

health professionals—the 2 million+ registered nurses in the United States.

These outstanding men and women, who work hard to save lives and maintain the health of millions of individuals, will celebrate National Nurses Week from May 6–12, 2000. Registered nurses will be honored by hosting or participating in several events such as rallies, childhood immunizations, community health screenings, publicity efforts, dinners, receptions and hospital events. I believe that any American who has ever been cared for by a nurse should join in the celebration of National Nurses Week.

Modern nursing has been traced to Florence Nightingale's efforts during the Crimean War of the mid-19th century. Exactly 100 years after Nightingale's methods were first used, National Nurses Week was first observed from October 11–16, 1954. National Nurses Day and Week was eventually moved to May to include Florence Nightingale's birthday, which is May 12th.

Using this year's theme: "Nurses—Keeping the Care in Health Care," the American Nurses Association (ANA) and its 53 constituent associations will highlight the diverse ways in which registered nurses, the largest health care profession, are working to improve health care for Americans. Thankfully, the efforts of nurses are being widely acknowledged. According to the Gallup Poll's 1999 "Honesty and Ethics" survey, nursing ranked #1 of 45 among the most respected professions.

Mr. Speaker, I will salute America's nurses during the week of May 6–12, 2000. I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

END RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN
INDIA

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 2, 2000

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, the persecution of Christians and other religious minorities in India continues. Now even an ally of the ruling party has spoken out against it.

Newsroom, a website devoted to religious news, reported that the Trinamool Congress, a party in coalition with the ruling BJP, demanded the banning of Bajrang Dal, a militant Hindu nationalist organization. The Bajrang Dal is affiliated with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), which in turn is part of the RSS, a Fascist organization that is the parent organization of the BJP.

Dara Singh, the person India has arrested in connection with the murder of missionary Graham Staines and his two young sons, has been linked to the Bajrang Dal. Christians have been subjected to three attacks in Uttar Pradesh in two weeks. On Good Friday, members of the Bajrang Dal attacked members of the House of Worship, a Christian church in Agra. Uttar Pradesh also has a law prohibiting Muslims from building new mosques or converting any building into a mosque without government permission. In the state of Orissa, religious conversions are banned without government permission.

In Haryana on April 22, three nuns were attacked by a Hindu fundamentalist. One, Sister Anandi, remains in Holy Family Hospital in serious condition. No one has been arrested for this crime.

The militant Hindu fundamentalists who carried out these acts are allies of the Indian government. The government itself has killed over 200,000 Christians in Nagaland, over a quarter of a million Sikhs, more than 65,000 Kashmiri Muslims since 1988, and tens of thousands of others. It holds tens of thousands of political prisoners without charge or trial. Some of them have been held for over 15 years. This is unacceptable.

America is the bastion of freedom in the world. It is our responsibility to do what we can to ensure freedom for all people. We should cut off India's aid until it learns to respect human rights. The government must stop killing religious and ethnic minorities. It must also punish strongly those who kill and do other acts of violence in the government's behalf. Amnesty International, which has not been allowed to enter India to investigate human rights abuses since 1978, must be allowed to come into the country. Until then, no American money should go to India.

We should also put this Congress on record in support of democracy in South Asia by calling for a free and fair plebiscite, under international supervision, to decide the political future of Khalistan, Kashmir, Nagaland, and all the other nations occupied by India. These steps are the best way to bring freedom to all the people of South Asia.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit the Newsroom article into the RECORD. I urge my colleagues to read it.

BAJRANG DAL BAN SOUGHT AFTER PRE-EASTER ATTACKS ON CHRISTIANS IN INDIA

NEW DELHI, 25 April 2000 (Newsroom)—Allies of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which leads India's coalition government, this week demanded that the BJP ban a militant group of Hindu nationalists and dismiss the BJP-led Uttar Pradesh state government in the wake of recent attacks against Christians.

The call by the Trinamool Congress, an ally in the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance headed by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, to ban the Bajrang Dal and dismiss Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Ram Prakash Gupta and his government stunned BJP leaders.

Leaders from the Trinamool Congress and from the opposition Congress and Samajwadi parties blasted the BJP for failing to control the Hindu nationalist group that many blame for the spate of violent incidents directed toward religious minorities in the last two years.

The Bajrang Dal, a militant Hindu organization affiliated with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council) and linked to several attacks on Christians, believes it has a duty to promote the Hindu religion and Hindutva—Hinduness—in India. Dara Singh, who is accused of masterminding the murders of Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two sons last year, has been linked to the Bajrang Dal, although the group denies he is a member.

Sudip Bandoopathy of the Trinamool Congress and Yerram Naidu, Tulugu Desam party leader, demanded that security be provided to Christians and other religious minorities wherever possible, especially in

states like Uttar Pradesh where there have been three violent attacks against Christians in the last two weeks.

