

spraying the streets with marigold petals. Hindu women paused from their chores of peeling garlic and doing laundry to offer garlands and blessings.

The cheerful scene, part of Jeetubhai Waghela's campaign for a seat in the state legislature, played out beneath a cloth banner that revealed a more ominous aspect of the coming election here in India's western state of Gujarat. The banner vows to avenge the killing of 58 Hindus during an attack on a train by Muslims last February, and as the supporters of Waghela, a member of the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), pressed forward and choked the alleys, Muslim residents quickly hurried indoors.

"Here comes the lion," roared Waghela's men.

Nine months ago, as Gujarat was being riven by religious violence that followed the killing of the Hindus, Waghela stormed the same streets with a mob of Hindu men wearing orange bandanas and armed with swords, sticks and gasoline, according to witnesses and police records. Shouting angry slogans at Muslim residents, Waghela allegedly ordered the mob to loot and destroy their homes, leaving them homeless for months.

"For three days, Waghela and his men looted and burnt our homes. For eight months, we lived in relief camps because of him," said Nasir Khan, a complainant. "Now he tells Hindus he is their protector against us. Where do we run for cover if he gets elected?"

After a Muslim mob in the town of Godhra killed 58 Hindu train passengers in February, more than 1,000 people died, most of them Muslim, in weeks of arson and killing throughout Gujarat. Human rights groups have accused the BJP—the ruling party in Gujarat as well as in India's national government—of essentially ignoring the killings by its Hindu extremist allies.

As Gujarat prepares to elect a new state legislature on Thursday, many analysts are describing the vote as an important test of the secular foundations of India's religiously and ethnically diverse democracy.

In a state where only 9 percent of the population of 50 million is Muslim, the BJP is counting on sectarian passions to consolidate the Hindu vote. Throughout the state, BJP leaders have delivered fiery speeches against Muslims involved in the Feb. 27 attack and against Pakistan-aided Islamic militants killing Hindus in the revolt-racked province of Jammu and Kashmir.

One such party stalwart is Waghela, who was arrested in connection with this year's riots on four charges, including murder and rioting. Jailed for 108 days and now free on bail, Waghela, 31, is back here in Gomtipur, a mixed working-class neighborhood in Ahmedabad, with folded hands, asking for votes for the BJP. He denies playing a role in the riots and insists he was framed.

Campaigning on a recent morning, Waghela identified a new target of hate for his Hindu voters. Climbing on a platform, he told them that a fancy new high-rise for Muslims is being planned adjacent to their homes, on the site of a closed textile mill. He warned them that they would not be safe any longer.

"You will be surrounded from all sides by Muslims," said Waghela, breathlessly flicking back his hair from his forehead. "Don't let them gain power over you. Vote for me and I will stop that building plan."

"Do you want the building here?" he said. "No!" the crowd shouted back.

This election is critical to the political destiny of the BJP, which has suffered defeats in several state elections in the past two years. Gujarat is the last major state in which the party holds power, and critics fear

that it could use a victory here as an endorsement of strident Hindu politics. The national coalition that the BJP leads in New Delhi under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee will face the polls in 2004.

"In this election, the BJP is seeking a legitimization of violence that its members indulged in against the Muslims," said Achyut Yagnik, a political analyst and social worker in Gujarat. "The results in Gujarat will determine whether they take this appeal of Hindutva [Hindu chauvinism] beyond Gujarat."

The BJP's main challenger in Gujarat—and at the national level—is the Congress party, which attacks the BJP's Hindu fundamentalism for endangering the lives and rights of India's religious minorities. As a result, Gujarat's Muslims and Christians have rallied behind Congress, while many Hindu voters in Gujarat feel that Congress, headed at the national level by the Italian-born Sonia Gandhi, has an anti-Hindu slant and defends only the religious minorities.

Opinion polls show that it is likely to be a close contest between the BJP and Congress. Some secular analysts said that although Hindu voters may find the demagoguery of the BJP attractive, the social divisions inherent in the caste system may prevent Hindus from voting as a bloc.

The Muslims of Gujarat, on the other hand, appear to have decided to vote en masse for Congress. Yet many complained that Congress took their support for granted and often forgot them when attaining power. They will vote for Congress, they say, simply because they have no other choice.

Nowhere is this frustration felt more sharply than in Godhra, the epicenter of Gujarat's religious strife.

The BJP's candidate in Godhra, Haresh Bhatt, campaigns under banners of the burning train, distributes pictures of the dead Hindu passengers and describes the election as a "religious war." But the Congress candidate there, Rajendra Singh Patel, many Muslims said, was involved in burning the shops and homes of Muslims in March.

"We made two appeals to the Congress last month not to field Patel in the elections, but they still made him the candidate," said Mohammad Yusaf, 56, a clerk in the city government. "But we are caught between a ditch and a well. To defeat the BJP, we will have to vote for Patel. But our heart is not in it."

