

If so, there are a number of controversial UN treaties that have not been ratified because they also could potentially nullify rights granted to us under the Constitution. Treaties such as the UN Covenant on the Rights of the Child, which officially designates the state as the guardian of children's best interest, insuring that the state knows better than parents what materials are appropriate and what associations are beneficial. It is also responsible for protecting the child when parental beliefs conflict with the rights of the child. Politically incorrect beliefs such as spanking or religious indoctrination could be grounds for placing children into foster care.

Another controversial treaty is the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. This treaty has been criticized in part because it forces countries which sign it to allow abortion rights to women, whether or not there is national legislation prohibiting abortion.

It doesn't take much imagination to project what agencies like the Department of Education or the Department of Health and Human Services could do with directives such as these.

The agency Clinton has set up with the issue of this Executive Order has been directed to monitor agencies, coordinate responses to human rights complaints, review proposed legislation for violations, and monitor the actions of states, commonwealths, and territories of the United States, as well as Native American tribes. It would appear that no local governments will escape the scrutiny of this new political bureaucracy.

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION SERVICES PROVIDER REGISTRATION ACT

HON. JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR.

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 1999

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, I have re-introduced legislation to provide a resource to people seeking reputable agencies and facilitators that process intercountry adoptions. The bill, entitled the "Intercountry Adoption Services Provider Registration Act," requires people licensed to process intercountry adoptions or involved with intercountry adoptions to register with the U.S. State Department's Office of Children's Issues. The agencies are required to disclose all addresses, employees and sources. If any agency fails to comply, it may suffer financial penalties or a loss of its operating license.

When I became a member of this body, I vowed to give a voice to those with no voice and to protect people from being victimized. Accordingly, when a constituent from my 17th district told me about her horrible experience with an intercountry adoption, I was compelled to take action.

My constituent and her husband had tried for many years to have a second child. When circumstances beyond their control would not let them have another child, they decided to adopt a foreign-born child. They researched the international adoption process and adoption agencies. They contacted the State Department and national adoption networks to gather information before proceeding with their

adoption. Finally, they settled on what they thought to be a reputable agency from New Mexico. The adoption process was underway. The New Mexico intercountry adoption facilitator asked for and received prepayment, followed by several installments to cover costs. The couple understood that an intercountry adoption was an expensive process, but knew that the cost would not matter when they had a child in their arms.

After a few months, a photograph of a three-year-old Russian girl was sent to the couple. They were told she was eligible for adoption. In order to prevent the child from being adopted by someone else, the couple was told to send additional monies to secure the adoption. The facilitator explained that the final adoption would take six to eight months to process. The couple gladly sent the money. What they weren't told was that Russia had placed a moratorium on all foreign adoptions. The moratorium took effect even before they were sent the photo of the child. The child was never placed in their home and they lost more than \$12,000 to a foreign adoption con artist. When the adoption facilitator was confronted with the moratorium information, he changed the name of his organization and moved to another state. After several months of searching for the agency, the couple is suing for a refund. The case is pending in a New Mexico court.

While completing research for this bill, I discovered many other couples who have similar horror stories of intercountry adoptions. Fraud, deceit and lots of money were involved in each of the tales. The House of Representatives must provide some consumer protection for persons who wish to adopt a foreign-child.

The Hague Intercountry Adoption Convention, a convention convened to protect children and co-operation in respect to intercountry adoptions, has yet to be signed by the United States. Among other matters, this treaty addresses the fraudulent and unscrupulous practices of a minority of agencies that participate in selling children, bribing parents and government officials, deceiving adoptive parents and failing to ensure that each and every adoption is in the best interests of the children concerned. However, the Hague Convention gives no specific legal protection to any person or provide a resource regarding the adoption process. Each individual country must protect its citizens. The Intercountry Adoption Services Provider Registration Act will provide a much needed source of information and protection for prospective adoptive parents.

THE REINTRODUCTION OF A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO ABOLISH THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

HON. RAY LAHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 1999

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to reintroduce, along with Congressman WISE from West Virginia, a constitutional amendment that seeks to end the arcane and obsolete institution known as the Electoral College.