Madhavrao Scindia, deputy leader of the Congress Party in the Lok Sabha (the lower house of Parliament), said the government should put a stop to incidents like those reported in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana this month. He demanded a response from Home Affairs Minister Lal Kishen Advani, who is considered a friend of most of India's Hindu nationalist groups and is the second most powerful man in India after Vajpayee. "Groups close to the BJP must be reined in as they are vitiating communal peace," Scindia said.

Opposition Samajwadi party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav, who once headed the defense ministry, said that militant Hindu groups pose a greater danger than the actions of religious minorities. "Majority communalism poses a greater danger compared to minority communalism," he said. Members of the Hindu group Shiv Sena tried to heckle him while he addressed members of Parliament.

During a two-day BJP national executive meeting in the Uttar Pradesh town of Lucknow, Vajpayee chastised Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Ram Prakash Gupta over his state's handling of attacks on Christian missionaries in Mathura. Vajpayee reportedly said the state should have dispatched police to assess the situation and instill confidence among the Christian community. He also asked the state government to explain its position on the controversial religious places bill, which prohibits Muslims from building mosques or converting an existing building into a mosque without government permission.

Bajrang Dal national coordinator Surendra Kumar Jain said last month that his group was fighting to construct a temple for Ram in Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh. The extremist group also once demanded that the federal government declare Pakistan an enemy state.

Referring to the attacks against Christians, Jain said that "missionaries consider Hindus a soft target. Even the words 'soft target' were used in the missionary literature. However, now the Hindus have woken up. We are no more a soft target for their unholy activities. We appreciate missionary services, but only when the object is service and not conversion."

Monday's confrontation in parliament followed three attacks against Christians in Uttar Pradesh in the last two weeks. Members of the House of Worship, one of India's fastest-growing church groups headquartered in the southern state of Hyderabad, were attacked by suspected Bajrang Dal activists on the outskirts of Agra, site of the Taj Mahal, police said. The Good Friday attack on the 14-member preaching team from Hyderabad in the BJP-ruled state came a week after a Catholic priest and three nuns were attacked in a school. It was the seventh attack reported in the state in less than 100 days.

The Bajrang Dal complained to state police that the Hyderabad group was trying to convert villagers by offering them money, a charge church authorities deny. In a counter complaint the victims reported that a mob of 20 to 30 people attacked the van in which they were traveling and tried to burn the vehicle. The group returned to Hyderabad where the main church, Hebron Church, is located. The church, also known as the Indigenous Society of Churches in India, is one of the fastest growing in the country with mainly new converts as members. It was

founded by a Punjabi Sikh agricultural engineer, Bakht Singh, in the 1920s. Bakht Singh is 99.

Three Catholic nuns on their way to attend midnight Mass in Rewari in neighboring Haryana state were attacked Saturday night by a man riding a scooter. It was the third attack on Christians reported in the past three months in this wheat-rich state. One nun, Sister Anandi, remains in Holy Family Hospital in serious condition. The other two nuns suffered minor injuries. Police so far have made no arrests.

John Dayal, convener of the United Christian Forum for Human Rights, said in a prepared statement that "this attack was part of the series of ongoing attacks on Christians and their institutions."

THE SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS ACT OF 2000

HON. WILLIAM (BILL) CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 2, 2000

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the Safe and Successful Schools Act of 2000. It will help modernize our public schools by providing grants and loans for up to 8,300 renovation projects in high-need school districts. It will continue the highly successful class size reduction program by helping communities hire an additional 20,000 highly qualified teachers. It will boost investments in quality after-school and summer school programs advocated by the President. It will help us close the digital divide that currently leaves too many poor children and their teachers behind. It will bolster safe and drug free school programs, and strengthen programs to reduce hate crimes by children.

ESEA is our nation's flagship education partnership with local communities. It provides vital assistance to the most vulnerable, educationally challenged children in America. Until this Congress, the ESEA had enjoyed a rich and enduring history of bipartisanship.

Unfortunately, Senate and House Republicans have been highly partisan and divisive. At the beginning of the ESEA process, we urged Republicans to work in a bipartisan way. Instead, they proceeded in a highly partisan manner and created havoc throughout the reauthorization process. In the House, they carved up the ESEA into seven disjointed pieces—hoping to bolster their devastating public image and terrible performance on education.

Today, the ESEA process is in shambles. Straight A's, the Republican education block grant bill, has a veto threat pending and has no chance of becoming law. Their Teacher Empowerment bill has a veto threat pending because of its gratuitous attack and block granting of the Clinton Class Size Reduction Act. Conservative Republican Members are blocking floor action on two other ESEA bills, Even Start and Impact Aid. And the one major bipartisan bill, H.R. 2, has been sharply and publicly attacked by reactionary Republican Members of the Education and Workforce Committee.

