

groups. For example, an investigative report undertaken by the French Parliament in 1996 contained a list of "dangerous" groups in order to warn the public against them. Suspect activities, according to the report, include "recruitment" through evangelistic outreach and distribution of tracts, activities clearly within the internationally recognized right to free expression. Similarly, the Belgian Parliament's 1997 report had a widely circulated informal appendix that listed 189 groups and included various allegations against many Protestant and Catholic groups, Quakers, Hasidic Jews, Buddhists, and the YWCA. In Belgium, the unofficial appendix appears to have gained significance in the eyes of some public officials who reportedly have denied access to publicly rented buildings for Seventh Day Adventists and Baha'i because they were listed in the appendix.

Equally alarming, the French, Belgian, and Austrian Governments, as well as a number of state governments in Germany, have set up hotlines for the public and, through government-sponsored "information centers," distribute information on groups deemed by the government to be "dangerous." Characterizations of religious beliefs by these government information centers and publication of unproven and potentially libelous materials have already caused problems for a number of minority religious groups. Such government action presumes that religious beliefs and spiritual convictions can be objectively analyzed by government bureaucrats in their consumer protection role. These information centers contradict the OSCE commitments to "foster a climate of mutual tolerance and respect," and excessively entangle the government in the public discussion on the viability of particular religious beliefs.

A few months ago, in October 1998, the French Prime Minister's office created the "Interministerial Mission to Battle Against Sects," which by its very name, suggests confrontation with religious minorities rather than tolerance. The Interministerial Mission's mandate includes the responsibility to "predict and fight against actions of sects that violate human dignity or threaten public order."

This is the latest example of how the French Government has taken steps which have negative effects on religious liberty. In 1996, the French Parliament placed the Institut Theologique de Nimes, a mainstream Baptist seminary closely connected to the Luther Rice Seminary in Atlanta, Georgia, on its list of so-called "sects." Since then, libelous articles about the Institut have been published in newspapers. The articles were based on hearsay of dubious origin. In addition, the church connected with the Institut recently reported that a loan application was rejected for the reason that the church is on the Parliament's "sect" list. Members of the Institut have also apparently suffered discrimination from people in the region; according to report, at least one church member has lost her job due to her attendance.

Since the 1997 Belgian Parliament's report with the unofficial appendix listing 189 groups, the Belgian Government has moved ahead with plans to establish an "Advice and Information Center on Dangerous Sects." It is my understanding that this center should be fully

operational by the latter part of this year. According to Belgian officials at the Ministry of Justice, the new center will distribute official government views on the groups identified by the Parliament and may expand its inquiries to other groups not previously listed. A coalition of Belgian religious groups registered their concern at a press conference held in May 1998 in Brussels and continues to oppose the Belgian Government policies toward religious groups.

In Austria, a law restricting religious freedom became effective in January 1998. The law requires that a religious group prove a 20-year existence in Austria, have a creed distinct from previously registered groups, and have a membership of at least 0.02% of the population or 16,000 members before they are granted full rights under law. The Austrian Government's opinion that the government must "approve" religious belief before it is available for the public reveals a shocking retreat from democratic principles which encourage the free exchange of ideas and quality before the law for all religions or beliefs.

The tendency to increase control over religion or belief groups extends to Europe as a whole. Pan-European institutions such as the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament have in the last year debated the role of government in controlling "sects." The tone of these discussions has been ominous and proposals include instituting even more government controls over minority religions.

The people of the United States are deeply committed to religious liberty. The 105th Congress overwhelmingly passed the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. This act establishes an Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom and a nine-member Commission on International Religious Freedom who will monitor the status of religious freedom in foreign countries. Additionally, the Act encourages the President of the United States to become more thoroughly involved by regularly reporting to Congress on the state of religious liberty and by requiring the President to take specific actions against countries which violate this freedom.

Let me emphasize that the Act mandates U.S. Government action against not only countries engaged in persecution of religious believers, but also mandates U.S. Government action against countries that are actively intolerant of religious groups or those that allow societal intolerance to exist. The intolerant actions of Western European governments squarely are in the purview of the Act. The Commission, the Ambassador at Large, and the President are mandated to focus on issues of religious intolerance, and I encourage them to focus on the actions taken by Western European governments in light of international law and international commitments on religious liberty.

