

THE NEED FOR A SPECIAL ENVOY TO ADVOCATE FOR RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH CENTRAL ASIA

**HON. FRANK R. WOLF**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 15, 2013*

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, today I am joining with my colleague Rep. ANNA G. ESHOO in re-introducing legislation to create a special envoy position at the State Department to advocate on behalf of vulnerable religious minorities in the Middle East and South Central Asia.

In countries like Iraq and Egypt, ancient Christian communities are being driven from the lands they have inhabited for centuries. In Iran, Baha'is are imprisoned and some cases executed simply because of their faith. In Pakistan, Ahmadi graves are desecrated. In Afghanistan, a country where America has sacrificed greatly in both blood and treasure, the most basic right to freedom of religion or belief is not recognized in the constitution. This is but a snap shot of the grave challenges facing these communities.

If the international community fails to speak out, the prospects for religious pluralism and tolerance in the region are bleak.

Last Congress the House, to its credit, overwhelmingly passed, by a vote of 402–20, bipartisan legislation, H.R. 440, to create a special envoy position at the State Department charged with focusing on the plight of religious minorities in these regions. Sadly, in the face of State Department opposition, the Senate failed to act.

There is a historic precedent for special envoys—including the Sudan special envoy and the North Korea human rights special envoy—whose positions were created in response to an urgent need for focused attention on a critical issue. The dire challenges facing Coptic Christians, Baha'is, Chaldo-Assyrians, Ahmadis, the small remaining Jewish population and countless other religions minorities throughout the Middle East and South Central Asia is surely such an issue.

While there is no guarantee that a special envoy will be able to single-handedly solve the problem, it certainly cannot hurt to have a high-level person within the State Department bureaucracy who is exclusively focused on the protection and preservation of these ancient communities. Such an envoy would send an important message to both our own foreign policy establishment and to suffering communities in the Middle East and elsewhere that religious freedom is a priority—that America will be a voice for the voiceless.

President Reagan once said that the U.S. Constitution is “a covenant that we have made not only with ourselves, but with all of mankind.” I believe the United States has an obligation to speak out for the voiceless around the world and urge my colleagues to join me cosponsoring this critical legislation.

IN RECOGNITION OF GERALD WALSH, PRESIDENT OF THE DUTCH KILLS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

**HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 15, 2013*

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Gerald “Jerry” Walsh, outgoing President of the Dutch Kills Civic Association. Mr. Walsh has been involved with the organization since 1986, and has served with distinction as its President for ten years.

Mr. Walsh has lived in Astoria and Long Island City for his entire life. A proud graduate of Long Island City High School, he has always been passionate about serving and improving his community. In 1975, Jerry married his wife, Diane Hopkins, and is the proud father of two daughters, Dawn and Crystal, and has recently become a grandfather. Mr. Walsh has worked for the City of New York—Financial Information Services for 35 years in the Department of Computer Operations. He is currently the shift manager of Computer Operations Hardware.

His passion for the betterment of his community has been a lifetime commitment. He volunteered with the Dutch Kills Civic Association for the first time in 1986, and became a board member in 1989. He became its Vice President in 1993, and President in 2003. He has been the Deputy Chief of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) since January 2006, has served as the President of the Parents Association for Long Island City High School, and is a former member of the 114th Civilian Observation Patrol (Civ-OP). On November 29, 2012, the Central Astoria Local Development Coalition presented Mr. Walsh with the “Community Leadership Award” in recognition of his outstanding service.

The Dutch Kills Civic Association was created in 1979 to promote a greater awareness of the community among elected officials and government agencies. Dutch Kills is a neighborhood bounded by 34th Avenue on the north, on the south by Bridge Plaza North, on the east by Northern Boulevard, and on the west by 21st Street. The Association’s goal is to assist all segments of the community and to support cooperation between business and residents.

Under Mr. Walsh’s leadership, the Dutch Kills Civic Association has flourished. Mr. Walsh strongly believes in the power of community involvement and civic engagement. As the neighborhood has become increasingly residential, the number of retail establishments has grown and the area has become a mecca for tourists with many new hotels. The Dutch Kills Civic Association has made extraordinary contributions to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood. These efforts include supporting a massive rezoning project, making crime reports, improving sanitation, keeping a watchful eye on nightclubs, and successfully fighting the closure of Fire Engine Company #261. Additionally, Dutch Kills has sponsored children’s shows at the Dutch Kills Playground and street fairs on 36th Avenue, and been involved with the organization of the New York City Marathon.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the extraordinary contributions that Mr. Walsh has made to the communities of Astoria and Long Island City. Mr. Walsh has truly brought about positive changes in the community he loves. His lifetime of service and dedication to civic life has greatly benefited his neighbors and the city of New York.

RECOGNIZING VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR ED VANVICKLE AND MAYOR ERIC SANDINE OF LITHOPOLIS, OHIO

**HON. STEVE STIVERS**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 15, 2013*

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Village Administrator Ed VanVickle and Mayor Eric Sandine of Lithopolis, Ohio, for their heroic efforts to fix a water main break that left half of the village without water.

In most cities, a water main break would mean hiring someone else to fix it, but in Lithopolis, Mayor Sandine has made unconventional, but necessary, cuts to save money. Now he and Mr. VanVickle roll up their sleeves and do the dirty work themselves, even though it is not part of their job descriptions. With no more than household plumbing experience, these men were able to fix the water main break in freezing temperatures.

On top of fixing the water lines, these men, along with the village’s maintenance crew, fix sewer lines and pot holes. They even go as far as operating snow plows and the water treatment plant.

These two men represent what it means to be a true leader. They do not do this extra work for money or recognition. Instead, they do what is best for their community because it is what they believe is the right thing to do.

I would again like commend Ed VanVickle and Eric Sandine for their heroic efforts and their incredible leadership in the Village of Lithopolis.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF DR. CARL EVERETT DRAKE, SR.

**HON. JOHN CAMPBELL**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 15, 2013*

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Dr. Carl Everett Drake, Sr. who died peacefully of natural causes at his home in Sacramento on December 27, 2012. He was 99.

Carl Drake was born on August 21, 1913 in Neptune New Jersey, the second son of James and Lucy Bingham Drake. Carl was educated in the public schools where he was an outstanding student, and even better multisport athlete. His state high school long jump mark of 21’10” stood for over 25 years. His talents brought him to the attention of coaches from Morgan State College in Baltimore, MD the top ranked college football program available to African American players in the 1930s. His combination of size, speed and ferocity won him a starting spot on the championship football team. At 6’1” and 205 lbs., huge at the time, he was a bruising, standout guard, playing both offense and defense. The