab Chief Secretary Y.S. Ratra on the telephone and expressed his “strong displeasure” over “politicalisation of the bureaucracy”.

The Chief Secretary reportedly assured the Union Home Secretary that no SGPC member would be stopped from reaching the Golden Temple complex for attending the election meeting. Efforts would be made to facilitate those lodged in jails in one case or the other to attend and vote in the elections.