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REMEMBERING RABBI JOSEPH
WEINBERG

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 18, 1999

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, this weekend, the nation lost one of its foremost religious and spiritual leaders, Rabbi Joseph P. Weinberg. Rabbi Weinberg served for over thirty years at Washington Hebrew Congregation. Throughout his exceptional career, Rabbi Weinberg distinguished himself not only for his Jewish scholarship and the pastoral care he devoted to his congregation, but as a champion in the fights for civil rights, racial understanding, and religious tolerance.

Rabbi Weinberg was a gracious, warm and compassionate man. He possessed both a softspoken demeanor and a fiery determination to correct the injustices of our society. Above all else, he was devoted to his family. I wish to extend my most sincere condolences to his wife Marcia, his children Rachel, Johathan, Josh, their spouses, and his grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I submit for our colleagues an article about Rabbi Weinberg that was published in the Washington Post. This article reports on Rabbi Weinberg's final Rosh Hashanah sermon, delivered last month with the help of his children. Using Tolstoy's famous journal entry, "Still Alive," Rabbi Weinberg said:

"Dear congregants, children and grandchildren,

It is Rosh Hashanah . . . and we are still here.

Still alive—to stand for causes that are just.

Still alive—to stand in solidarity with others.

Still alive—to bear witness to the majesty of the human soul.

Still alive! Still alive!"

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, Rabbi Joseph P. Weinberg is still alive. He may no longer be physically among us, but his spirit and legacy live on.

[From the Washington Post, Oct. 17, 1999]

RABBI JOSEPH P. WEINBERG DIES AT 62

(By Caryle Murphy)

Joseph P. Weinberg, 62, senior rabbi at Washington Hebrew Congregation, who had been active in interracial and civil rights efforts since the 1960s, died at his Potomac home Friday night after battling brain cancer for more than a year.

Rabbi Weinberg, who was known for his concern for social issues, had served for 31 years at Washington Hebrew, the city's oldest Jewish congregation and the largest Reform congregation in the Washington area. For many of its thousands of members as well as many others in the community at large, he was the human symbol of the congregation.

His death came a little more than a month after the rabbi delivered an emotional farewell sermon on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year and one of the holiest days in the Jewish calendar.

With the help of his three children, who each read portions of the sermon, Weinberg told a packed sanctuary he had just learned that he must "battle anew with my pesky invader" but wanted "to have Rosh Hashanah as usual."

He said the holiday was a reminder of "God's great gift to us . . . the precious gift of time," which is "ours to fill wisely, joyfully, completely." The ailing rabbi told his congregants to rejoice that "we are still here. Still alive, to stand for causes that are just . . . to bear witness to the majesty of the human soul. Still alive!"

The Sept. 11 sermon was the first time many in the congregation realized "what was really happening as far as his health was concerned," recalled Kenneth Marks, president of the Northwest Washington congregation. "The mood was quite emotional.

"Joe Weinberg and the congregation were one and the same, basically," Marks added. "What can you say when you lose someone who meant so much? This is the most compassionate man you ever met in your life. He always wanted to do good, and he always had time for you."

Weinberg's brain cancer was diagnosed in March 1998, and he underwent surgery twice, his wife, Marcia Weinberg, said yesterday. On Friday evening, the family had gathered for the traditional Shabbat prayers, and Weinberg, his wife recalled, "left us while the candles were still burning."

Since his arrival in Washington in 1968—a time when the city was wracked by racial riots and anti-war protests—Weinberg played a leading role in efforts to improve racial relations and fight poverty. He helped organize Ya'chad, a Jewish organization promoting affordable city housing, and Carrie Simon House, a transitional home for unmarried mothers in Northwest Washington, which is supported by Washington Hebrew.

Weinberg also was a moving force behind his congregation's annual service held jointly with local African American churches to honor the legacy of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. on the Jewish Sabbath right before King's national holiday.

Marcia Weinberg, 61, said her husband had been deeply affected by his experiences when he marched with King in the historic civil rights march in Selma, AL, in 1965. Then a young rabbi, Weinberg was arrested twice.

"It was an important moment for him as a human being and as a rabbi," she said. "Joseph was very motivated by social action."

Weinberg was born in Chicago in 1937. His mother, Helen Joy Weinberg, was an artist, and his father, Alfred, a businessman. In 1938, as the Nazi menace was threatening European Jewry, Alfred Weinberg returned to his native Germany to bring his parents and several other family members to the United States.

After graduating from Northwestern University in 1958, Joseph Weinberg immediately entered seminary at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cin-

cinnati. After his ordination in 1963, he served as assistant rabbi at a San Francisco congregation before coming to Washington.

Weinberg, who also was a fervent supporter of Israel and campaigned for years to help Soviet Jews emigrate, became senior rabbi at Washington Hebrew in 1986. He was only the fifth rabbi to hold that position since the Reform congregation was founded in 1952.

The original congregants held services in their homes until they purchased a building site in the 800 block of Eighth Street NW. in Chinatown. There, they built their first synagogue, which they sold 58 years later. Today, the former temple, which still has the Star of David in its stained-glass windows, is home to Greater New Hope Baptist Church.

Washington Hebrew, with a membership of more than 3,000 families, is now located on Macomb Street NW. Funeral services for Weinberg will be held at the congregation tomorrow at 1 p.m.

In addition to his wife, Weinberg is survived by a sister, Judith Adler, 66 of Seattle; a daughter, Rachel Weinberg of Arlington; two sons, Jonathan Weinberg of Potomac and Josh Weinberg of Bethesda; and four grandchildren.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO
AMEND THE ALASKA NATIVE
CLAIMS SETTLEMENT ACT

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 18, 1999

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that would address several matters of concern to Alaska Natives through amendments to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971.

As my colleagues know, ANCSA was enacted in 1971, stimulated by the need to address Native land claims as well as the desire to clear the way for the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and thereby provide our country with access to the petroleum resources of Alaska's North Slope. As the years pass, issues arise which require amending that act. The Resources Committee as a matter of course routinely considers such amendments and brings them before the House.

The bill has three provisions. One of the provisions would restore 50,000 acres back to the village of Elim. The Norton Bay Reservation (later referred to as Norton Bay Native Reserve) was formally established in 1917 by an Executive Order and comprised approximately 350,000 acres of land for use of the U.S. Bureau of Education and the Natives of Indigenous Alaskan race. It is located approximately 110 miles southeast of Nome, Alaska along the shoreline of Norton Bay Reservation. Some of the burial grounds were mass graves of Natives who succumbed to epidemics of disease brought into the Eskimo culture by non-Natives. Today, Elim is home to about 300 Alaska Natives and a small number of non-Natives who live and work in the village.

In 1919, Congress enacted a law requiring that any future Indian Reservations be established only by an act of Congress. In 1927, Congress passed an act which prohibited