

have proven very successful in achieving that goal. From January 2000 to July 2001, a Chicago program known as Transitional Community Service Jobs placed over 75 percent of its participants in unsubsidized jobs, more than one-third of which paid over \$8.00 an hour.

Many cities and communities across the country have implemented transitional jobs programs because they understand the importance of helping those facing serious barriers to employment, and they recognize the long-term benefits of investing in a future workforce that is well-trained and able to contribute to the economy. However, because the Welfare-to-Work funds that help support transitional jobs programs are nearly exhausted and because of tight State budgets, many of those successful programs are at risk. This bill would provide a more stable funding source to allow many of these programs to survive, enable the development of new programs, and require a rigorous evaluation of funded programs.

I am proud that this bill would help those who are having a difficult time supporting their children by providing them with resources and skills that will help them immediately, as well as sustain them in the future. I urge my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring the Business Links Act of 2003.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP OF UNIFIED BUDDHIST CHURCH OF VIETNAM

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2003

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am here today as a staunch supporter of freedom of religion. While we have made progress in our own country, there are other areas in the world which still persecute unjustly. Buddhism has a 2,000-year tradition in Vietnam and the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV) is an heir to this tradition. In 1981, the Government of Vietnam declared the UBCV, one of the largest religious denominations in the country, illegal, confiscated its temples, and persecuted its clergy for refusing to join the state-sponsored Buddhist organizations.

The Government of Vietnam has often imprisoned UBCV clergy and subjected them to other forms of persecution; the Patriarch of the UBCV, the 85-year-old Most Venerable Thich Huyen Quang, has been detained and restrained for more than 2 decades in isolated areas of Vietnam. The Vietnamese Government has held the Most Venerable Thich Quang Do, the Executive President of the UBCV and his deputy, the Venerable Thich Tue Sy, in various forms of detention since 1977. In 1978, he was tortured to death in a reeducation camp.

Many other leading UBCV figures have been detained and harassed. Evading tight surveillance, others have fled to Cambodia to escape religious repression and harassment.

Vietnam has acceded to international treaties that prohibit the forced repatriation of UNHCR-recognized refugees and that protect the right to faith, belief, and practice.

Vietnam's constitution protects the right of religious belief, yet on October 8, 2003, Vietnamese authorities initiated a tense standoff following the meeting, where police stopped a vehicle carrying the UBCV's new leadership and subsequently detained the eleven passengers. According to reports by the United States State Department, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, and the European Union, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam systematically limits the right of religious organizations to choose their own clergy.

During the 107th Congress, I along with my colleagues in the House of Representatives, passed H.R. 2833, the Vietnam Human Rights Act, on September 6, 2001, which noted the persecutions faced by various members of the UBCV over the past 25 years. Because of systematic, egregious, and ongoing abuses of religious freedom, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom recommended that the President of the United States designate Vietnam as a "country of particular concern" under the provisions of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

Today, I am pleased to join the House of Representatives in congratulating the new leadership of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam and urging the Government of Vietnam to respect the right of all independent religious organizations to meet, worship, operate, and practice their faith in accordance with Vietnam's own constitution and international covenants to which Vietnam is a signatory.

We are joined by our allies in being committed to promoting religious freedom in Vietnam, and, in furtherance of this goal, and urge the implementation of the recommendations of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom.

We ask that the United States Embassy in Vietnam to closely monitor cases of abuse of religious belief and practice, routinely visit detained clergy members, especially those in need of medical care, and report to the Congress on specific measures taken to protect and promote religious freedom in Vietnam.

HONORING SEEDS OF PEACE FOR ITS PROMOTION OF UNDERSTANDING AMONG YOUTH FROM REGIONS OF CONFLICT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2003

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here today to honor such a valuable program. Seeds of Peace was founded by John Wallach in 1993. It is a program designed to bring together young people from regions of conflict to study and learn about coexistence and conflict resolution.

