

Sikh nation but a sovereign, independent Khalistan. Every Sikh leader must come out openly for Khalistan. We salute those Sikh leaders in Punjab who have done so.

Any organization that sincerely supports Khalistan deserves the support of the Sikh Nation. However, the Sikh Nation needs leadership that is honest, sincere, consistent, and dedicated to the cause of Sikh freedom. Leaders like Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan, Harchand Singh Longowal, Didar Bains, Ganga Singh Dhillon, the Akali Dal leadership, and others who were complicit in the attack on the Golden Temple cannot be trusted by the Sikh Nation. The evidence against them is clear in Chakravayuh: Web of Indian Secularism. The Sikh Nation cannot believe that these leaders will not betray the cause of Khalistan, just as they betrayed the Sikh Nation in 1984. We must be careful if we are to continue to move the cause of freedom for Khalistan forward in 2005 as we did in 2004.

The Akali Dal conspired with the Indian government in 1984 to invade the Golden Temple to murder Sant Bhindranwale and 20,000 other Sikh during June 1984 in Punjab. Even the Pope spoke out strongly against this invasion and desecration of our most sacred shrine. How can these so-called Sikh leaders connive with the people who carried it out? If Sikhs will not even protect the sanctity of the Golden Temple, how can the Sikh Nation survive as a nation?

The Akali Dal has lost all its credibility. The Badal government was so corrupt openly and no Akali leader would come forward and tell Badal and his wife to stop this unparalleled corruption.

If Jathedar Vedanti opposes freedom and sovereignty for the Sikh Nation, then he is not fit to sit in Akal Takht, in the seat of the Khalsa Panth. The Sikh Nation should have a Jathedar who is committed to sovereignty.

The Council of Khalistan has stood strongly and consistently for liberating our homeland, Khalistan, from Indian occupation. For over 18 years we have led this fight while others were trying to divert the resources and the attention of the Sikh Nation away from the issue of freedom in a sovereign, independent Khalistan. Khalistan is the only way that Sikhs will be able to live in freedom, peace, prosperity, and dignity. It is time to start a Shantmai Morcha to liberate Khalistan from Indian occupation.

The Akal Takht Sahib and Darbar Sahib are under the control of the Indian government, the same Indian government that has murdered more than a quarter of a million Sikhs in the past twenty years. The Jathedar of the Akal Takht and the head granthi of Darbar Sahib toe the line that the Indian government tells them. They are not appointed by the Khalsa Panth. Otherwise they would behave like a real Jathedar, Jathedar Gurdev Singh Kaunke, rather than like Indian government puppet Jathedar Aroor Singh, who gave a Siropa to General Dyer for the massacre of Sikhs and others at Jallianwala Bagh. These institutions will remain under the control of the Indian regime until we free the Sikh homeland, Punjab, Khalistan, from Indian occupation and oppression and sever our relations with the New Delhi government.

The Sikhs in Punjab have suffered enormous repression at the hands of the Indian regime in the last 25 years. Over 50,000 Sikh youth were picked up from their houses, tortured, murdered in police custody, then secretly cremated as "unidentified bodies." Their remains were never even given to their families! Another 52,268 are being held as political prisoners. Some have been in illegal custody since 1984! Even now, the capital of Punjab, Chandigarh, has not been handed

over to Punjab, but remains a Union Territory. How can Sikhs have any freedom living under a government that would do these things?

Sikhs will never get any justice from Delhi. The leaders in Delhi are only interested in imposing Hindu sovereignty over all the minorities to advance their own careers and their own power. Ever since independence, India has mistreated the Sikh Nation, starting with Patel's memo labelling Sikhs "a criminal tribe." What a shame for Home Minister Patel and the Indian government to issue this memorandum when the Sikh Nation gave over 80 percent of the sacrifices to free India.