Republicans repeatedly refused to work with Democrats to craft the pending ESEA bill,

H.R. 4141, and voted in mass to defeat 52 of 54 amendments offered by Democratic Members. The bill passed out of committee is a legislative disaster. Every major education group opposes the bill. The President will probably veto it.

Because the Republicans have decided to play politics with America's school children, they have placed in jeopardy passage of this comprehensive Federal aid program to education. If the Republicans leave town this year without enacting the ESEA, it would be the first time that the program has permanently lapsed in its 35-year history.

I urge the Republican leadership to stop playing politics with our nation's school children, and pass ESEA legislation that can bring urgent relief and assistance to our public schools this year.

THE DEMOCRATIC AGENDA: DEMONSTRATING A NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO OUR NATION'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

THE SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS ACT OF 2000 *Helping Communities Repair and Modernize Unsafe Schoolhouses*

Communities across the country are struggling to address critical needs to build new schools and renovate existing one. One-third of all public schools—about 25,000 schools—need extensive repair or replacement. A recent survey documented over \$250 billion dollars of unmet school modernization funding need.

The Safe and Successful Schools Act of 2000 authorizes \$1.3 billion annually to help communities make emergency school renovations such as repairing roofs, fixing dangerous electrical wiring and plumbing, bringing schools into compliance with fire safety codes, undertaking asbestos removal or abatement, and removing lead-based paint. The Act will support up to 8,300 renovation projects in high-poverty, high-need school districts that have little or no capacity to fund urgent repairs over the next five years.

Reducing Class Sizes/Smaller Schools

Research shows that class size reduction in the early grades is one of the most direct and effective ways to boost student academic achievement, especially among populations of disadvantaged children. Smaller class sizes ensure that every child receives personal attention, gets a solid foundation for further learning, and learns to read independently by the end of the third grade. The Safe and Successful Schools Act of 2000 continues the Clinton/Clay class size reduction program that is helping communities hire and pay for 100,000 new, fully qualified teachers.

The Act also reauthorizes the Small, Safe and Successful High Schools program, which helps high schools to create smaller, safer learning environments. Research has shown that the size of a school and the number of its students greatly impact children's ability to learn and the likelihood that violence may occur.

Accountability for Results

The bill requires schools reducing class sizes to hire only fully qualified teachers. The bill strengthens ESEA technology programs by focusing on the achievement of performance indicators and the correlation between technology and improved student achievement. The Act requires school safety and drug abuse prevention programs to be based on sound research, and strengthens reporting and eligibility criteria for the Title VI program, increasing program accountability.

Providing Safe After-School Learning Opportunities for Students

Extended learning programs reduce juvenile crime by providing a wide range of education, social, mentoring, and counseling services to help improve student behavior, including services relating to violence prevention and conflict resolution. Recent research has demonstrated that extended learning programs help improve student achievement in reading and math, and reduce truancy and dropout rates.

The Safe and Successful Schools Act more than doubles our investment to \$1 billion, in the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program. This program enables schools to stay open longer, providing safe and educational after-school opportunities for some 700,000 school age children in rural and urban communities each year, and vital social health, and educational services for their families.

Providing Safe and Drug Free Schools/Keeping Guns Out of Our Schools

America's students cannot be expected to learn to high standards if they are threatened by drugs and violence. There is a high level of concern by parents and students about school safety and violence caused in part by the tragic shootings at Columbine High School and other schools in the past two years.

The legislation will increase funding for the Safe and Drug Free Schools Act, and enhance its accountability and performance through the adoption of research-based programs. It also authorizes the Secretary of Education to set aside \$5 million annually to fund strong, community-based hate crime prevention activities.

The bill requires school districts, with a history of suspensions and expulsions for gun violence or possession, to work with law enforcement agencies to promote the use of child safety locks.

Lastly, the bill provides new, additional support for school-based alternative education programs to address the educational needs of students who are suspended or expelled from school. This authority will increase the safety of both our schools and communities by ensuring that discipline and violence problems leading to suspensions and expulsions do not spill over into the community.

Recruiting and Maintaining High Quality Teachers

The Safe and Successful Schools Act of 2000 requires all teachers to become certified or fully licensed, and have knowledge of the subjects they teach. The bill creates a "Parent Right to Know" requirement to ensure that parents are made aware of the professional qualifications and expertise of their children's teacher. It also includes a provision requiring that parents be notified when their child is being taught by an underqualified or substitute teacher for more than two consecutive weeks.

It also authorizes \$50 million to help high-poverty school districts attract and retain teachers and principals through better pay. To become eligible, schools would have to undertake rigorous peer review of every teacher, improve systems to remove low-performing teachers, and provide intensive support to give the opportunity for all teachers to succeed.

Expanding Access to Education Technology/ Closing the Digital Divide

Technology in the schools can substantially improve student learning, classroom management, the professional development