

May 10, 2000

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY HONORS
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE
JOHN WEINGART

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 10, 2000

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize a truly outstanding citizen of Central New Jersey. Each year the New Jersey Environmental Lobby presents the Frank J. Oliver Environmental Award to individuals who have contributed in a special way to the protection and preservation of New Jersey's environment. This year, the NJEL has chosen to honor an individual who has devoted many years, both professionally and personally, to the protection of New Jersey's resources and its citizens. Today, I rise in honor of John Weingart for his tireless efforts to preserve New Jersey for future generations.

John Weingart is a man of many talents. He has worked for the Department of Environmental Protection, serving there as Assistant Commissioner before leaving to become the Executive Director of the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Siting Commission. In the later capacity, he instituted several innovative concepts, including the idea of a voluntary self-selection process for municipalities interested in the siting facility. Although his efforts did not succeed in obtaining such a site, his approach is worthy of mention.

Even more surprising was John's reaction after all possible avenues had been explored. At this point, this government agency head did the unthinkable: he suggested that they disband his agency and that he and the other professionals seek employment elsewhere. Mr. Speaker, John is a true public servant who had the courage to eliminate his own job.

Mr. Speaker, the efforts of John Weingart serve as an excellent example to all citizens of New Jersey. I ask all my colleagues to join with me in congratulating John Weingart for his recognition by the Environmental Lobby.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS OF INDIAN ORIGIN

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 10, 2000

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPIO). AAPIO is an outstanding professional organization with over 36,000 physicians of Indian origin practicing across the nation. The Northern California Chapter of AAPIO will hold its annual meeting on May 13, 2000 in Fremont, California, a major city within my 13th Congressional District. The Northern California Chapter represents approximately 700 physicians and allied health professionals in Northern California and constitutes the local chapter of AAPIO.

Northern California AAPIO Chapter President Dr. Subroto Kundu and President Elect, Dr. Srinivas Ramachandran are among the of-

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ficers, the Board of Trustees and AAPIO members providing exemplary leadership within the 13th congressional district and all of Northern California. These individuals work to insure the integrity of health care delivery and are committed to the well-being of the communities in which they serve.

I applaud the Northern California Chapter's continuing efforts to organize and promote community service events, such as Health Fairs and Community Medical Education Seminars, upholding the physician's role in society to treat, teach, and guide individuals to good health.

AAPIO physicians provide their time and energy in community service and leadership. They are actively involved in healthcare related issues on the local, state and national level and represent the majority of physicians who serve our uninsured and under-insured populations.

As the AAPIO Northern California Chapter gathers on May 13, I wish them success at their Annual Meeting. I am confident AAPIO will continue to meet our healthcare challenges and will renew their commitment to community service and involvement.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

HON. DEBBIE STABENOW

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 10, 2000

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, on April 12, I led an hour of debate on the topic of prescription drug coverage for senior citizens. I read three letters from seniors around the state of Michigan who shared their personal stories with me. On that day, I made a commitment to continue to read a different constituent letter every week until the House enacts reform. This week, I will read a letter from Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Crook.

Modern medicine has changed dramatically over the last three decades. When Medicare was created in 1965, most medical treatment was provided in hospitals. Surgery and other inpatient treatments were the norm and Medicare coverage for long hospital stays was a priority. Today, with the benefit of breakthrough pharmaceutical discoveries, many diseases can be controlled and treated with medication rather than lengthy hospital stays. Routine surgeries and procedures are performed on an outpatient basis. Medicare needs to be modernized to reflect these changes in our nation's healthcare delivery system. The number one advance in medical science of the 20th century is the development of life-saving drugs. It is critical that Medicare covers prescription drugs, so that seniors can have access to the best and most medically advanced treatments.

Furthermore, the price of prescription drugs is rising at a dramatic rate and we need to do something to make prescription drugs more affordable. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics, drug prices rose by 306 percent between 1981 and 1999, while the Consumer Price Index rose just 99 percent during the same period. In other words, prescription drug prices have increased at a rate three times higher than inflation.

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The letter I will read tonight comes from a couple who reside in Hillsdale, MI. I am saddened to say, their story is not unique. I have asked seniors from all over Michigan to send me their personal stories about the prices they pay for prescription drugs and many of them send me copies of their bills. Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Crook sent me a bill that shows they paid over \$1,125 for their prescription drugs last year. Here is their story.