How can Sikhs continue to live in such a country? There is no place for Sikhs in supposedly secular, supposedly democratic India. Let us make Viasakhi Day a day of freedom. Let us dedicate ourselves this Vaisakhi Day to living up to the blessing of Guru Gobind Singh. Let us take the occasion of Vaisakhi Day to begin to shake ourselves loose from the yoke of Indian oppression and liberate our homeland, Khalistan, so that all Sikhs may live lives of prosperity, freedom, and dignity.

IN RECOGNITION OF MRS. BETH
FREEMAN

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 6, 2005

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a distinguished public servant of Alabama's Third Congressional District.

Mrs. Beth Freeman, hired just two months after she turned 18, has worked for the people of Alabama for more than 30 years. Over her career she has progressed from answering phones and clipping newspaper articles to handling nearly every issue addressed by the Federal government, from military affairs to Social Security.

She has been a faithful and non-partisan public servant, having served with the four most recent officials representing this office, including the late Congressman Bill Nichols; Congressman Glenn Browder; and then-Congressman Riley.

While I have only known 'Ms. Beth' since taking office in 2002, in that short time I have developed a deep appreciation for her hard work and dedication to the people of Alabama. Families and seniors across this district have called upon her expertise for years, and relied upon her persistence to get their problems solved. She will be missed here in this office, and across East Alabama.

Beth, on behalf of the citizens of Alabama's Third Congressional District, thank you for your service to our state. We wish you all the best in your retirement.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF THE
HON. HOWELL HEFLIN

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 6, 2005

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, the entire state of Alabama recently lost a dear friend, and I

rise today to honor him and pay tribute to his memory.

Senator Howell Heflin was a devoted family man and dedicated public servant throughout his entire life, someone who devoted nearly a quarter-century in public service to the residents of Alabama.

Born on June 19, 1921, the son of Reverend and Mrs. Marvin Heflin, Senator Heflin was a native of Poulan, Georgia, and spent his childhood moving from one Alabama community to another before his family settled in Colbert County. He was a 1942 graduate of Birmingham-Southern College. Within a short time following his graduation, he joined the United States Marine Corps and served during World War II in the Pacific Theater of Operations. He was wounded twice during his service and was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action before being discharged in 1946. Following the completion of his military obligations, he enrolled in the law school at the University of Alabama and graduated from that institution in 1948.

From 1948 until 1970, Senator Heflin worked as a prosecuting attorney in the City of Tusculumbia before winning election as Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court. For the next six years, he served with distinction on the court and is known for many accomplishments during that time, including implementing large reforms of the state court system that eliminated years of backlogged cases. He earned so much respect for his work as Chief Justice that, even after having been elected to the United States Senate, friends, colleagues, and admirers continued to refer to him as "The Judge."

First elected to the Senate in 1978, Senator Heflin served with distinction for 18 years and ably represented the interests of all Alabamians. During his three terms, he served most notably as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee and as both chairman and vice chairman of the Senate Ethics Committee, a position he held for 12 years. Additionally, he served as a member of that body's Agriculture Committee and was a strong and able advocate for the interests of Alabama's agricultural community.

During his three terms in Congress, Senator Heflin developed a reputation of working with his colleagues to find common ground on numerous issues, and always with the best interests of his constituents at heart. Many times, he put partisanship aside to support issues for which he saw great benefit, but which others were actively working to oppose. And while his personal views tended towards the conservative end of the spectrum on defense and financial matters, he was more progressive on social issues. In fact, two African-American federal judges from Alabama, U.W. Clemon of Birmingham and Myron Thompson of Montgomery, were both championed by Senator Heflin.

In an article appearing in the Mobile Register following the senator's death, former Alabama Congressman Sonny Callahan was quoted as saying, "He was always there for us when we needed him. We had common goals for Alabama and worked towards those goals." Perhaps these words more than many others spoken in the days following his passing are an accurate summation of the tremendous work completed during his long career and of the faith and trust he in turn earned from his constituents.