

The serious challenges posed to global stability by poverty, hunger, illiteracy, disease, immorality and lack of access to clean water and health care.

The recourse to oppression, cruelty and violence as the principle instruments for resolving disputes.

The ecological crisis in which the world finds itself, with grave consequences for present and future generations.

*Declare:* That the promotion of the values of Tolerance, Truth, Justice and Love must be the aim of any religious teaching.

That extremism, terrorism and other forms of violence in the name of religion have nothing to do with genuine understanding of religion, but are a threat to human life and hence should be rejected.

That the diversity of religious beliefs and practices should not lead to mutual suspicion, discrimination and humiliation but to a mutual acceptance and harmony demonstrating distinctive characteristics of each religion and culture

That religions must aspire towards greater co-operation, recognizing tolerance and mutual acceptance as essential instruments in the peaceful co-existence of all peoples.

That educational programs and the means of social communication should be essential instruments for promotion of positive attitudes towards religions and cultures.

That inter-religious dialogue is one of the key means for social development and the promotion of the well-being of all peoples, fostering tolerance, mutual understanding and harmony among different cultures and religions, and operating to bring an end to conflicts and violence.

That the entire human family must be encouraged to overcome hatred, enmity, intolerance and xenophobia.

We shall strengthen co-operation in promoting spiritual values and the culture of dialogue with the aim of ensuring peace in the new millennium.

We are ready to strain every effort not to allow the use of religious differences as an instrument of hatred and discord, in order to save mankind from a global conflict of religions and cultures.

We look forward to joint actions to ensure peace and progress for humanity and to foster the stability of societies as the basis for a harmonious world for the future.

We thank the Republic of Kazakhstan and his Excellency President Nursultan Nazarbayev for initiating and hosting this Congress.

May our commitments be blessed and all the peoples of the world be granted justice, peace and prosperity.

#### RESOLUTIONS OF THE FIRST CONGRESS OF WORLD AND TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS

The participants of the First Congress of World and National Religions, held from 23 to 24 September 2003 in Astana, the capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Taking into consideration the fruitful exchange of views on the role of religions in promoting peace and harmony in the world.

Expressing common understanding on the need to continue constructive dialogue among representatives of the world's religions.

**HAVE RESOLVED:** To convene the Congress at least once every three years; To approve the following title of the Congress—"the Congress of World and Traditional Religions"; To request the Republic of Kazakhstan, as the initiator of the Congress, to elaborate all aspects related to the establishment of the Secretariat; To convene the Second Congress in Astana, the Republic of Kazakhstan.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE FAIRNESS TO LOCAL CONTRACTORS ACT

#### HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 8, 2003*

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to ensure that out-of-state Federal contractors doing business in the various States fully comply with local State laws.

For years, my home State of Hawaii has struggled to force out-of-state Federal contractors to pay local taxes. This issue became so serious in the mid-1990s that the State of Hawaii sued out-of-state Federal contractors for failing to pay State taxes, penalties, and interest ranging from \$191,000 to \$324,000. Non-compliance with State laws has become such an acute problem that the Hawaii Department of Taxation has joined with other State departments and members of the Hawai'i congressional delegation to devise ways to make Federal contractors comply with State tax laws.

The bill I introduce today will solve this problem by requiring the Federal government to withhold from any Federal contractor doing business in any State the amount necessary to pay the State tax liability due under its contract, with the amount withheld paid directly to the State where the work is performed. The bill would also direct the Federal government to require a contractor to be licensed in the State in which a construction contract is to be performed.

Besides assuring prompt and full payment of State taxes, these requirements will also help ensure that out-of-state contractors follow the same set of rules and compete on equal footing for Federal contracts with local contractors. Ignoring State laws gives out-of-state contractors an unfair and illegal advantage over local contractors, who routinely face much stricter scrutiny to comply with their local laws and much stricter penalties for failing to do so.

This bill is modeled after legislation introduced by my predecessor, the late Congresswoman Patsy T. Mink, who understood that out-of-state contractors must fulfill their legal responsibilities wherever they conduct their business. By reintroducing an expanded and refined version of her earlier bill, I will continue her fight to help State governments police unethical contractors. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

#### NATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK

#### HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 8, 2003*

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in recognition of the National Education Week that was celebrated during the week of November 17th through November 22, 2003. The theme was "Great Public Schools for Every Child—America's Promise." Although we triumphantly celebrated American education during that time, we must acknowledge that we have failed to fulfill the promise of ensuring a quality education for every student, regardless of their socio-economic background. Mr. Speaker, there is an underlying problem with the nu-

cleus of our public school system, and we cannot continue to band-aid these educational atrocities.