"Madam, we have a income of \$800 a month between the two of us. Beside, we have our household costs. We can't go [out] or do anything because [it] takes all of our income for the cost to live. Some weeks [we] wonder just how long we can go on. It [our prescription drug bill] keeps going up in cost and [we] cannot live. Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Crook."

Mr. and Mrs. Crook and thousands of older Americans like them need our help. Creating a Medicare prescription drug benefit to help cover the costs of their medications would make a big difference in their finances and in the quality of their lives. These seniors are a part of the "greatest generation ever" who helped build the strong economy we are enjoying today. Our nation is in economic good times and I believe it is time to fix the Medicare program so that it includes a prescription drug benefit.

TRAFFICKING VICTIMS PROTECTION ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 9, 2000

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I support this bill.

The exploitation of our world's girls and young women in sex trafficking is a tragic human rights offense.

Many of these women are kidnaped, sold, or tricked into brothel captivity.

And this does not happen just in countries miles away from our own. Each year women from all over the world are brought into the United States, for the sole purpose that they be bought and sold by American citizens for commercial sex.

I am happy to see that Congress is addressing this issue.

It is important that we protect the victims of the sex trade industry, and punish the predators that exploit the women.

This bill takes a significant step towards making a difference in the lives of women around the world.

It authorizes a new visa for trafficking victims to provide protection to the women and children that are brought into the United States and forced into prostitution.

The bill establishes initiatives to prevent trafficking through education, and authorizes assistance to the native countries of sex trafficked victims to help stop the industry.

And by establishing new criminal provisions and increasing penalties for traffickers this bill punishes traffickers for profiting from the victimization of women.

Of course there is more that needs to be done to stop the many human rights abuses inflicted on women around the world.

Preventing the trafficking of women is an important step in stopping the booming sex trade industry.

I commend the Representative from New Jersey for this legislation and I join with him and urge a "yes" vote on this bill.

RECOGNIZING PLAINSBORO TOWNSHIP AS AN "EDUCATION TOWNSHIP"

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 10, 2000

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the Township of Plainsboro, New Jersey, as an "Education Township." It is, in fact, the town that schools built.

Plainsboro was founded on the principle of local education. For many years there were only four one-room schoolhouses that served the children of this particular area of Central New Jersey. In 1908, a large wood-frame two room schoolhouse was built. These schools and the teachers who taught in them, were paid and maintained under the Boards of Education of Cranbury and South Brunswick townships.

As the local population increased, the people of the Plainsboro area wanted a larger four-room school for their children. The school Boards refused. Plainsboro's representative on the Board of Education, John Van Buren Wicoff (an attorney at law and a lifelong resident who had attended the public schools in Plainsboro) tried to persuade the Cranbury Board of Education to build a larger school. When efforts failed to provide money for the school, the people of Plainsboro petitioned the New Jersey State Legislature to create the Township of Plainsboro.

The legislation to establish the Township of Plainsboro was approved April 1, 1919. Among the first act taken was the construction of a new four-room school built of stone.

For many years the 6th grade graduates of Plainsboro elementary school attended a 7th and 8th grade Junior High School in Princeton and then went on to attend Princeton High School.

As time passed, it became apparent that Princeton High School could no longer accommodate the growing school-age population of the area. As a result, Plainsboro and its neighbor, West Windsor, required both junior and senior high schools.

In 1969 a proposal was drafted to create a regional based school system that would provide public education from kindergarten through the 12th grade for the children of both Plainsboro and West Windsor. Voters in both townships overwhelmingly approved the proposal.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the West Windsor-Plainsboro School System is one of the best in the county.

NEW REPORT SHOWS INDIAN GOVERNMENT IS TO BLAME FOR MASSACRE OF 35 SIKHS IN CHATTI SINGHPORA

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 10, 2000

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, recently two human-rights groups in Punjab, the Punjab Human Rights Organization and the Movement Against State Repression, published a report on the massacre of 35 Sikhs in the village of Chatti Singhpora, Kashmir, this past March. Despite the Indian government's efforts to blame Pakistan and alleged Kashmiri "militants" for the massacre, an effort the Indian government reinforced by killing five innocent Kashmiris, the report clearly and unambiguously places the blame where it belongs—on the Indian government.

