

KAREN MIKOLASY: WASHINGTON STATE'S TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. JAY INSLEE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 3, 1999

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to announce that Karen Mikolasy has been chosen Washington State's Teacher of the Year.

Ms. Mikolasy teaches English at Shorecrest High School, located in Washington's 1st congressional district. During her 28 years, she has become famous for being not only a remarkable teacher, but also a tireless champion of her students' talents. She never fails to help them strive for excellence. She has devoted countless hours of selfless service to the most valuable resource in this country—our children. Her gift of teaching gives her students the intellectual tools to become successful and productive members of society.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing that impacts America's social, economic and political future more than the quality of learning that happens in our schools. I do not believe educators are given nearly the amount of accolades they deserve, so I appreciate the chance to simply say: thank you for the important and meaningful work you do.

With teachers like Karen Mikolasy, I am confident that today's students will become tomorrow's leaders.

Thank you, Karen Mikolasy, for your commitment to education and congratulations, again, on becoming Washington State's Teacher of the Year.

TRIBUTE TO FLORETTE POTKIN

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 3, 1999

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Florette Potkin, who is being honored for her dedicated service to the community. Florette and her family are residents of Northridge, California, and have been extremely generous to Temple Ner Maarav, our community, and many charitable causes.

President Kennedy once said, "For those to whom much is given, much is required." Temple Ner Maarav has recognized Florette for exemplifying leadership, volunteerism, and dedication. For over three decades, Florette has worked tirelessly to better the community as a whole.

Through her love for the arts, Florette found her way to Temple Ner Tamid through her participation in a musical play. Thereafter, she became active through a variety of programs within the temple. While serving as Sisterhood President in 1974, she also helped to pave the way for women in religious functions when she became a Bat Mitzvah that same year.

Florette and her husband, Perry, have served in leadership positions in both Temple Ner Tamid and Temple Maarev. Florette has also encouraged her four children to become active in the Jewish community. Florette has been unwavering in her efforts to work with

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members of the community through her generous contributions.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, please join me in paying tribute to Florette Potkin, who is truly a role model for the citizens of Los Angeles.

IN HONOR OF THE BAYONNE CHAPTER OF UNICO NATIONAL ON THEIR 50TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 3, 1999

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Bayonne Chapter of UNICO National on their 50th Anniversary of dedicated service to the community.

UNICO, an Italian-American organization, has been committed to serving the community through grassroots work and the building of partnerships with other community activist and advocacy groups while maintaining its identity as Italian-American. In order to fulfill this goal, UNICO National has supported five basic principals: maintain Unity; serve one's Neighbor; maintain Integrity of character; be motivated by Charity; and open Opportunity to the underprivileged.

Since its inception in 1949, the Bayonne Chapter of UNICO National has contributed more than \$300,000 to more than 200 charities, scholarship programs, youth programs, schools, senior organizations, as well as others in the community at need. Because of members' tireless efforts, the Bayonne Chapter has also been successful in facilitating a \$25,000 donation for the building of a Child Care Facility at the YMCA, at \$20,000 donation to the Bayonne Hospital, and a college scholarship program which has awarded more than \$50,000 in scholarships to local students.

The Bayonne Chapter of UNICO exemplifies leadership and dedication to both the Italian-American community and to Bayonne. For these tremendous contributions to New Jersey, I am very happy to honor the Bayonne Chapter for its achievements on its 50th Anniversary. I salute and congratulate UNICO National on these extraordinary accomplishments.

ADMINISTRATION CERTIFICATION OF RUSSIA REGARDING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 3, 1999

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, through Public Law 105-292, the International Religious Freedom Act, Congress is on record as standing for religious liberty throughout the world.