Mr. Speaker, over the past quarter of a century, the percentage of student dropout rates has stayed relatively unchanged. In fact, there are over 519,000 dropouts in America every year. Essentially, Mr. Speaker, America's dropout rates are the "unintended consequences" of our failure to invest the appropriate resources and programs in public school infrastructures.

When students drop out of school, there is a simultaneous spiral effect that leads to a host of troubling issues, such as teenage pregnancies, juvenile delinquencies, and even criminal activities. It is well-known that teenage girls who drop out of school are approximately 50 percent more likely to have a teenage pregnancy than girls who complete their high school education. Mr. Speaker, it is not a mystery to me, where the problem lies, when an estimated eight out of 10 prisoners are high school dropouts. These obvious correlations are not a matter of happenstance.

I believe we have a responsibility to remedy these issues through effective comprehensive programs in public education.

Mr. Speaker, this is the reason I am introducing the Vocational Opportunities and Instruction through Cooperative Education Act, also known as the VOICE Act of 2003. This bill would require the Secretary of Education to conduct a pilot study that would examine effective cooperative education programs in high schools across the nation.

The goal of my legislation is to promote alternative learning environments through school-to-work programs that have been proven to be a successful strategy in preventing high school dropouts. We know that cooperative education is an effective approach in reducing dropout rates. Mr. Speaker, School-to-Work programs, not only prevent dropout rates, but research also demonstrates that linking academic course work to career-related curriculum in the workplace, consistently increases student achievement.

My legislation would also create paid partnerships for students who participate in the program. This is an important piece of my legislation because when these students are paid, it reinforces our commitment to excellence through education while rewarding the efforts of the students. My bill, the VOICE Act of 2003, provides a win-win program for schools, community businesses and organizations, and most importantly the students. Students will benefit from this program because it creates an avenue for both high academic achievement and financial incentives. And the partnership between community businesses and organizations and the schools will assure highly skilled, motivated and experienced high school graduates, which is an investment for the future workforce.

Mr. Speaker, if America is serious about keeping our promise of providing great public schools for every child, then we must do everything in our power to integrate cooperative education programs into every public school classroom across this nation. It is my hope that all my colleagues will join me in the struggle to improve the quality of public education, by cosponsoring this much needed legislation.

DECEMBER SCHOOL OF THE  
MONTH, NEW YORK'S 4TH CON-  
GRESSIONAL DISTRICT

**HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 8, 2003*

Ms. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, it's with great pride that I announce Franklin Elementary School in the Hempstead Union Free School District as School of the Month in the Fourth Congressional District for December 2003.

The Principal of Franklin Elementary School is John W. Moore. Regina Armstrong and Carolyn Townes-Richards are the Assistant Principals, and the Superintendent of Schools is Dr. Nathaniel Clay. Franklin Elementary School is the largest elementary school in the Village of Hempstead with over 750 students in grades Kindergarten through 5, and 115 dedicated staff members. The faculty work to fulfill the school's mission: To achieve a safe and secure educational environment that promotes working with parents and the community to ensure that all students reach and maintain high academic standards.

Despite various factors the students must overcome, they have shown, and maintained, academic progress in their pursuit to achieve and exceed the standards set by the school. The school's motto, "Your choices determine your destiny. \* \* \* Choose them wisely," puts the students' future in their hands and they have succeeded. Through the rich and diverse cultural wisdom of its students and staff, Franklin Elementary School has distinguished itself as a community, county and a national resource. Recognized as a national school of excellence, Franklin Elementary School this year received from the Department of Education the National Blue Ribbon award. The honor is awarded annually to schools to acknowledge the achievements and hard work of the students, staff members, families and community.

Franklin Elementary School's band has been locally and nationally recognized and is regarded as one of the best elementary school bands in New York State. The band has participated in numerous community events resulting in its adoption by the Eastern Regional Federal Aviation Headquarters. The organization has given students mentorship, tours of its facilities, awards and career advice. It is a relationship benefiting both sides, which I hope will be maintained in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the faculty and students, of Franklin, along with the community, have created a wonderful learning environment. I am proud to name Franklin Elementary School the school of the month for December 2003.

HONORING RICHARD A. ELBRECHT

**HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 8, 2003*

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to honor Richard A. Elbrecht on the occasion of his retirement from the California Department of Consumer Affairs, an agency with which Elbrecht has served the public since 1976. As the Super-

vising Attorney of the Legal Services Unit, he promoted and practiced the ideal that the law must be accessible to those whom it affects.

Mr. Elbrecht graduated from Yale University in 1955 with a degree in economics and a focus on money, banking and the antitrust law. He also attended the University of Michigan Law School and earned his J.D., 1960. Mr. Elbrecht worked for Legal Aid, the National Consumer Law Center and in private practice in San Jose and Santa Cruz.

