

Founded in 1815, Hurricane Baptist Church is the fifth oldest Baptist church in Wilson County. Located on the edge of the Cedars of Lebanon State Park, the church began with about 30 members. Today, Hurricane Baptist Church has 190 members.

The Hurricane Baptist Church facility was built in 1907. Since that time, the church has added a fellowship hall and Sunday School rooms. Church records dating back to 1897 were lost when clerk W.B. Edwards' home was destroyed by fire. Some records survived through the Baptist association and other sources.

Ollie Edwards Lester, a descendent of W.B. Edwards, and Elsie Lou Williams Merritt are two of the surviving members among the 36 original members baptized in Hurricane Creek during a service in 1925. "It's been a family church," said brother James Gordon Williams, the 38th pastor of Hurricane Baptist Church. Brother Williams is the fourth generation of his family to be a member of the church. Four generations of the Flatt family have also attended Hurricane Baptist Church.

Former members, their families, old friends and new have been invited to join "The Little White Church down in Cedar Forest" on its special day of thanksgiving and praise. I am sure Hurricane Baptist Church will continue to make a positive difference in the community for the next 190 years. I cordially congratulate the congregation and Brother Williams for all the good they have done.

STATEMENT TO HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

HON. DENNIS KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, on May 12, 2005, I made the following statement during a hearing in the House Committee on Government Reform on "Securing Our Borders: What We Have Learned from Government Initiatives and Citizen Patrols":

Good afternoon. Thank you, Chairman Davis, for holding this important hearing and thank you to the witnesses. We can all agree on the tremendous importance of securing our border. But frankly, I am not confident in how our government has been handling border security one bit. I have two concrete examples of deficiencies on the part of U.S. Customs and Border Protection that my office has been investigating that I'd like to highlight—that I think are representative of a much greater problem.

The first case involves how U.S. Customs has handled an investigation into slave labor allegations regarding a product that we import into the U.S.—as you know, importing products made with slave labor has been illegal since 1930. Allegations of slave labor used in the production of pig iron, in the Para state of Brazil, came out in the summer of 2004. As the United States reportedly imports 92 percent of the pig iron produced in Brazil, most of which is produced in Para, it is highly probable that this importation violates section 1307 of the U.S. Tariff Act of 1930, which states,

"All goods, wares, articles, and merchandise mined, produced, or manufactured whol-

ly or in part in any foreign country by convict labor or land forced labor or land indentured labor under penal sanctions shall not be entitled to entry at any of the ports of the United States, and the importation thereof is hereby prohibited."

I sent a letter to U.S. Customs to ascertain what actions had been taken in response to this violation of law. After six months, I finally got a response, which said that Customs had opened a file on the case in July 2004, and had referred it to the FBI Attaché Brasilia for further investigation. The rest of the letter explained how logistical difficulties had prevented even a single investigator from visiting Para for a site visit. One excuse: "The Amazon Basin in Brazil is in a remote area where the majority of the roads to this area are only accessible via 4-wheel drive vehicles." The Trans-Amazon highway, an important route for the economic development in that area, runs right through Para. It can carry the pig iron out of Para, but can't take our investigators into Para. And frankly I would be surprised if none of our FBI investigators in Brazil had access to a 4-wheel drive vehicle.

The inaction of the investigators in this case is highly unsatisfactory, and I am deeply disturbed by the broader implications of such inadequacies. U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, along with FBI Attaché offices, are responsible not only for investigating violations of tariff law, but they are also responsible for keeping terrorists out of our country. I believe the inefficiencies highlighted in this case reflect the greater threat to the national security interests of the United States. Furthermore, I am disturbed to think of the possibility that trade motivations are hidden behind the inadequate investigation in this case. I can assure you that all the American miners forced to compete with slave labor would also be disturbed by that possibility.