Furthermore, Public Law 105-177, the foreign appropriations legislation passed in the 105th Congress, mandates that no foreign aid money be appropriated to the Government of

the Russian Federation if the President determines that the Russian government has implemented legislation or regulations that discriminate, or cause discrimination, against religious groups or religious communities in Russia in violation of accepted international agreements on human rights and religious freedoms to which the Russian Federation is a party. This provision was in response to the 1997 Russian Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations, which many feared would lead to limitations on religious worship and a retreat from the standards of religious freedom that had been achieved in Russia following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

This year, for the second year in a row, the President has made the determination that the Government of the Russian Federation has not implemented legislation or regulations that cause such discrimination against religious groups. The Presidential Determination states "During the period under review, the Government of the Russian Federation has applied the 1997 Law on Religion in a manner that is not in conflict with its international obligations on religious freedom. However, this issue requires continued and close monitoring as the Law on Religion furnishes regional officials with an instrument that has been interpreted and used by officials at the local level to restrict the activities of religious minorities." Furthermore, the Presidential Determination states, "To the extent that restrictions on the rights of religious minorities have occurred, they have been the consequence of actions taken by regional or local officials and do not appear to be a manifestation of federal government policy. Such incidents, while they must be taken seriously, represent a relatively small number of problems when viewed against the size of the country and the number of religious organizations."

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the above statements are a reasonably accurate representation of the religious liberty situation in Russia and that the Presidential Determination is probably a fair one, given the lack of firm legal structure and the geopolitical situation in the present-day Russian Federation. Moreover, some of the most egregious instances of restrictions against religious groups in Russia have been corrected through court action.

And to be fair, Russia is hardly the worst offender in the former Soviet Union. In Turkmenistan, for instance, religious groups are required to have five-hundred members before they can be legally registered with the government to operate openly. It is a ridiculously high number and has resulted in harassment of unregistered religious groups. Of course, unlike Russia, the Government of Turkmenistan doesn't claim to be much of a democracy or go out of its way to adhere to international standards of human rights.

In Uzbekistan, the 1998 law imposes severe criminal penalties for meeting without registering and for engaging in free religious expression with the intent to persuade the listener to another point of view, in violation of OSCE religious liberty commitments. Since February 1999, several pastors in Uzbekistan have been detained and jailed on charges of drug possession eerily reminiscent of charges brought in years past against Soviet religious dissidents.

These comparisons, however, do not change the fact that there are still several problems in the area of religious liberty in Russia that should be noted and corrected, especially if a considerable sum of U.S. taxpayer money still continues to go to Russia. In the East-West Church & Ministry Report of Winter 1999, Mark Elliot and Sharyl Corrado of the Institute for East-West Christian Studies write:

Implementation of the 1997 law to date has been uneven. At least in the short run, a number of factors appear to have worked against consistently harsh application Still life since the passage of the law has not been easy for many who wish to worship outside the folds of the Moscow [Russian Orthodox] Patriarchate. The first 15 months of the new law included at least 69 specific instances of state harassment, restriction or threat of restriction against non-Moscow Patriarchate religious communities in the Russian Republic.

For instance, I wonder if it was a coincidence that a few days after the Presidential Determination, the Russian Federation Ministry of Justice rejected the application of the Society of Jesuits for official registration. For that matter, most of the property seized by the Communists from the Roman Catholic Church in Russia has not been restored.

In the city of Moscow, which is considered a liberal jurisdiction, the Jehovah's Witnesses have been subjected to a protracted trial that threatens to return them to "underground" status.

In Stavropol, the local Moslem community has not only been refused the return of a mosque that had been seized by the Communists, but also been prevented from holding worship services in other quarters. A provincial official justified this policy by saying that Moslems only make up 10 percent of the population in the city.

These are only a few of the most prominent cases of concern. In rural areas, local officials attempt to hinder worship activities by a number of subterfuges, ranging from the refusal to rent city property to religious groups without their own premises to outright threats and eviction of missionaries.

Therefore, while I believe the Presidential Determination is, by and large, acceptable at this time, I would emphasize the reference to "continued and close monitoring" of the situation. In my opinion, the Administration has done a good job of monitoring the Russian religious liberty situation, and I trust these efforts will continue. As Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, I urge the Russian government to take every appropriate step to see that religious freedom is a reality for all in Russia, and I know the Congress will continue to follow this issue closely.

IN MEMORY OF THE REVEREND
SEAMUS O'SHAUGHNESSY

HON. CARRIE P. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 3, 1999

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of the late Reverend Seamus

O'Shaughnessy, a well known champion of civil rights, peace activist, and 29-year Archdiocese of Miami priest who died earlier this month at Little Flower Catholic Church in Hollywood. Father O'Shaughnessy will be remembered as an outspoken and passionate advocate for minority rights.

