

In California, and throughout the country, officials at the State, local, and Federal level are beginning to understand the strong sentiment in favor of liveability. This is a movement that the people have already started. As Joe Edmiston of the San Monica Mountains Conservancy said, "The public is far ahead of the politicians on this."

Mr. Speaker, this is not just true in California, but nationwide. At the Federal level, we in Congress have a unique opportunity to advance these issues. The Federal Government is the Nation's largest landowner, tenant, and employer. From the military to the Post Office, from our vast public landholdings to our transportation infrastructure and the environmental partnership, we have all the tools we need.

Our actions have tremendous impacts on how Americans live, work, and travel. By working to make the Federal Government a better partner with the State and local governments, with business, individual citizens and community groups, we can make our cities and suburbs across America more livable communities and our families safer, healthier and more economically secure.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There being no further requests for morning hour debates, pursuant to clause 12, rule I, the House will stand in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 8 minutes a.m.) the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

Rabbi Linda Motzkin, Temple Sinai, Saratoga Springs, New York, offered the following prayer:

In the Talmud, we are taught that every human being should be cognizant of three things, "know from whence you came, and where you are going, and before whom in the future you will be called to account."

Honorable Representatives, you who serve in this House know from whence you came, from every geographic region across this great Nation. And you know that the decisions you make in this Chamber will shape where we all are going, all the men, women and children whom you represent, the people of every faith, race and background who comprise the great tapestry of humanity that is the source of our country's strength.

And so we pray to the Eternal God: May these men and women who serve

their country be mindful that, in the future, they will be called to account, not only before the citizens they represent, and not only in the eyes of history, but before You, the God of all. May they be granted in their deliberations on this day a measure of Your wisdom and Your compassion. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TRAFICANT led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RABBI LINDA MOTZKIN

(Mr. SWEENEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SWEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I have the distinct pleasure to welcome Rabbi Linda Motzkin of the temple Mount Sinai in Saratoga Springs, New York, as she offered today's opening prayer.

Rabbi Motzkin was ordained by the Hebrew Union College Judiciary Institute of Religion in 1986. She has a BA in Hebrew Language from the University of California at Berkeley and an MA in Hebrew Letters from HUC-JIR.

Prior to her arrival at Skidmore in 1986, she taught the Judaic Studies department at the University of Cincinnati.

She is also coauthor of two Hebrew language textbooks, the First Hebrew Primer and Prayerbook Hebrew: The Easy Way.

In addition to serving as Skidmore's Jewish chaplain, she is co-rabbi, together with her husband, Rabbi Jonathan Rubenstein, of Temple Sinai of Saratoga Springs, a Reform Jewish congregation.

Rabbi Motzkin has a close relationship with all three local Jewish congregations and works to foster connections between Skidmore students and the local Saratoga Springs community, as well as all of those who live in New York's 22nd Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to have her here and welcome her participation today.

RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY IN FRANCE

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the freedom to worship freely according to the dictates of one's conscience is one of the basic rights enshrined in the bill of rights and in similar documents around the world.

The European Convention on Human Rights is another document that guarantees freedom of religion, but the powerful socialist party in France has compiled a list of 173 denominations that it considers dangerous; they call them cults.

The socialist parliament is about to send legislation to President Chirac that would imprison any member of these denominations for up to 2 years for proselytizing or evangelism.

Who is on the list? Well, it includes the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Scientologists, but it also includes Baptists and other well-known evangelical denominations.

Mr. Speaker, the President and Vice President of the United States are both Southern Baptists. Were they to live in France and invite friends to church, they might be imprisoned for that under this proposed law.

The freedom of religion is threatened around the world, but not just in Third World countries.

Mr. Speaker, we must stand against bigotry of every kind, including religious bigotry.

INTERNATIONAL ABDUCTION

(Mr. LAMPSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to continue delivering my 1-minute stories on the issue of international child abduction.

On October 22, 1994, after learning that she was going to lose custody of her children, Mrs. Isabel Felix Leon fled to Mexico with Margaret and William Leon Sandige.

At the time of the abduction, Margaret was 6 and William was 1. After the abduction, the children's father, William Sandige, was granted full custody; and warrants for the mother's arrest were issued. In November of 1995, the mother was arrested at a border crossing without the children and was released after revealing their location.

Under the Hague treaty, Mr. Sandige was awarded full custody of the children from the Mexican court system; however, the abductor appealed the decision to the Supreme Court and has blocked further progress on the case.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sandige's children are now 11 and 6 years old. They have spent 6 years apart from each other. It is time to end their separation and the separation of thousands of other parents and children who are being forced apart. It is time, Mr. Speaker, to bring our children home.