The second case involves the presence of an international terrorist, Luis Posada Carriles, in the United States, and his recent application for asylum. Posada, a CIA-trained Cuban exile, was responsible for organizing the bombing of a Cuban civilian airliner flying from Bermuda to Venezuela. The bombing killed all 73 people on the plane on October 6, 1976. In addition to the civilian airline bombing, Posada was implicated in the 1976 Washington, DC assassination of former Chilean government minister Orlando Letelier. Letelier, a prominent opponent of the Pinochet dictatorship, was killed along with the American Ronni Moffit in a car bombing, which was at the time, one of the worst acts of foreign terrorism on American soil. Carter Cornick, a retired counterterrorism specialist for the FBI who worked on the Letelier case, said in an interview that both bombings were planned at a June 1976 meeting in Santo Domingo attended by Posada in addition to others. Mr. Cornick said that Posada was involved "up to his eyeballs" in planning the attack. A newly declassified 1976 F.B.I. document has confirmed this. Furthermore, at the time of the bombings, Venezuelan police found maps and other evidence in Posada's Venezuelan home that tied him to the terrorist killings.

Posada was imprisoned in Venezuela, but escaped while waiting for an appeal in 1985. In 1998, he admitted to the New York Times that he was responsible for organizing a number of bombings in tourist locations in Cuba, including hotels, department stores and other civilian targets during the summer of 1997. The bombings killed an Italian tourist and injured 11 other people. In November 2000, Posada was arrested in Panama for preparing a bomb explosion in the University of

Panama's Conference Hall where Fidel Castro was going to speak. Hundreds of people were expected to attend the event there, and had intelligence not uncovered the plot beforehand there would have been massive civilian casualties.

Our nation's policy against terrorism is unequivocally clear. President Bush defined this policy when he said on September 19, 2001, "anybody who harbors a terrorist, encourages terrorism, will be held accountable. I would strongly urge any nation in the world to reject terrorism, expel terrorists." The National Security Strategy, released in 2002, further defined this policy with, "no cause justifies terror. The United States will make no concessions to terrorist demands and strike no deals with them. We make no distinction between terrorists and those who knowingly harbor or provide aid to them." Back in 1989, when the Justice Department was considering the deportation of Orlando Bosch, one of Posada's associates, Joe D. Whitley, then-Associate U.S. Attorney General said, "The United States cannot tolerate the inherent inhumanity of terrorism as a way of settling disputes. Appeasement of those who would use force will only breed more terrorists. We must look on terrorism as a universal evil, even if it is directed toward those with whom we have no political sympathy." Mr. Whitley, now General Counsel for the Department of Homeland Security has declined to comment on the Posada case.

Posada supposedly crossed the U.S. border six weeks ago, and is presently here. His Miami lawyer, Eduardo Soto, confirmed at a news conference last month that he had arrived clandestinely into the United States. Orlando Bosch said in a recent interview broadcast in Miami that he had spoken by telephone with Posada, who, "as everybody knows, is here."

Yet the U.S. government has not even acknowledged it. Roger F. Noriega, Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs in the State Department said he did not even know whether Posada was in the country. State Department spokesman Tom Casey said in a recent press conference, "In terms of where he presently is, I think it's fair to say we don't know."

The U.S. government has not sent teams of investigators into South Florida to find Posada—or if they have, the investigators haven't done a very good job of finding him. No bounties have been offered to recover Posada. U.S. Customs and Border Patrol is responsible for securing our border, and preventing terrorists from crossing it, yet a known international terrorist—who committed an act of terrorism on U.S. soil that killed an American citizen—crossed it, and the U.S. government hasn't done a thing. It just isn't a political priority.

I hope this hearing and the series of hearings on border security that this Committee intends to hold will shed some light not only on the two cases I described, but on the larger problem that those cases represent: major deficiencies on the part of the U.S. government to investigate Customs and Border violations, when it frankly isn't in the political interest of the United States. That is unacceptable. We cannot pick and choose when to apply our laws and our policies; they must be applied in universal situations. And when they aren't, it compromises our national security. Thank you.