

Religious liberty is, of course, a founding principle of the United States. The first line of the First Amendment states it flatly: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . ."

Abundant experience shows that a government's lack of religious tolerance is a sure indicator of broader oppression. And it is a very modern problem. According to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, about 70 percent of the world's people live under regimes that restrict religious freedom.

The Clinton and George W. Bush administrations both named ambassadors-at-large for religious freedom but failed to afford them the status required by the 1998 law. Passed unanimously by Congress, the law requires the ambassador to be the principal adviser to the president and the secretary of state on matters of international religious freedom.

As noted by Joseph Grieboski, the Lackawanna County native who founded the Institute on Religion and Public Policy, the current administration would further diminish the status of the ambassador by having the eventual appointee report far down the chain of command rather than directly to the president or secretary of state.

Other ambassadors-at-large, for counterterrorism, war crimes and global women's issues, report directly to the president or secretary, or both, as required by the laws establishing the positions.

Religious liberty is a human rights issue inextricably woven into America's position of promoting democracy and freedom around the world. President Obama should signal repressive regimes that it is an important matter to the United States by quickly naming an ambassador and having that person consult directly with him and the secretary of state.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL RESOURCE AND EDUCATION CENTER OF FLORIDA

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 2010

Mr. GRAYSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day. On this day, we remember and memorialize the 6 million Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust. In honor of this day, I would like to recognize the Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center of Florida, which includes a staff and board of community activists who work tirelessly to combat anti-Semitism, racism, and prejudice through education and cultural programming.

The Center was founded in June of 1980, when Valencia Community College and the Jewish Federation of Greater Orlando came together to sponsor a series of community-wide events on the Holocaust and relevant human rights issues. The focus was on the social, historical, moral, ethical and economic implications of the Holocaust for today. Subsequently, a conference, co-sponsored by the newly created Holocaust Center, Florida Humanities Council, Valencia Community College and the Jewish Federation of Greater Orlando, was held in March 1981. The same coalition sponsored a Conference on Terrorism the following year, and in 1986 a Holocaust Center facility was constructed, a professional mu-

seum exhibit was installed, and a library with documentary and archival collections was developed. The Center received national and international recognition for its unique facility—the only one of its kind in the Southeast until 1996—as well as for its dedication to world-class, innovative programming.

The Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to use the lessons of the Holocaust as a tool to teach the principles of good citizenship to thousands of people of all ages, religions and backgrounds each year. The Center hosts numerous educational and cultural events to promote their organization's mission. They've hosted events and activities ranging from conferences, speakers, and days of recognition, to marches, museum exhibits and the construction of a center on the Holocaust. This work has made a tremendous impact in Central Florida by engaging, educating and inspiring all of its citizens. The Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center is ensuring we never forget and never repeat the tragedy of the past.

Madam Speaker, it is a tremendous honor to recognize the accomplishments of the Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center in promoting acceptance and tolerance in the Central Florida community. As we all know, an organization can only be as good as the impressive staff and board that help run it. I applaud the Holocaust Center's board, which is represented by Central Florida's interfaith, multicultural community and the Center's staff, which is comprised of dedicated community activists. It is crucial we learn from our past to help better our future. Eva London Ritt, who many consider the cornerstone of the Center's staff and good works, said it best, "Be aware of what is written and spoken. Be aware of the first hint of hate or bias against any individual or group and then act. One person can make a difference. Be a kind person. Kindness rubs off. With kindness, you can improve the world around you."

PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, March 21, 2010

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, today we will cast a series of historic votes.

The outcome of the votes will result in 32 million people without health insurance gaining coverage and 94 percent of Americans with guaranteed health care coverage.

In New York State, close to 2.5 million people who are currently uninsured will have health care coverage once the day is over.

To get to this point, the House had to first vote on the Senate passed health care bill and then vote on a bill that makes important changes that have been negotiated by the House to dramatically improve the Senate bill—this is called the reconciliation bill.

Without a promise of these important fixes, like taking out several of these "special deals" I would not vote for the Senate bill. However, with the guarantee of these improvements, today I will cast my vote in favor of the Senate health care bill.

I appreciate the opportunity to outline some of my concerns with the Senate passed health care reform bill.

Most importantly, the Senate bill would have cost New York close to a billion of dollars in Medicaid funding. Unlike the House bill which saves New York billions, the Senate bill penalizes States like New York for its expanded coverage of its citizens under Medicaid. Under the Senate bill, States that have not significantly expanded their Medicaid programs would receive a large influx of Federal funding, but States like New York are penalized for doing the right thing. The House bill contained a more equitable solution to sharing the costs of Medicaid expansion under health care reform by providing increased Federal funding for Medicaid expansion regardless of existing State eligibility levels. FMAP provisions in the Senate bill would result in a significant loss to New York State as a significant number of uninsured New Yorkers who are eligible for Medicaid enroll, while the House bill fairly shares in the costs for currently enrolled and newly enrolled childless adults and parents. Fortunately, the reconciliation bill that we will be voting on, fixes this problem, and the distribution of Federal Medicaid funding is more equitable and saves money for New York.

The Senate bill similarly penalized New York in terms of its treatment of payments to Disproportionate Share Hospitals, DSH. Historically, Medicaid hospital reimbursement rates, on average, have been lower than the cost of providing care, and DSH payments were instituted to cover reimbursement shortfalls and uncompensated care costs. The need for DSH reimbursement will remain even after health care reform is passed since there will millions of newly eligible individuals who will receive care through Medicaid.

The Senate bill reduced Federal funding for Medicaid DSH payments by \$19 billion and Medicare DSH payments by \$24 billion over 10 years; reductions to DSH payments of this magnitude will jeopardize the stability and the services provided by our safety net system. The original House bill which I supported had included more reasonable reductions of \$10 billion each from Medicaid and Medicare DSH and similarly, the reconciliation bill, while not as good as the original House bill, reduces the cuts that the Senate bill would have imposed.

I am also opposed to the restrictive abortion language contained in the Senate bill. The Senate bill is significantly onerous, stigmatizing abortion services and creating obstacles for those consumers who would like to purchase this coverage and to those insurance companies would like to provide this coverage. Though I am strongly opposed to these restrictions, I am voting for the final bill because overall, reforming our current health care system dramatically and positively impacts women. As Chair of the Joint Economic Committee, I prepared a report that looked at the specific health care challenges facing women and how women would benefit from comprehensive health care reform. More than 2 million women have lost their health insurance since the recession began due to their own job loss or their spouse's job loss. 1.3 million women lost their health coverage when their spouse lost his job and an additional 800,000 women lost their health care as a result of their own job loss. More than 2 million women have faced the brutal double-whammy of a lost job and lost health care. While job losses