

difficult. In 1948, Romania's communist government banned the Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church and ordered the incorporation of the Greek Catholic Church into the Orthodox Church. More than 2,500 churches and other buildings seized from the Uniates were given to Orthodox parishes. The government decree that dismantled the Greek Catholic Church was abrogated in 1989, however, of the thousands of properties confiscated from Greek Catholics, fewer than 200 have been returned nearly 15 years later. The status of thousands of properties belonging to the historic Hungarian faiths (Roman Catholic, Reformed, Lutheran and Unitarian), and the Jewish community, as well as other non-traditional religions has not been resolved, despite the enactment of a communal property restitution law in July of 2002.

The restitution of private property in Romania is equally as murky. In February 2001, the Romanian Parliament enacted Law 10/2001, the express purpose of which, according to Article 1 (1) of the Law, is to make restitution in-kind of nationalized real property and, whenever such in-kind restitution is not possible, to make restitution in an equivalent consisting of cash for residential properties and vouchers to be used in exchange for shares of state-owned companies or services. This clearly stated principle has been undermined by so many exceptions that it becomes virtually meaningless. Those claimants who have overcome the numerous exceptions contained in the law have then been stymied by government recalcitrance when they have attempted to obtain the necessary documentation to support their claims. Many title deeds were purposely destroyed by the former communist regime. State archives, having been deluged with a significant volume of requests, complicate the process with chronic bureaucratic delays in processing property records, and seeming indifference to the urgency of those requests. The Government of Romania cannot expect claimants to file within prescribed deadlines, and then not provide them with the means to obtain the proof of their claims from the government's own records.

Further, I am disappointed by the ineffective and inadequate attempts of the Romanian Government to register the Jehovah's Witnesses as an official religion. The inability of the government to make this happen is a seri-

ous concern, as it is more than an issue of legal personality, but also of rule of law, religious freedom and discrimination. In October 2001, I received personal assurances from Foreign Minister Geoana that this longstanding matter would be resolved; it has not despite a ruling by Romania's highest court dating back to 2000. The Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs seemed to provide a fix in October of last year, but it proved faulty and failed to bring closure to this matter. Mr. Speaker, I urge the competent Romanian authorities to remove this issue from the agenda by facilitating the recognition of the Jehovah's Witnesses as an official religion without further delay.

Another matter which I hope the Government of Romania will bring to closure is the rehabilitation and honoring of World War II dictator, Marshall Ion Antonescu, Hitler ally and war criminal condemned for the mass murder of Jews. Last year government officials publicly condemned efforts to honor Antonescu and removed from public land three statues that had been erected in his honor. One statue remains on public land in Jilava, the site of Antonescu's execution, and important streets in the cities of Timisoara and Oradea continue to be named after him. I urge the Government of Romania to remove these remaining vestiges honoring the former dictator.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to express my continuing concern about the Romani minority in Romania. I appreciate that Romania was the first country in Central Europe to adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. This was an extremely important and positive step. But there appears to be a rising tide of intolerance against Roma, manifested by scapegoating of Roma in the media and in the statements of some public officials. In all likelihood, this climate contributed to the tragic events in Buhusi last December, when a number of Roma were shot during a police raid, including a 14-year-old boy who was reportedly shot in the back. I hope the Romanian Government will play a leadership role in countering prejudice against Roma and will continue to implement programs to address discrimination against them.

Protection and promotion of fundamental freedoms and human rights, as well as commitment to the Helsinki Final Act and respect for Organization for Security and Cooperation

in Europe norms and principles, are requirements for NATO membership. As a participating State of the OSCE, and as a candidate for admission to NATO, Romania has made that commitment. It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that the Government of Romania will use this opportunity to strengthen its democracy, not retreat from it.

HONORING DORIS GREGORY

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 7, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Doris Gregory for her contributions to the Ouray community. For the last twenty-five years Doris has been one of Ouray's most prolific historians, writing more than a dozen books about the community, its buildings and families. Today I would like to acknowledge her accomplishments before this body of Congress and this nation.

Doris was not always a historian. After she graduated from the University of Washington, Doris moved to Alaska with her new husband and ran a small newspaper. Later she earned a doctorate in education and embarked on a thirty-year career in teaching and administration in three different states, authoring textbooks and spending summer vacations in Ouray. By the time Doris retired in 1978, she and her husband owned a home in Ouray, and Doris began spending a lot of time in the county archives. Among her books, Doris has authored a two-volume comprehensive history of Ouray. As an important local authority, Doris has also volunteered countless hours at the Ouray County Historical Museum and given lectures.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to recognize Doris Gregory for her hard work and dedication to documenting the history of an important region of Colorado. Doris has almost single-handedly preserved the history of Ouray County for future generations, and I thank her for her efforts.