

PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION TO
STUDY THE CULTURE AND GLO-
RIFICATION OF VIOLENCE IN
AMERICA ACT

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Presidential Commission to Study the Culture and Glorification of Violence in America Act. This bill will establish a commission tasked with not only studying the culture of violence in our country, but also the factors that contribute to this culture and the actions that can be taken to mitigate its effects.

Members of this Commission will determine what connections exist between violence and access to firearms, psychological stress, and economic despair. They will further examine what role schools can play in preventing violence and propose possible solutions to address the glorification of violence in the United States.

Madam Speaker, we have become a society that places violence and aggression above hard work and acts of kindness. Sadly, children today admire gangsters instead of teachers. They would rather be thugs and drug lords than doctors and philanthropists. They measure the strength of their character by the size of their gun and not by their generosity toward others.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has found that prolonged exposure to violence in the media can increase acceptance of violence as an appropriate means of solving problems. It can glamorize weapons as sources of personal power and can contribute to aggressive behavior. It is, therefore no surprise that in 2005 alone, there were over 1.8 million serious violent crimes in America and almost 420,000 firearm-related incidents. In that same year, the Federal Government spent \$35.4 billion on criminal justice and local governments spent nearly three times that amount. Worst of all however, teens and young adults experience the highest rates of violent crime.

It is clear that we must make an effort to raise our children to recognize that violence is nothing more than the physical manifestation of fear and desperation. However, our society's glorification of violence has become so ingrained in our culture that it has become seemingly impossible to reverse.

Madam Speaker, it is our collective responsibility to create a society that values respect toward our fellow citizens. This legislation is simply a small step toward addressing what has become a destructive parasite upon the future of our country. By learning how the media and society promote violence and examining ways in which we can address this most pressing dilemma, it is my hope that we can stem the tide of violence and crime in America so that subsequent generations can live in a more peaceful nation.

I ask for my colleagues' support and urge the swift consideration of this bill.

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 2008

The House In Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1338) to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 1338, the Paycheck Fairness Act.

As its name suggests, this bill is about fairness. As a nation, we have made great strides in promoting fairness in the workplace since the Equal Pay Act was passed in 1963. Unfortunately, I do not think the language of that bill adequately addresses the problem of gender-based wage discrimination. In particular, the language of the Equal Pay Act offers little remedy for women who are not being paid equal wages for doing equal work.

The statistics describe precisely why this legislation is needed. Despite representing nearly half of the American workforce, and despite countless examples of professional women who have ascended to the highest levels of any given field, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates women still earn only 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man.

This bill would require that employers, in justifying unequal pay, provide evidence-based reasoning that such pay discrepancies are job-related and necessary for their business. It would help end the secret discrimination of unequal pay by prohibiting employers from retaliating against employees who share salary information with their coworkers. And this bill would dissuade employers from practicing gender-based pay discrimination by allowing women to sue for compensatory and punitive damages—the same sanctions that already apply to discrimination based on race, disability or age.

There are also some amendments that I think are important to prevent unscrupulous people from unfairly taking advantage of the provisions in this bill. As I said, this bill is about fairness, so I support the amendment from the gentle lady from Arizona, Ms. GIFFORDS, which would clarify that a plaintiff would have to show intent to recover any punitive damages. I also support the amendment of another good friend from Arizona and a fellow supporter of earmark reform, Mr. FLAKE, which would prohibit any funds authorized under this bill from being used for Congressional earmarks.

Women have long proven their equal measure of talent and capacity in every corner of the professional world. It's long overdue that they be compensated equally as well, so I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

RECOGNIZING CHARLES E. SMITH
UPON HIS INSTALLATION AS
PASTOR OF BEREA BAPTIST
CHURCH

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise before you today to recognize The Reverend Charles E. Smith, who will be installed as Pastor at Berea Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas.

Pastor Smith is a native of Texas and a longtime resident of Fort Worth, where he has raised his family. He and wife Lawsha Smith have six children. Smith graduated from the Southern Bible Institute in Dallas in 1984, and prior to that completed a Bachelor of Science degree in architecture at the University of Texas at Arlington. In the nearly 25 years since the completion of his theological training, Smith has served in various capacities in Baptist churches throughout North Texas, the most recent being his role as Associate Minister at Berea.

The multiple leadership and service awards that have been bestowed upon Pastor Smith testify to the fact that this is a man who is dedicated to excellence in serving his community. In addition to his service in a religious capacity, he has also positively contributed to his community as a Campus Learning Coordinator and Chancellor's Leadership Committee member at Tarrant County College.

Madam Speaker, I commend Pastor Smith for his longstanding service to Fort Worth and to the members of the Baptist congregations whom he has so capably served. It is an honor to represent Pastor Charles Smith and Berea Baptist Church in the 26th Congressional District of Texas.

THE LOSS OF PHIL RUHLE, SR.

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, it is with profound sorrow that I rise to recognize the loss of an important local figure, Captain Phil Ruhle, Sr., affectionately known to so many as Captain Phil. A resident of North Kingstown, Rhode Island, Captain Phil was lost at sea on July 23rd when his fishing boat capsized off the New Jersey shore. I join his family and the people of Rhode Island in mourning this great loss.

An experienced fisherman who spent the majority of his life fishing the Atlantic Ocean, Captain Phil was deeply devoted to his career, and his passion for responsible fishing was unparalleled. Born in Oceanside, NY, he moved to Rhode Island early in life. He hails from a long line of fishermen, including his grandfather, father and brother, and his son has followed in his footsteps. Throughout his life, Captain Phil was tested many times. Twice before, he was aboard a fishing vessel that sank. However, despite those setbacks, he continued to persevere and pursue his passion in life.

Captain Phil will be remembered as one who strongly advocated for those in his field,