"It is our considered opinion," the report says, "that Pakistan has nothing to gain by ordering militants/mercenaries to massacre Sikhs in the Kashmir valley. Pakistan had steered clear of this kind of act during 10–15 years of militancy in J&K," the group wrote. "J&K militants too had nothing to gain from such an incident. Indian leaders however gained substantial mileage from this incident as a spate of international sympathy was forthcoming," the investigative team wrote. They noted that India's Home Minister, L.K. Advani, "was quoted as saying that three events brought a turn around in international opinion in India's favor. He mentioned Kargil, the hijacking of the Indian airliner, and the Chatti Singhpora incident."

According to the report, the people in the village of Chatti Singhpora "did not believe that militants had any hand in this incident." The report notes that "as a rule foreign mercenaries visit a village once and do not come back again. So these men cannot be militants. Also real militants do not part with their weapons even for a minute." The killers wore military uniforms and chanted "Jai Mata Di; Jai Hind," a Hindu nationalist slogan. The report notes that the Sikhs and Kashmiri Muslims have very good relations. Both the Chief Minister of Kashmir, Farooq Abdullah, and Mr. Advani had warned villagers against supporting "militants."

The authors of the report conclude that the Indian government's counterinsurgency forces, which are run by the Indian intelligence service, RAW, are responsible for the massacre of Chatti Singhpora.

Unfortunately, the Indian government is suppressing this information, and their friends in the democratic countries of the world are protecting them. There must be a full, fair, independent, and complete investigation and the people responsible for this terrible atrocity must be prosecuted. However, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pramod Mahajan admitted that "security forces would not be punished for the killings of civilians. It would demoralize the troops who are fighting insurgency in different states." This is a very revealing statement by an official of the Indian government. Perhaps this is why an allegedly democratic country needs a "Movement Against State Repression."

America is the beacon of freedom. America must not allow an allegedly democratic country to continue these activities. We must do what we can to help bring freedom to the people of South Asia. It is time to stop our aid to India until it lets the people within its borders enjoy the human rights to which all people are entitled. We should stop supporting India's anti-Americanism. And we should declare our support for an internationally-supervised, free and fair plebiscite in Punjab, Khalistan on the question of independence. We should also support similar plebiscites in Kashmir, in Christian Nagaland, and throughout India. This is the way to bring real freedom, peace, prosperity, and stability to South Asia. It will also gain us new allies in that troubled region.

Mr. Speaker, I wish I could put this excellent report into the RECORD, but it is too long. I would like to place the summary sections of observations and recommendations into the RECORD, for the information of my colleagues. I urge my colleagues, especially those who are supporters of India, to read these sections carefully.

VISIT TO CHITHI SINGHPORA
OBSERVATIONS

3.1. Team Observations

The facts narrated above clearly indicate that the visitors of Chithi Singhpora were not members of the security forces. Dress, language, careless handling of weapons and behaviour in general discounts the security forces. That they were militants, can also be safely ruled out because it is general knowledge that militants guard their weapons most carefully and would not visit a location repeatedly knowing that an RR post is located 3–4 kms away. The finger therefore points towards the so-called Counter Insurgents/Renegades (Surrendered militants). The description of the villagers, in fact, corroborates this assessment.

The fact that the RR Unit was located close to Chithi Singhpora and the statement of Principal Ranji Singh and teacher Niranjana Singh clearly indicated that the security forces know fully well about the identity of the visitors to Chithi Singhpora and did nothing about it.

The statements of various individuals in Anantnag/Srinagar tallies with what the villagers narrated to the team. One man Karamjit Singh spoke a different language. He stressed in his statement that the killers were militants. Secondly his various actions indicate that he has an inkling that some force had come to kill on March 20, 2000 evening. His escape was miraculous in spite of his being addressed directly by the so called CO not to go home. He still escaped. In our opinion Karamjit appears to have been in some contact with the security forces. His migration to Jammu and his nervousness during the teams meeting with him clearly point to this.

The State Chief Minister, Farooq Abdulla had asked for a Judicial enquiry into the Chithi Singhpora killings by a Supreme Court Judge. (Press Statement is attached as Annexure II). Instead, the Centre has ordered a judicial enquiry by Justice Pandhian into the Patribal killings of five civilians and police firing at Brakpora. The Chithi Singhpora killings are to be probed by the Additional Judicial Magistrate only. This clearly indicates that the truth behind this Chithi Singhpora incident is not being allowed to surface.

All efforts should be made to normalise the situation and bring the Sikhs back into the mainstream in the State.