The original focus of Seeds of Peace was to bring Israeli, Palestinian, Jordanian, and Egyptian youth together, the program has since expanded to involve youths from other regions of conflict, including Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, the Balkans, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

Seeds of Peace provides young people with the opportunity to study, learn and interact at a summer camp in Otisfield, Maine, and also through regional programs at the Jerusalem

Center for Coexistence. Seeds of Peace works to dispel fear, mistrust, and prejudice, which are root causes of violence and conflict, and to build a new generation of leaders who are committed to achieving peace.

Seeds of Peace has been successful at revealing the human face of those whom youth have been taught to hate, by engaging campers in both guided coexistence sessions and ordinary summer camp activities such as living together in cabins, sharing meals, canoeing, swimming, playing sports, and creative exploration through arts and computers.

The Arab-Israeli conflict is currently at a critical juncture, and sustained progress towards peace depends on the emergence of a new generation of leaders who will choose dialogue, friendship, and openness over violence and hatred.

In addition to Seeds of Peace, I am a co-sponsor of Global Family Day, a House Resolution that seeks to raise awareness of children by having a one day holiday every year dedicated to family, community and sharing global traditions.

Similar to Global Family Day, Seeds of Peace provides year-round opportunities for former participants to build on the relationships they have forged at camp, so that the learning processes begun at camp can continue back in the participants' home countries, where they are most needed.

Programs such as these bring us closer to our foreign policy goals of raising our future leaders to think about global issues, and see the neighbors as other children like them, rather than enemies.

Both Global Family Day and Seeds of Peace are strongly supported by participating governments and many world leaders. It is especially important to reaffirm that youth must be involved in long-term, visionary solutions to conflicts perpetuated by cycles of violence. I am glad we have the opportunity to honor Seeds of Peace, for the work it has accomplished thus far, and for the impact it will have for generations.

COMMENDING AFGHAN WOMEN FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN AFGHAN GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2003

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here today to support H. Res. 393, commending Afghan women for their participation in Afghan government and civil society, encouraging the inclusion of Afghan women in the political and economic life of Afghanistan, and advocating the protection of the human rights of all Afghan women in their Constitution.

As we are all aware, the women of Afghanistan suffered horrible tragedies under the Taliban regime. The Afghan people have since rejected the Taliban and are in the process of building a free and democratic republic and repairing the damage. These efforts have improved the daily lives of all Afghan citizens,

particularly Afghan women, children, and refugees.

More Afghan girls are attending school than ever before in the history of Afghanistan. Millions more adult women are either returning to school to make up for being forbidden to attend school during the Taliban regime, or taking vocational training classes to prepare for the job market. Now, women in Afghanistan are able to work outside the home and hold positions in all levels of government and in private sector organizations, something unheard of during the Taliban regime.

In order for women to fully participate in Afghan society, they must have the right to vote, the right to run for office, equality of opportunity, and access to health care, education, and employment. This is why I am joined by my colleagues today to advocate that women's human rights should be guaranteed in the Afghanistan Constitution.

I have traveled to Afghanistan and seen the plight of these women. I have heard their stories of hardships and their wishes for a better life for them and their children. I support this resolution because I know how timely and vital it is for the future of Afghani women to have these rights. The United States is actively involved in encouraging the full inclusion and participation of Afghan women in the political and economic life of their country, and must continue to do so throughout the reconstruction process. We must continue to urge the participation of women in the continued efforts toward a lasting peace in Afghanistan.

RECOGNIZING THE 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2003

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 423 which properly recognizes the 5th anniversary of the signing of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. The International Religious Freedom Act is an essential demonstration of our commitment to observing religious freedom for all human beings throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker this Nation was built by those who escaped persecution in their own homelands. Today we continue to see people throughout the world who still can not freely practice their faith. The International Religious Freedom Act created the Office of International Religious Freedom in the Department of State and the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. This has resulted in a greater awareness of religious persecution both in the United States and abroad. It is vital in order to protect the principles of freedom that this nation was founded on, that we protect the ability of each person in the United States to freely observe their religious practices. This also means that we as a Nation must push other countries throughout the world to meet this same ideal standard on religious freedom.