THE HOUSING BOND AND CREDIT MODERNIZATION AND FAIRNESS ACT OF 2003

HON. AMO HOUGHTON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 8, 2003

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleague from Massachusetts, Representative RICHARD NEAL, in introducing our bill, "The Housing Bond and Credit Modernization and Fairness Act of 2003". My collaboration with Mr. NEAL today is indicative of the broad bipartisan support Housing Bonds and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (Housing Credit) programs enjoy.

The Congress has a golden opportunity, without creating any new program or asking for any appropriation of Federal money, to create new housing opportunity for tens of thousands of low- and moderate-income families every year. All it will take is enactment of simple legislation to eliminate obsolete provisions

in the two principal federal programs that finance the production of affordable housing: Housing Bonds, or single-family Mortgage Revenue Bonds, MRBs, as they are commonly known, and the Housing Credit.

This bill is identical to the one Representative NEAL and I introduced in the 107th Congress, which earned the support of 360 House cosponsors from both parties, from all regions of the country, and from rural and urban districts.

The Housing Bond and Credit Modernization and Fairness Act of 2003 would do three things.

First, the bill would repeal the Ten-Year Rule, a provision added to the MRB program in 1988 that prevents states from using homeowner payments on such mortgages to make new mortgages to additional qualified purchasers. For each day the Ten-Year Rule is in effect, states lose millions of dollars in financing for first-time home buyer mortgages, amounting to more than \$12 billion in mortgage authority between 2001 and 2005. This represents nearly half of the entire Bond cap increase Congress enacted in 2000. Our bill would eliminate the Ten-Year Rule to allow states to use mortgage payments to finance additional lower income mortgages.

Second, the bill would replace the present unworkable limit on the price of the homes these mortgages can finance with a simple limit that works. No reliable comprehensive data exists to determine average area home prices. The current price limits were issued in 1994 based on 1993 data. They are obsolete and well below current home price levels in most parts of the country. Many qualified buyers simply cannot find homes that are priced below the outdated limits.

The answer is to replace the present limit, set in Washington, by a simple formula limiting the purchase price to three and a half times the qualifying income under the program.

Finally, the bill makes Housing Credit apartment production viable in rural areas by allowing statewide median incomes as the basis for the income limits in that program. This change would apply the same methodology for determining qualifying income levels used in the MRB Program. HUD data shows that current income limits inhibit Housing Credit development in more than 1,300 nonmetropolitan counties across the country.

I am pleased to tell my colleagues that the changes proposed by the Housing Bond and Credit Modernization and Fairness Act of 2003 have been endorsed by the bipartisan National Governors Association, the National Council of State Housing Agencies, and every major national housing organization. These groups know how important the Housing Bond and Housing Credit programs are in giving states the ability to meet the housing needs of low- and moderate-income families.

Today, I ask you to join in a bipartisan effort to see that these important provisions are enacted as part of tax legislation this year.

TRIBUTE TO PAUL B.
HIGGINBOTHAM

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 8, 2003

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Paul B. Higginbotham, a Dane

County Circuit Court Judge for the past 8 years, for his continued service to the people of Wisconsin.

Paul Higginbotham is a 29-year resident of Dane County and a former small business owner. Throughout his life he has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to public service.

As a Circuit Court Judge, he presided over some of the most significant cases in recent history, including the case challenging the Milwaukee private school voucher program, which ultimately reached the U.S. Supreme Court.

In addition to his work on the Circuit Court, Paul was the city of Madison's first Municipal Judge. He was also a successful attorney who worked for a diverse group of law firms, focusing particularly on the areas of civil rights, family law, criminal defense, and housing. Between 1993 and 1994 he served as the Acting Executive Director of the Madison Equal Opportunities Commission. From 1988 to 1992, Paul was the Dane County Minority Affairs Coordinator in the County Executive's Office, where his advocacy ensured our government would reflect the rich diversity of the community. He has also served as a lecturer at the University of Wisconsin Law School and as a staff attorney for the Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council.

Judge Higginbotham has also been an active community member in the greater Madison area, benefiting numerous community service organizations. He currently serves on the United Way Foundation Board of Trustees and is involved with both the Collaborative Management Team and the Comprehensive Approaches to Sex Offender Management Program. In the past, he has served as a Vice-President of the Madison Mutual Housing Association Board of Directors, a trustee of the Greater Madison Housing Foundation, as well as an Executive Committee Member of the NAACP. He was also a Commissioner of the Dane County Housing Authority, President of WORT Radio, co-chair of the Grant Allocations Board of the Wisconsin Community Fund, and Private Sector Review Committee Member of Madison Area Technical College.