Born in 1940 in Limerick City, Ireland, Father O'Shaughnessy learned about the Archdiocese of Miami through a recruitment offer, came to our city, and was assigned as the assistant pastor of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Perrine. Subsequently, he served in other parishes, and he helped to organize the First National Black Catholic Congress in 1987.

Reverend O'Shaughnessy formed a local chapter of Orita Rite, a group that recognizes the rites of passage into adulthood of young people of color. This active priest often wore kente cloth when speaking at his Catholic Church.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to pay tribute to a priest who was so vigorous in advancing minority rights. Father O'Shaughnessy will be missed by his congregation and his many friends in the community.

ARSON AWARENESS WEEK

HON. ROBERT E. WISE, JR.

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 3, 1999

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to remind all Americans and especially West Virginians that this week is Arson Awareness Week. As a member of the Congressional Fire Service Caucus, I support the efforts of the International Association of Arson Investigators and their West Virginia Chapter who will celebrate the IAAI's 50th Anniversary this year.

The IAAI in cooperation with the United States Fire Administration educates the public about the hundreds of innocent people who die each year and the millions of dollars of property damage caused by the arsonist's match. I am proud of what the West Virginia Chapter of the IAAI has done to control arson. The Chapter provides advanced training for police, fire and insurance personnel. They also work to educate West Virginians about how arson affects their lives.

The intentional burning of homes, businesses and cars has long been a problem. Even more outrageous was when our places of worship came under attack. I proudly worked with my colleagues in a bipartisan effort to prevent more church burnings. Through the efforts of the Congressional Fire Services Institute, an educational program was presented nationwide for church leaders. The West Virginia Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators conducted many of these programs.

I am proud of my long relationship with the West Virginia Fire Service. I know that many of our firefighters risk their lives extinguishing these intentionally set blazes. That is why I will continue to work to prevent arson so our fire fighters won't be endangered. Mr. Speaker, I join with all members of Congress in reminding Americans that we must work together to prevent arson.

IN RECOGNITION OF CABERNET
SAUVIGNON

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 3, 1999

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to recognize the Cabernet Sauvignon winegrape, indisputably the grape that put California and the United States on the international wine map.

Cabernet Sauvignon will be celebrated in my hometown St. Helena, California from May 10 to May 16 by the California Cabernet Society, the Culinary Institute of America, and the Wine Spectator Greystone Restaurant, and it's fitting that we honor the "king" of red wines.

Each year the California Cabernet Society stages a Spring Barrel Tasting to showcase the most recent vintage. This year's tasting will, for the first time, kick off an entire week, Cabernet Week, highlighting this varietal and offering consumers the opportunity to taste rare and older offerings of America's most treasured grape.

Cabernet Sauvignon, Mr. Speaker, has a long and distinguished history in California and the United States dating back to the late 1800's. It is a remarkably steady and consistent performer throughout much of the state. In certain areas, it is capable of rendering wines of uncommon depth, richness, concentration and longevity. It rises to the greatest heights in Napa Valley and its smaller appellations such as Calistoga, Oakville, Rutherford, and the Stags Leap District. It also performs exceptionally well in the mountains on both sides of the valley, and in select vineyards in Alexander Valley, Dry Creek Valley, Sonoma Valley, Sonoma Mountain, Paso Robles, and in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

I need not remind my colleagues that the renowned 1976 Paris tasting rocked the international wine world by placing California Cabernet Sauvignon on the same playing field with Bordeaux. Indeed, a few of California's offerings were judged as superior wines. A 1973 Stag's Leap Wine Cellars' Cabernet Sauvignon scored highest when matched against French Bordeaux, which is also made from the Cabernet Sauvignon grape. In fact, American wines made a very strong showing throughout the competition. The Paris tasting gave international recognition and much-needed momentum to American vintners, American wines, and American methods of grape growing and wine production.

Cabernet Sauvignon has come a long way since 1976 and has become a model inspiring vintners in France, Italy, Spain, South Africa, Chile, Australia and New Zealand to adopt our New World technology and technique. Cabernet produces wines of great intensity and depth of flavor. A \$1.5 billion business in California, Cabernet Sauvignon is the most regal of all wines and is second only to Zinfandel in total red-wine acreage. Because of the high esteem of Cabernet and the way it complements a meal, a huge proportion of the varietal wines are sold in the best restaurants worldwide.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is fitting and appropriate at this time to honor Cabernet