Clearly the actions taken by the Governments of France, Belgium, Germany, and Austria call into question the commitment those countries made to "foster a climate of mutual tolerance and respect." I urge the Administration to continue raising these issues with the Governments of Western Europe to ensure through law and governmental practice that religious freedoms for minorities are protected.

GOOD FRIDAY TRADE AND INVESTMENT ACT

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, we're here today because we share a common goal. We all want the peace process in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic to work.

As hard as it is to get folks to sign a peace agreement. It's even harder to make sure that it gets fully implemented.

We feel strongly that the best chance we have to ensure the Good Friday Peace Agreement is fully implemented is by creating jobs and economic growth.

The legislation we are introducing today is the first comprehensive effort by the United States to create real jobs and real investment in Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Irish Republic.

Our legislation uses existing trade and investment tools to stimulate tangible economic assistance to the people of Northern Ireland and the border counties. Faced with continued resistance to the Irish free trade efforts of the past, we concluded that a fresh attempt to fashion legislation that could address European reticence while quickly delivering meaningful trade and investment assistance to Northern Ireland and the border counties was in order.

The legislation provides for the creation of a \$300 million Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) equity fund. Such a fund generates private sector focus and interest in Northern Ireland and the Border area and makes sure that women entrepreneurs have meaningful access to that funding. We believe that the multiplier effect from such a fund could generate a total \$1.2 billion in new private investment.

Our legislation also relies on the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) to assist Northern Ireland's exporters to grow their economy and job base. For those of you who don't know, the United States Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) provides preferential duty-free entry for approximately 4,500 products from 149 designated beneficiary countries and territories.

GSP lowers the tariff rate for goods being imported into the United States. GSP already is in place for portions of the European Union. Because beneficiary designees are not required to change import policies. GSP designation for Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Irish Republic would not require them to seek an amendment from the EU or the Treaty of Rome.

Finally, the legislation relies on the International Fund for Ireland to increase funding for projects that will create rapid job growth in the private sector. The bill recommends six projects for funding and support that will provide both immediate and mid-term job generating growth.

We feel strongly that now is the time for the U.S. to send a clear, serious and solid signal of support to the parties in Northern Ireland that are struggling to implement the peace agreement.

Stimulating real job creation through improving access to our marketplace and encouraging private investment would send a strong signal to everyone that the price of peace could very well be prosperity.

THE COLUSA BASIN WATERSHED
INTEGRATED RESOURCES MAN-
AGEMENT ACT OF 1999

HON. DOUG OSE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Colusa Basin Watershed Integrated Resources Management Act of 1999.

The Colusa Basin drainage area consists of 1,036,000 acres—1,620 square miles—in northern California within Glenn, Colusa and Northern Yolo Counties. The Colusa Basin Drainage District embodies more than 600,000 acres of the Sacramento Valley, spanning from Knights Landing in the south to Orland in the north, with the Sacramento River and the Sierra foothills forming the east and west boundaries.

Flooding in Colusa Basin causes approximately \$4.9 million in property damage each year. In 1995, a major flood did an estimated \$100 million in damage to private and public property. The costs of these floods are borne by residents, local agencies and the Federal Government. Large-scale traditional flood-control methods are not cost effective in the Basin. Instead, local authorities are focused on small-scale structural and non-structural flood control remedies that would produce flood protection at a reasonable cost and have the added benefit of being environmentally acceptable.

The Colusa Basin and the Bureau of Reclamation have jointly developed an integrated plan that would provide flood protection for cities and agricultural areas by reducing peak runoff flooding along streams; capture storm water for local uses, groundwater recharge, and wildlife purposes; improve water quality; reduce land subsidence; and improve the quality and quantity of fish and wildlife habitat in the region.

