

July 10, 2000

Since 1994, the IFC Legal Department has been involved in a joint effort with Gospel Rescue Ministries (GRM), a homeless shelter and drug rehabilitation/educational training center for men on the edge of DC's Chinatown neighborhood. This partnership has helped rebuild the lives of numerous formerly homeless individuals.

IFC offers men from Gospel Rescue Ministries the opportunity to work and receive training in the Legal Departments Records Room. The program allows these men to gain experience in records management while the IFC gains reliable help. Already, 14 men have taken part in the program and several of them have gone on to continue their studies, move to promising jobs with other firms, or take positions with other IFC Departments, while all have laid foundations for more stable lives.

The idea of IFC's involvement came about at a Legal Department retreat, where staff members said they wished they could see development impact locally or at least find ways of reaching out to the community. IFC Deputy General Counsel Jennifer Sullivan knew GRM and knew that it needed jobs for the graduates of its computer training program. Aware of openings in her department paying between \$8 and \$10 an hour, she proposed a partnership. As Ms. Sullivan has told me, it was definitely a win-win situation. These young men are gaining experience and training and IFC gets reliable, low-cost help.

Office manager Viki Betancourt and Records Room manager Michael Cortese closely track the program with GRM. Both were devastated when their first hire reverted to drug use and had to leave both the shelter and his job at IFC. But their eyes shine when they talk about the other men they have hired since.

One participant, who has earned his high school equivalency degree, is attending Strayer College and plans to become a minister. Others have landed jobs in other IFC departments. All feel a great responsibility to reach out to others in the shelter and show them that success is attainable. All have worked very hard and done well, according to Mr. Cortese. Other staff in the Records Room have come to appreciate the enthusiasm and dedication of these individuals.

Dr. Edward Eyring, director of GRM, says that most men who walk into the shelter cannot even conceive of being successful. Dr. Eyring is a friend of mine and an orthopedic surgeon who moved to Washington from Knoxville, Tennessee with his wife Mary Jane to run the privately supported program.

It is very appropriate that there is a sign over the front door of the program's facilities that reads, "If you haven't got a friend in the world, you can find one here. Come in." GRM says it has a 70 percent success rate in helping its men stay free of drugs and alcohol for at least 15 months but really offers more than just drug rehabilitation, aiming to give men support and training so that they can begin life anew. Nothing helps more than a job.

The IFC Legal Department staff is committed to finding ways to reach out to the community. This commitment has gone beyond words to provide employment opportunities that have transformed lives and renewed hope for a brighter future. The IFC deserves our

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congratulations and thanks for their successful involvement in the fight to combat homelessness in our nation's capital.

SECURING JUSTICE FOR THE IRANIAN JEWS

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2000

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deepest concerns for the ten Iranian Jews who were convicted last week of seditious crimes and sentenced to extraordinarily long sentences. By now it is well documented that the condemning trial was saturated with false evidence and forced confessions, and was never intended to expose the meaning of true justice. These individuals were small tradesmen, leading a life in the ways consistent with their religion, and it is that for which they are being punished. Religious persecution can never be allowed, but when such injustices are showcased before the international community, it is our responsibility to take a stand and say that this will not be tolerated.

We have seen legal and human rights organizations worldwide affirming that this trial was in fact a sham, and that it is beyond the realm of possibility to believe that such individuals could ever have been capable of committing the crimes for which they are accused.

By staging such a mockery of justice it is apparent that Iran has no comprehension of human or civil rights, and therefore convicted no other than themselves in proving that they remain unfit to enter any exercise of the civilized world.

In a recent meeting between President Clinton and the American relatives of the convicted Iranian Jews, a promise was made to use all possible U.S. government resources to secure the freedom of these individuals. This is a promise in which I would urge President Clinton to keep as I hope my colleagues here in the House would as well.

We must remember that as we speak that there are thousands of Jews remaining in Iran, who can be subjected to identical suppression at any time. We must take a stand here and now and say behavior such as this will not be tolerated both now and in the future.