Wisconsin is fortunate to have a public servant with the commitment, passion, and integrity of Paul Higginbotham. As the Wisconsin Community Fund honors Paul Higginbotham, I am proud to join them in thanking him for his dedication and service to the community.

THE ARC OF LUZERNE COUNTY
CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 8, 2003

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call the attention of the House of Representatives to the service to the community of the Arc of Luzerne County, PA, which was founded in 1952 as the Wyoming Valley Council for the Mentally Retarded. The Arc will hold its 50th anniversary celebration on January 15, 2003.

Like many nonprofit organizations, the Arc of Luzerne County started as a small group of parents trying to make a better life for their

children. Today, the Arc has become an influential advocacy organization serving all people with mental retardation and related developmental disabilities and their families. The local organization also benefits from its affiliation with the state and national Arc.

Among the many accomplishments of the Arc of Luzerne County is the Community Resource Center, which opened in July 2000 to serve people in six northeastern Pennsylvania counties. Since opening, the center has provided a creative arts program and other community integration activities, as well as up-to-date information and a place for the people it serves to meet with each other and with caregivers and service providers.

The Arc of Luzerne County also has a long history of working to improve the support services offered to children and adults with mental retardation and related developmental disabilities. In addition, the organization provides representative payee services and independent monitoring teams that assess the quality of residential facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to call to the attention of the House of Representatives the half-century of service to the community of the Arc of Luzerne County, and I commend its members for their hard work and dedication.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO: MANCOS
FIRE PROTECTION DEPARTMENT

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 8, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to recognize the Mancos Fire District for their service and dedication during one of Colorado's most formidable fire seasons. Last summer, the Mancos Fire Department played an integral role in containing the Missionary Ridge forest fire that burned over 70,000 acres in Southwestern Colorado. Today, I would like to pay tribute to their heroic efforts before this body of Congress and this nation.

When the Missionary Ridge fire first erupted last June, the citizens of Durango, Bayfield, and the surrounding communities called upon the Mancos Fire District to protect their loved ones, homes, and communities from what would become the worst fire in area history. The fire began in a ditch beside Missionary Ridge Road just 15 miles northeast of Durango and grew to consume more than 70,000 acres, 56 residences, and 27 outbuildings.

Although the Missionary Ridge fire was a devastating reminder of how destructive forest fires can be, it also served to remind us of the men and women who risk their lives to protect their fellow citizens on a daily basis. The Mancos Fire District has served the citizens of Colorado for many years and has a reputation for its outstanding service. The district relies upon its volunteers to remain on call, prepared to fight fires or provide medical assistance on a moment's notice.

Mr. Speaker, it is with sincere admiration that I recognize the Mancos Fire District before this body of Congress and this nation. I want to commend all of the Fire District's fire fighters for their determination, courage, and resolve during last summer's efforts on Missionary Ridge. Without the help of the Mancos

Fire District and others, the added devastation to our community, environment, and quality of life would have been unimaginable. Their tireless commitment throughout last summer's fire season has served as an inspiration to us all and it is an honor to represent such an outstanding group of Americans in this Congress.

SAN JOAQUIN RIVER
RESTORATION ACT

HON. DEVIN NUNES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 8, 2003

Mr. NUNES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to take the first of many steps to improve the water situation in the San Joaquin Valley of California. Today, the San Joaquin Valley continues to face a water crisis in which our water supplies have become inadequate to meet expanding needs. Demands by domestic users, industry, and environmental needs continue to grow with no relief in sight. One of my top priorities in Congress is to address this water crisis and begin the long process of constructing much needed water storage for the Central Valley.

Today, I have introduced the San Joaquin River Restoration Act which will take the first step to construct a major storage facility on the Upper San Joaquin River. This legislation directs the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of increasing water storage capability on the Upper San Joaquin River. Furthermore, this legislation directs the Secretary to investigate the feasibility of increasing power generation, improving water supply reliability and quality, improving water management efficiency, and improving ecosystem function and flood control on the river in the area of Temperance Flat.

This new storage capability on the San Joaquin River will go a long way to meet the needs of the 15,000 farmers in Madera, Fresno, Tulare, and Kern counties. While my efforts to increase storage capacity on the San Joaquin River are vitally important to our water future, it must be part of a larger water storage plan. In the coming decades, the growth in our Valley will only worsen our water crisis. Now is the time to increase our water storage and efficiency for the future. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the San Joaquin River Restoration Act.

SOUTHERN BORDER AIR QUALITY
PROTECTION ACT

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 8, 2003

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I proudly represent Southern California communities, many of which are along the U.S.-Mexico border. These border communities, by and large, have a good working relationship with their neighbors in Mexico. Unfortunately, their proximity to the border causes them to suffer the consequences of Mexico's more lax environmental requirements, especially with respect to air quality. As we all know, air does not respect the international boundaries we put in place and, as a result, border communities are