It is no accident that this bill is being introduced today, the day that the electoral ballots are opened and counted in the presence of the House and Senate. I hope that the timing of this bill's introduction will only underscore the fact that the time has come to put an end to this archaic practice that we must endure every four years.

Only the President and the Vice President of the United States are currently elected indirectly by the Electoral College—and not by the voting citizens of this country. All other elected officials, from the local officeholder up to United States Senator, are elected directly by the people.

Our bill will replace the complicated electoral college system with the simple method of using the popular vote to decide the winner of a presidential election. By switching to a direct voting system, we can avoid the result of electing a President who failed to win the popular vote. This outcome has, in fact, occurred three times in our history and resulted in the elections of John Quincy Adams (1824), Rutherford B. Hayes (1876), and Benjamin Harrison (1888).

In addition to the problem of electing a President who failed to receive the popular vote, the Electoral College system also allows for the peculiar possibility of having Congress decide the outcome should a presidential ticket fail to receive a majority of the Electoral College votes. Should this happen, the 12th Amendment requires the House of Representatives to elect a President and the Senate to elect a Vice President. Such an occurrence would clearly not be in the best interest of the people, for they would be denied the ability to directly elect those who serve in our highest offices.

This bill will put to rest the Electoral College and its potential for creating contrary and singular election results. And, it is introduced without historical precedent. In 1969, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a bill calling for the abolition of the Electoral College and putting a system of direct election in its place. Despite passing the House by a vote of 338-70, the bill got bogged down in the Senate where a filibuster blocked its progress.

So, it is in the spirit of this previous action that we introduce legislation to end the Electoral College. I am hopeful that our fellow members on both sides of the aisle will stand with us by cosponsoring this important piece of legislation.

IN MEMORY OF PADDY CLANCY

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a music legend, Paddy Clancy of The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem. The Clancy Brothers were one of the first Irish musical groups to achieve international notoriety. The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem created numerous hit songs in the 1960's.

Paddy Clancy was born in Carrick-on-Suir in Tipperary county to a family of nine, all of

whom were musically inclined. In the 1950's he and his brother Tommy emigrated to New York to pursue acting careers. It seemed the brothers were destined however, to make their mark not as thespians but as musicians. Later, their brother Liam was to join Paddy and Tom, with Tommy Makem they created The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem. The Clancy Brothers were known for their incredible harmonies and their energetic concerts. These talents were quickly recognized, and they built a loyal fan base, playing folk clubs in Greenwich Village.

In 1961 they gained national notoriety following an incredible 16-minute set on The Ed Sullivan Show. Their music defied definition. It was both beautiful and raucous at once. They blended American folk music with traditional Irish forms. Paddy was equally capable of singing an Irish drinking song or an elegant ballad. Paddy and the Clancies also performed with Bob Dylan and Barbra Streisand. The Clancies were able to expose Americans to the glorious music of Ireland and still incorporate American folk into their music.

Ladies and gentlemen, the contributions made by Paddy Clancy to music were incredible. I ask you to join me today in remembering this fine musician.

FRANCIS FRANCOIS, A DEDICATED
PUBLIC SERVANT

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 1999

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the retirement of Francis B. Francois; Executive Director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

Mr. Francois will retire in February after 19 years with AASHTO. In addition, during his tenure he also served on the Executive Committee of the Transportation Research Board.

Francis Francois was born and raised on an Iowa farm and earned an engineering degree at Iowa State University and then went on to earn a law degree at the George Washington University. A registered patent attorney, Mr. Francois resides in Bowie, MD with his wife Eileen where they have raised five children.

Known as a skilled parliamentarian, Mr. Francois served 18 years as an elected official in Prince George's County including nine as a County Councilman. While serving the County, Mr. Francois was a member of many boards and associations including the National Association of Counties and the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Area Transit Authority. Having the vision for a regional approach to solving problems, he earned the reputation of being "Mr. Goodwrench" and "Mr. Fixit."

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Francois is a person dedicated to solving problems, serving people and setting plans in motion. In 1973, Mr. Francois was named "Washingtonian of the Year" by the Washingtonian magazine. He is also well published on such topics as the important role of counties in state government, urban water resources and the responsibility of regional decisionmaking.