The program includes the construction of 11 small, off-stream, environmentally sound foot-hill reservoirs and 10,000 acres of new wetlands and riparian habitat. This bill is supported by a wide range of interests, including local farm bureaus, cities and counties in the Colusa Basin, irrigation districts, the CALFED Bay-Delta program and conservation groups such as the California Waterfowl Association, among others.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill, and build upon the bipartisan coalition of cosponsors committed to improving flood control, water quality, and wildlife habitat in northern California.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RON LEWIS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate having the following statement printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD in the appropriate place: Mr. Speaker, on March 16, 1999, I was returning from Moscow where I participated in meetings with leaders of the Russian Duma as part of a Congressional Delegation trip led by my colleague, the Honorable CURT WELDON. The purpose of our trip was to discuss missile defense issues and specifically H.R. 4. As a result, I missed Rollcall votes 51, 52 and 53. Had I been present, I would have voted YES on all three votes.

Rollcall No. 50—H.R. 891, Federal Maritime Commission Authorization Act.

Vote—"Yes."

Mr. Speaker, the Maritime Commission provides needed protections for U.S. shippers and carriers through its oversight and licensing activities. I support this bill which allows the Commission to improve services, address the Y2K computer problem, and continue its mission.

Rollcall No. 52—H.R. 774, Women's Business Center Amendments Act.

Vote—"Yes."

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 775 which will allow more women to benefit from the Women's Business Center program currently operated by the Small Business Administration. This measure simplifies matching fund requirements and increases authorization levels for the program making it easier for communities to establish centers that will educate and encourage small business growth.

Small businesses in this country exemplify the true meaning of what is called the "American Dream". This measure takes another step toward preserving that dream by encouraging more Americans to start their own business.

Rollcall No. 52—H. Con. Res. 25.

Vote—"Yes."

Mr. Speaker, I recently met with Prime Minister Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders who are working in earnest to gain a peaceful solution along the West Bank. These efforts include negotiations about the formation of a permanent Palestinian State.

Recent statements by PLO Leader Yasser Arafat, regarding his willingness to declare an independent Palestinian State along the West Bank, are threatening those fragile negotiations. Should Mr. Arafat follow through on his statement, he will be violating the Oslo accords and dragging the peace process towards hostility. I support this non-binding resolution expressing the sense of Congress that decisions about the Palestinian controlled land along the West Bank must be made through the negotiation process. It also states that Congress opposes any attempts, outside of the negotiation process, to establish a Palestinian State. The agreements made through the peace process must be upheld by all parties involved.

TRIBUTE TO WALNUT CREEK
LIONS CLUB

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, today I congratulate the Walnut Creek Lions Club as they celebrate their 75th Anniversary. Since its founding in April 1924, the Walnut Creek Lions Club has provided immeasurable services to the citizens of Contra Costa County. I am proud to honor them as they celebrate their 75 years of dedication to the betterment of their community and the world at large.

Mr. Speaker, as you may know, Lions are committed to sharing their success by helping those less fortunate than themselves. Created in 1917 by Melvin Jones in Chicago, Lions Clubs International now enjoys over 44,000 clubs worldwide, with a membership of 1.4 million in more than 185 countries. In 1925, Helen Keller challenged the Lions to become "knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness". Thus began the Lions Clubs' renown for their sight-related programs, including SightFirst, the world's largest blindness prevention program. The motto of every Lion, however, is simply "We Serve", which eloquently expresses the true mission of this community service club.

Please join me in recognizing the Walnut Creek Lions Club as they celebrate their 75th anniversary. Their service-minded spirit is inspirational and I am honored that they are a part of my constituency.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CON-
GRESS THAT A POSTAGE STAMP
SHOULD BE ISSUED HONORING
THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE JUNIOR LEAGUE

HON. BOB BARR

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the introduction of a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that a postage stamp should be issued honoring the 100th Anniversary of the Junior League.

One of my constituents, in Georgia, Ms. Martina Goscha, a dedicated and long time member of the Cobb Marietta, Junior League, brought this important issue to my attention.

The Junior League was founded in 1901, in New York City, by Mary Harriman. The Association was launched for those more fortunate in helping those more in need. Volunteers would work in settlement houses on New York's Lower East Side to improve child health, nutrition, and literacy.

The Junior League's efforts caught on, and in 1912 the Junior League expanded to Montreal. In 1914, the Junior League of St. Louis marched for women's suffrage and was active in World War I efforts by selling bonds and working in Army hospitals. In 1921, 30 Junior Leagues joined to form the Association of Junior Leagues International (AJLI) to collectively advance their work.