Today, in New York the Jewish Community Relations Council and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations organized a solidarity gathering in an effort to show the world community that we will continue to fight for the rights of these individuals until justice is truly served. I would like to commend these organizations for their efforts and would like to offer and assistance possible to the rectification of this atrocity.

13645

CHURCH PLAN PARITY AND ENTANGLEMENT PREVENTION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN R. THUNE

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 26, 2000

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for S. 1309. This bill clarifies that church sponsored employer benefit plans are not subject to state insurance laws.

Because church plans are exempt from the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, they do not benefit from the explicit preemption of state insurance regulation that secular self-insured health plans enjoy. Many service providers have been reluctant to do business with church benefit programs for fear that they themselves may violate state insurance rules barring contracts with unlicensed entities. In addition, state regulators occasionally raise questions about the legal status of these benefit programs. These complications have caused churches to contract with numerous service providers in order to comply with recent federal mandates on church plans.

S. 1309 remedies this problem by clarifying that church plans are not insurance companies for state law purposes. Congress has already addressed a similar problem for church sponsored employee benefit plans under federal securities laws, extending the exemptions enjoyed by secular plans and preempting state securities regulation of church plans.

Just this year, my own state of South Dakota enacted an exemption for church plans from its insurance laws—making my State the fourth state to do so act. I commend the Director of Insurance, Darla Lyon, the State Legislature and the Governor for working hard to protect the health care benefits of church workers and to assist them in accessing discounted providers. South Dakota has now joined Texas, Florida and Minnesota in clarifying that church benefit plans are not insurance companies. It makes little sense to suggest that church benefit programs spend their resources to enact 46 more state exemptions. The pending bill will provide these programs the legal certainty they need in every state.

More than one million clergy, lay workers, and their families are presently being denied access to discounted service providers because of the ambiguous position of church plans under state law. S. 1309 corrects this problem.

I urge adoption of the pending bill.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, July 11, 2000 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

JULY 12

9:30 a.m.

Commerce, Science, and Transportation
To hold hearings on the nomination of Francisco J. Sanchez, of Florida, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation; Frank Henry Cruz, of California, Ernest J. Wilson III, of Maryland, Katherine Milner Anderson, of Virginia, and Kenneth Y. Tomlinson, of Virginia, all to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

SR-253

Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the Department of Defense Anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program.

SH-216

10 a.m.

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
To hold hearings to examine the National Science Foundation.

SD-430

Judiciary

Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine identity theft and how to protect and restore your good name.

SD-226

Budget

To hold hearings on certain provisions of S. 2274, to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide families and disabled children with the opportunity to purchase coverage under the medicaid program for such children.

SD-608

10:30 a.m.

Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the United Nations policy in Africa.

SD-419

2 p.m.

Foreign Relations

International Economic Policy, Export and Trade Promotion Subcommittee
To hold hearings on the role of biotechnology in combating poverty and hunger in developing countries.

SD-419

Judiciary

To hold hearings on the nomination of Glenn A. Fine, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, Department of Justice; the nomination of Dennis M. Cavanaugh, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey; the nomination of James S. Moody, Jr., of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida vice a new position created by Public Law 106-113, approved November 29, 1999; the nomination of Gregory A. Presnell, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida vice a new position created by Public Law

106-113, approved November 29, 1999; and the nomination of John E. Steele, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida vice a new position created by Public Law 106-113, approved November 29, 1999.

SD-226

2:30 p.m.

Energy and Natural Resources
Forests and Public Land Management Subcommittee

To hold oversight hearings on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement implementing the October 1999 announcement by the President to review approximately 40 million acres of national forest for increased protection.

SD-366

Indian Affairs

To hold oversight hearings on risk management and tort liability relating to Indian matters.

SR-485

JULY 13

9:30 a.m.

Energy and Natural Resources
Business meeting to consider pending calendar business; to be followed by oversight hearings to examine American gasoline supply problems.

SD-366

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Business meeting to markup pending calendar business.

SR-253

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Employment, Safety and Training Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine ergonomics and health care.

SD-430

10 a.m.

Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Business meeting to markup S. 2107, to amend the Securities Act of 1933 and the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to reduce securities fees in excess of those required to fund the operations of the Securities and Exchange Commission, to adjust compensation provisions for employees of the Commission; S. 2266, to provide for the minting of commemorative coins to support the 2002 Salt Lake Olympic Winter Games and the programs of the United States Olympic Committee; S. 2453, to authorize the President to award a gold medal on behalf of Congress to Pope John Paul II in recognition of his outstanding and enduring contributions to humanity; S. 2459, to provide for the award of a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to former President Ronald Reagan and his wife Nancy Reagan in recognition of their service to the Nation; S. 2101, to promote international monetary stability and to share seigniorage with officially dollarized countries; and a committee print of a substitute amendment of H.R. 3046, to preserve limited Federal agency reporting requirements on banking and housing matters to facilitate congressional oversight and public accountability.

SD-538

1 p.m.

Finance

International Trade Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine the United States trade policy agenda at the G 8 Summit.

SD-215

2 p.m.

Appropriations

Energy and Water Development Subcommittee

Business meeting to markup H.R. 4733, making appropriations for energy and water development for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001.

SD-124

Governmental Affairs

International Security, Proliferation and Federal Services Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine the annual report of the Postmaster General.

SD-342

2:30 p.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

National Parks, Historic Preservation, and Recreation Subcommittee

To hold hearings on S. 2294, to establish the Rosie the Riveter-World War II Home Front National Historical Park in the State of California; S. 2331, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to recalculate the franchise fee owed by Fort Sumter Tours, Inc., a concessioner providing services to Fort Sumter National Monument, South Carolina; and S. 2598, to authorize appropriations for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

SD-366

Intelligence

To hold closed hearings on pending intelligence matters.

SH-219

JULY 18

9:30 a.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.

SD-366

JULY 19

9:30 a.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.

SD-366

10 a.m.

Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings on certain legislative proposals and issues relevant to the operations of Inspectors General, including S. 870, to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) to increase the efficiency and accountability of Offices of Inspector General within Federal departments, and an Administrative proposal to grant statutory law enforcement authority to 23 Inspectors General.

SD-342

2:30 p.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

Water and Power Subcommittee

To hold oversight hearings on the status of the Biological Opinions of the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the operations of the Federal hydropower system of the Columbia River.

SD-366

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Indian Affairs
To hold oversight hearings on activities of the National Indian Gaming Commission.

SR-485

JULY 20

9:30 a.m.
Energy and Natural Resources
To hold oversight hearings on the United States General Accounting Office's investigation of the Cerro Grande Fire in the State of New Mexico, and from Federal agencies on the Cerro Grande Fire and their fire policies in general.

SD-366

Small Business

To hold hearings to examine the General Accounting Office's performance and accountability review.

SR-428A

10 a.m.

Indian Affairs

To hold hearings on S. 2688, to amend the Native American Languages Act to provide for the support of Native American Language Survival Schools.

SR-485

Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold oversight hearings on the conduct of monetary policy by the Federal Reserve.

SH-216

JULY 25

9:30 a.m.

Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the National Missile Defense Program.

SH-216

JULY 26

9 a.m.

Small Business

Business meeting to markup S. 1594, to amend the Small Business Act and Small Business Investment Act of 1958.

SR-428A

10 a.m.

Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings on S. 1801, to provide for the identification, collection, and review for declassification of records and materials that are of extraordinary public interest to the people of the United States.

SD-342

2:30 p.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

Forests and Public Land Management Subcommittee

To hold oversight hearings on potential timber sale contract liability incurred by the government as a result of timber sale contract cancellations.

SD-366

Indian Affairs

To hold hearings on S. 2526, to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to revise and extend such Act.

SR-485

JULY 27

10 a.m.

Indian Affairs

To hold oversight hearings on the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

SR-485

SEPTEMBER 26

9:30 a.m.

Veterans' Affairs

To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on the Legislative recommendation of the American Legion.

345 Cannon Building

CANCELLATIONS

JULY 12

10 a.m.

Finance

To hold hearings on disclosure of political activity of tax code section 527 and other organizations.

SD-215