But his greatest impact on the people of California was made during his years at the Department of Consumer Affairs where he constantly inspired his staff and co-workers through his intellect, enthusiasm and energy. He has created and maintained a work environment where excellence and innovation flourished. His unit provides a wide range of legal services, including legislative drafting, advocacy before administrative agencies, litigation and education. He has personally worked in a variety of areas of importance to consumers, including banking, electronic funds transfer, telecommunications, insurance, sales, warranties, credit and cable communications. He helped design and administer California's state quality awards program and has performed research on the application of computers and telecommunications to education.

Through this work, Elbrecht has achieved many extraordinary accomplishments on behalf of California's consumers. He drafted the 1991 and 1992 rewrites of the California Small Claims Act and supervised coordination of the Small Claims Court Experimental Project, which led to numerous significant improvements to the small claims court process. He fundamentally reformed practices for selling hearing aids through his representation in *People and Director v. Beltone Electronics Corp.* He assisted policy makers in developing regulations of interest rates in retail installment sales. He played a key role in the conceptualization and enactment of the California Lemon Law, the Song-Beverly Consumer Warranty Act and the Moore Universal Telephone Service Act.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Richard A. Elbrecht for his many years of service to California's consumers. His advocacy and hard work will be greatly missed, and we wish him much happiness and contentment in his retirement.

ADMINISTRATION'S ATTEMPT TO  
BAN THERAPEUTIC CLONING  
WORLDWIDE

**HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 8, 2003*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make clear to my colleagues how the current Bush Administration and their cadre of religious zealots are again attempting to impose their ideological views not just across our country, but across the world. The Administration, with the backing of the anti-abortion movement and several predominantly Catholic countries, is strongly lobbying members of the United Nations General Assembly to vote for a resolution to enact a worldwide ban on therapeutic cloning.

The Administration was not satisfied with their successful effort to cripple stem cell re-

search in this country. Now, they want to use their considerable resources to destroy this promising research field throughout all United Nations member countries. And who will suffer if this effort is successful? People of all races, creeds, religions who suffer conditions as varied as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, diabetes, chronic heart disease and spinal injuries. These are the individuals who have the most to lose if therapeutic cloning is banned.

The following is a statement released by Don Reed who is a constituent from Fremont, California. Don and his wife Gloria are tireless advocates of spinal cord research. Their interest in this area is passionate and very personal. Their son Roman was a star college football player until he was paralyzed by a game injury that broke his neck. Since the accident, Roman has been confined to a wheelchair. The Reeds are very much aware of the promise of therapeutic cloning and stem cell research to someday help their son, and many others, to live less restricted lives. This statement describes the efforts of the Administration at the United Nations and provides a poignant view of its effect on his spinal injured son.

WHITE HOUSE BEHIND CHRISTMAS ATTACK ON  
STEM CELL RESEARCH?

"This is like Scrooge putting Tiny Tim's doctor in jail," said stem cell activist Don C. Reed today, reacting to news that White House officials were part of a stealth campaign at the United Nations to internationally ban all forms of cloning with an up-or-down vote planned for December 8.

"My son is paralyzed with a spinal cord injury," said Reed. "Therapeutic cloning for stem cells is our only realistic hope of cure: that he will one day stand up and walk. But the White House continually attacks that research, apparently because of the religious convictions of the President."

As reported in Thursday's Financial Times of London, the Bush-backed Costa Rica plan would ban cloning everywhere. This would overturn the November 6 vote by the U.N.'s Legal Committee. By a razor-thin margin, (80-79, with 15 nations abstaining) that vote postponed a decision on the controversial therapy for two years.

"Mr. Bush did not like the way that vote turned out," said Reed. "And he wants a new vote. Well, I did not like the way the 2000 Presidential election turned out, but I don't get to have that vote re-done. Millions of people will suffer, if the President can overturn the November 6th U.N. vote. That vote did not approve or disapprove therapeutic cloning. It only says, we should take time to make this important decision carefully. What's wrong with that?"

A more moderate measure, sponsored by Belgium and backed by the UK, would ban reproductive cloning but allow member nations to make their own decisions on therapeutic cloning for medical research. This is opposed by the President, the Catholic church, and anti-abortion organizations.

"The American Medical Association supports therapeutic cloning," says Reed. "As does our own National Academy of Science." Exhaustive studies have been done on therapeutic cloning again and again, both nationally and in the state of California, as well as in countries like England, Israel, Singapore and China. All arrive at the same conclusion: reproductive cloning of children is dangerous to the unborn child, and should be banned; but therapeutic cloning of stem cells is potentially enormously valuable to cure hundreds of diseases and disabilities, and should be preserved.