Mr. Francois will be missed by AASHTO as well as the people of Prince George's County. Mr. Francois has the vision of an all-purpose reformer. I know my colleagues will join with me in congratulating Francis Francois and his family on his retirement and wishing them all the best as Mr. Francois enters what we all hope will be his most exciting adventures to date.

EDUCATION STANDARDS

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 1999

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, the November elections and impeachment trial have overshadowed a little-known victory for Colorado schools. Congress succeeded in blocking the President's efforts to consolidate national education standards and testing for local schools under the authority of the federal government.

Many parents and educators have been concerned about federalizing education measurements, content, and curriculum since the inception of Goals 2000 in 1994. While the need for standards and accountability is clear, concerns arise when one considers who will set the standards.

Under Goals 2000 legislation, unelected Washington bureaucrats set the standards. Although we hope the government will come up with reasonable and fair education benchmarks, in reality, there are big differences between what Washington experts prescribe and what parents want their kids to be taught.

This dilemma is no better illustrated than in the case of the National History Standards already developed under Goals 2000. Initial standards for American history did not mention some of the most prominent figures of American history including Paul Revere, the Wright Brothers, or George Washington's presidency. They did, however, encourage the study of Mansa Musa, a West African king in the 14th Century.

Not surprisingly, the standards were unduly critical of capitalism and our European founders. Even members of the Clinton administration and the press found the standards objectionable. The standards have subsequently been revised.

Placing government in charge of standards is certain to include not only content requirements—the who, what, where, why, and how of history, science, math and so on—but also subjective standards such as "students must demonstrate high order thinking or appreciate diversity." Suppose students are held to a standard which defies lessons their parents have taught them? What if teachers are forced to teach what they know to be false or counterproductive? Will government curricula replace that which locally elected school boards have chosen?

If adopted, national education priorities will reflect not the community nor parental values, but those of Washington. Given the atmosphere of political and pervasive corruption in Washington, can we afford such influence in our classrooms?

Clearly, standards of behavior and content must be established and enforced at the state and local level by those who are directly elected and accountable to parents and the community. Federal cooption must give way to increased parental authority. Parents must insist lessons and reading materials state facts and relate values they know to be true. They should vote for school board members who hold their convictions and parents should attend board meetings to stay connected to the process.

The authority of parents to direct their children's education remains threatened however, at least until zeal for federalization is extinguished. The 105th Congress voted to keep education standards in hands of parents and the community last year. Congress must continue to stand up for the freedom of local teachers to teach, and the liberty of our children to learn.

SYRACUSE SERVED BY INTRODUCTION OF "NEW NEWSPAPER" 100 YEARS AGO

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 1999

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, one century ago, on January 1, 1899, Central New Yorkers were treated to a new newspaper, The Post-Standard. That paper, one of a half-dozen at the time, remains today. Now it is one of two papers, and the only morning newspaper. I want to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the management and staff at this important milestone.

In particular, I would like to congratulate the top management, Mr. Stephen Rogers and Mr. Stephen A. Rogers, the President and Publisher respectively, for their well-known civic leadership and faithful adherence to the best of principles of journalism in the United States.

With the stewardship of a newspaper comes an important and historic responsibility. In the attached editorial, it is mentioned that a newspaper must be profitable to survive. But the newspaper must be sensitive to its special status in our nation's history. It is protected mightily by the First Amendment, and its right to print news and opinion without fear of retribution from any governmental quarter is unique in the world.

Though we in this body are often at odds with newspapers, we know their value and we know they represent a fundamental tenet of freedom. I have included the attached editorial, which appeared January 1 this year, commemorating the centennial recognition of The Post-Standard.

"CENTENNIAL POST: Your morning paper is 100 today, still pursuing much the same mission. 'A legitimate primary aim of the newspaper is to make money.'

Thus read the editorial that appeared in the inaugural edition of The Post-Standard 100 years ago today. The principle remains true today. As the editorial noted, quoting an editor-senator from Rhode Island: "A paper that cannot support itself cannot be any service . . . to spend money upon it is like wasting fuel in an attempt to kindle a store."