Mr. Speaker it is truly tragic that so many people throughout the world have been mur-

dered, raped, tortured, and brutalized simply because of the faith they belong to. This type of religious hatred must be countered strongly by this body. We can not insist on having full religious freedom for our own citizens and then turn a blind eye to the plight of oppressed people throughout the world. The International Religious Freedom Act was a step in the positive direction of eliminating this global scourge. Religious freedom is a fundamental human right as affirmed by numerous international declarations and covenants, as well as by the United Nations General Assembly. I stand proud of this body's work to pass the International Religious Freedom Act five years ago and I remain hopeful that we will continue with further efforts to fight religious intolerance.

TORTURE VICTIMS RELIEF REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2003

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. The Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2003, H.R. 1813, would authorize appropriations for domestic and foreign torture victims treatment centers and for the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

In many places around the world, the survivors of torture have to grapple with the lingering effects of their torture alone. In the United States, we have 20 torture treatment centers that provide treatment and care for torture survivors. These centers help the survivors to overcome debilitating psychological and physical problems such as post traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, limbs rendered useless, chronic pain, and excessive guilt. Moreover, torture assaults the victim's core values as a human being, including his humanity and his sense of trust in himself and in the world around him. The treatment centers also assist the victim in restoring these values and in getting on with his life.

Although funding has been increasing, it still remains insufficient to meet the treatment needs of torture survivors. The Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2003 would help address these funding issues by authorizing the appropriation of \$37 million for the treatment and care of torture survivors both in the United States and overseas. This would include \$20 million to fund United States treatment centers, \$11 million to fund treatment centers overseas, and \$6 million to fund the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

With the additional funding, it is estimated that the American centers would have the capacity and ability to serve an additional 2,800 torture survivors per year.

The overseas funding would serve dual purposes. In addition to providing resources needed for treatment, it also would provide resources that the centers need to combat torture in their respective countries, some of which continue to have serious problems with torture.

I urge you to vote for H.R. 1813, the Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2003.

HONORING VICTIMS OF CAMBODIAN GENOCIDE THAT TOOK PLACE FROM APRIL 1975 TO JANUARY 1979

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2003

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 83 which honors the victims of the Cambodian Genocide. Truly, this recognition is overdue for a people who suffered for so long under the brutal dictatorship of Pol Pot. It is unfortunate that the plight of the Cambodian people has not been more recognized in the United States. I want to thank Rep. MILLENDER-MCDONALD for introducing this legislation which affects not only the large Cambodian population in her district, but so many Cambodian people throughout the world who were forced to leave their homeland due to the brutalization they faced.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that between April 1975 and January 1979, up to 3 million Cambodians were deliberately and systematically killed shows the depth of suffering that the Cambodian people had to endure. Not only were scores of people brutally killed but they had to suffer through a vicious system of forced labor. In 1975, Pol Pot led the Communist guerilla group, the Khmer Rouge, in a large-scale insurgency in Cambodia that resulted in the removal of Cambodians from their homes and into labor camps in an attempt to restructure Khmer society. The Khmer Rouge maintained control by mass public tortures and executions. Families were separated. Men, women and young children were sent into labor camps and forced to do strenuous farm work with very little food. Famine and disease were epidemic while health care was non-existent. Literally these Cambodians were put through hell in order to maintain Pol Pot's hold on the nation.

We as a body must try to ensure that events like the Cambodian Genocide never go unnoticed again. Too many lives were lost and many of those who were killed were simply disposed of by the regime, in their effort to ensure that the victims would be forgotten. This resolution demonstrates that the victims of the Cambodian Genocide will not be forgotten by this Congress or by anyone of conscious. Many of those who suffered during the Cambodian Genocide are now residing in the United States. They are a living testament to the fact that brutality can not crush the spirit of even the most oppressed people.

OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2003

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a supporter of S. 1824 which amends the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to reauthorize the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. It is important that we as a Nation continue these efforts to invest abroad.