

Following is a technical explanation of the problem and the solution. Again, Mr. Speaker, we should not get lost in the turgidness of the issue—we should just keep our eyes on the fact that the half billion in promised savings can still be achieved.

PROPOSAL TO REDUCE MEDICARE OUTPATIENT
DEPARTMENT COINSURANCE
CURRENT LAW

Coinurance for hospital outpatient department (OPD) services is currently based on 20 percent of a hospital's charge. Under the prospective payment system (PPS) for hospital OPD services, coinsurance will no longer be based on charges. Instead, base payment amounts will be established for each group of services based on the national median of charges for services in the group in 1996 and updated to 1999. These copayment amounts will be frozen until such time as coinsurance represents 20 percent of the total fee schedule amount. If the OPD PPS were implemented in 1999, calculation of the copayment amounts in such a fashion would result in coinsurance savings of \$460 million for beneficiaries in 1999.

HCFA, however, will not be able to implement the OPD PPS in 1999 due to the intensive efforts and resources that must be devoted to achieving year 2000 compliance. It will be implemented as soon as possible after January 1, 2000. In the absence of the OPD PPS, coinsurance will continue to be based on 20 percent of charges.

PROPOSAL

Beginning on January 1, 1999 and until such time as the OPD PPS is implemented, coinsurance would be based on a specified percentage of charges, which will be lower than 20 percent. The specified percentage (e.g., 18% or 17.5%) would be calculated by the Secretary and specified in law so that the beneficiaries, in aggregate, would achieve coinsurance savings equal to \$460 million in 1999. These savings are equal to the amount that would have been saved by beneficiaries in 1999 if the OPD PPS were implemented.

The Medicare payment, however, would continue to be calculated as if coinsurance were still based on 20 percent of charges. In so doing, the beneficiary coinsurance savings are not passed on to the Medicare program as a cost. Instead, the loss will be absorbed by hospitals, which is the same outcome that would have occurred in 1999 under the OPD PPS.

Under this proposal, hospitals would not be able to recoup their losses by increasing their charges. In fact, increasing their charges would result in a further loss. This is because higher charges cause an increase in coinsurance but an offsetting reduction in the Medicare payment since coinsurance is subtracted out in order to determine the Medicare payment. Furthermore, since the Medicare payment is calculated as if coinsurance is 20% (rather than 18%), the Medicare payment would go down by more than the increase in the coinsurance payment (which is based on a lower percentage).

SIKH LEADER WRITES ON
REPRESSION OF CHRISTIANS

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 19, 1999

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, as you know, there has been a recent wave of attacks by

Hindu Nationalists on Christian churches, prayer halls, and schools. This has followed the killings of priests, the raping of four nuns by a Hindu mob described by the Hindu Nationalist VHP as "patriotic youth." Just this week, more churches have been attacked. No action has been taken to stop the religious violence. This situation has made it clear to the world that India's claims of democracy and secularism are fraudulent.

In this light, it was encouraging to see a letter in the January 18 issue of the Washington Times by Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the council of Khalistan, that addresses this issue. We all know Dr. Aulakh to be a tough and fair advocate of independence for the Sikhs in Khalistan, who have also come under the tyranny of Indian "secularism." I would recommend to my colleagues that they read Dr. Aulakh's letter. It will give them a lot of information on the reality of religious repression in India. As Dr. Aulakh wrote, "These attacks show that religious freedom in India is a myth."

Christians, Sikhs, and Muslims have suffered at the hands of India's ruling elite. As the letter shows, they are all being murdered by the Indian government. That government has paid more than 41,000 cash bounties to police officers for killing Sikhs. Meanwhile, Amnesty International and other independent human-rights monitors have been kept out of India since 1978, even longer than Communist Cuba has kept them out.

A country that kills its minorities for their ethnic or religious identity is not a fit recipient of American support. As the only superpower and the leader of the world, we have a duty to do whatever we can to support the cause of freedom in South Asia.

We should cut off American aid and trade to India until human rights, including religious liberty, are secure and regularly practiced. We should declare India a violator of religious freedom and impose the sanctions appropriate to that status. And to ensure the safety of religious and political freedom in South Asia, we should declare our support for the 17 freedom movements within India's borders. We can start by calling for full self-determination for the Sikhs of Khalistan, the Muslims of Kashmir, and the Christians of Nagaland. These steps will help bring the people of South Asia the kind of freedom that we in America enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce Dr. Aulakh's letter in the January 18 Washington Times into the RECORD.

[From the Washington Times, Jan. 18, 1999]

INDIA CONTINUES TO RESTRICT RELIGIOUS
FREEDOM

(By Gurmit Singh Aulakh)

Thank you for your editorial ("Mother Teresa's children," Jan. 10) exposing more than 90 attacks on Christians since the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power last year. These attacks show that religious freedom in India is a myth.

Just when we thought the recent wave of attacks on Christians in India was over, your editorial exposed the burning of two more churches by Hindu mobs affiliated with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, part of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, a militant Hindu nationalist organization that is also the parent organization of the ruling (BJP).

It is not just Christians who have suffered from persecution and violence in the hands

of the Indian government. Sikhs and Muslims, among others, have been victimized as well. In August 1997, Narinder Singh, a spokesman for the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the center and seat of the Sikh religion, told National Public Radio: "The Indian government, all the time they boast that they're democratic, they're secular, but they have nothing to do with a democracy, they have nothing to do with secularism. They try to crush Sikhs just to please the majority."

The Indian government has killed more than 200,000 Christians since 1947. It has also murdered more than 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, over 60,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988 and tens of thousands of other religious and ethnic minorities. The most revered mosque in India has been destroyed to build a Hindu temple. Police murdered the highest Sikh spiritual and religious leader, Akal Takht Jathedar Gurdev Singh Kaunke, and human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khaira. There are police witnesses to both of these crimes. The U.S. State Department reported that between 1992 and 1994 the Indian government paid more than 41,000 cash bounties to police for killing Sikhs. Plainclothes police continue to occupy the Golden Temple. There have been more than 200 reported atrocities against Sikhs since the Akali Dal/BJP government took power in March 1997.

It is not just the BJP that has practiced religious tyranny in pursuit of a Hindu theocracy in India. Many of these incidents came under the rule of the Congress Party. No matter who is in power, the minorities in India suffer from severe oppression. The only solution is to support self-determination for the peoples and nations of South Asia, so they can live in freedom, peace, prosperity and security.

India is not a single country; it is a polyglot empire that was thrown together by the British for their political convenience. Its breakup is inevitable. As the world's only superpower, the United States has a responsibility to make sure this process is peaceful, as it was for the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. Otherwise, a Bosnia will be created in South Asia.

Thank you for exposing the true nature of India's "secular democracy." Exposing these brutal practices will help bring true freedom to South Asia.

HOUSE CONSIDERATION OF H. RES.
611—IMPEACHMENT RESOLUTION

HON. WILLIAM J. COYNE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 19, 1999

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this resolution, to these articles of impeachment, and to these unfair, partisan proceedings which deny Members the right to vote on the alternative of censure.

Mr. Speaker, we are all disappointed by the President's actions. The President himself has admitted that he acted improperly and then misled the public, his family, his staff, and others about those actions.

This debate today, however, is not simply about whether the President did something wrong, or even whether he did something illegal. Rather, the issue before us today is what, if any, action Congress should take in response. Specifically, the Members of the