

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: The National Association of Evangelicals is officially neutral on the topic of permanent normal trade relations with China. Evangelicals are not of one mind on how best to encourage China to move toward greater religious freedom. However, I write to express my own concerns.

The NAE has been vocal about the religious persecution of Christians and others around the world. Its 1996 "Statement of Conscience Concerning Worldwide Religious Persecution," was the touchstone of a movement culminating in the passage of the International Religious Freedom Act. (I helped draft that statement and have been involved with China for more than twenty-five years, most recently participating as a staff member to President Clinton's "Religious Leaders' Delegation To the People's Republic of China.")

Millions of evangelicals, many within our 51 denominations and 43,000 churches, are convinced that we need to end the fractious debate over China trade policy which is damaging confidence in the United States among the Chinese people and elsewhere. Moreover, to have an effective policy that can actually achieve several goals—including gains in human rights and cooperative rather than hostile relations—requires a consistent policy that can only come from bipartisan consensus based on public support.

I respectfully suggest the following might help to create that new consensus.

Send clear signals to the government of the PRC of its primary responsibility to protect human rights and bring about social justice in China. For example, officials in Beijing and in Henan Province should immediately grant full freedom to Pastor and evangelist Peter Xu Yongzhe. Freeing Xu and other prisoners of conscience who have been unjustly detained or imprisoned would be an important step by China in terms of improving human rights, strengthening the rule of law, and building better relations with the United States. (The persecution of people of faith was raised by the members of the Religious Delegation in all of our meetings with government officials—including President Jiang Zemin.)

Recognize that there are no instant solutions but that progress is being made. China's cultural legacy of authoritarianism, the complexity of change, and the lagging of political reform behind economic developments requires a long-term struggle for human dignity and social justice. We should affirm the far-reaching improvements in personal freedoms and social-economic livelihood achieved over the past twenty years by the Chinese people in their attempt to leave behind the horrors of Maoism and to create a more democratic society.

Keep in mind that the key agents of change in China are Chinese citizens whose opinions will have growing impact on government action. We must ensure that our actions support rather than damage their efforts. In recent years, our annual debate over trade and human rights, while drawing attention to the religious liberty violations that should concern all Americans, has fueled hostility between Chinese and Americans rather than bringing about positive change in China. Additionally, it has served to strengthen the hand of Communist hardliners who oppose economic and political reform, as well as an improvement in US-Sino relations.

Listen carefully to the views of Chinese citizens, Americans living and working in

China, and citizens of Hong Kong and Taiwan, all whom will be the most affected by the outcome. Many Chinese Christians, including those in the unregistered house churches and those in the US, call for expanded trade through the World Trade Organization because it helps create acceptance of international norms and keeps the door open to religious exchanges and cooperation. Trade sanctions increase social discrimination and government pressure against these believers.

Pay more attention to the real impact of our actions inside China. Using trade restrictions to send a signal of disapproval to the PRC government is likely to fuel widespread public resentment of the United States. Restrictions on trade will be interpreted as an effort to block China's membership in the World Trade Organization and thus to stymie progress or even destabilize China. This will inevitably arouse anti-American sentiment, especially among younger generations.

Recognize that the United States government is only one actor and that many American institutions exert great influence in China, especially on moral and social issues. Religious groups, businesses, nonprofit institutions, academic, and medical organizations, as they interact with their Chinese counterparts, need to raise our concerns about human rights abuses. They also need to find constructive ways to assist efforts to speed up the restructuring of social and political institutions necessary to underpin the rule of law.

Let me make some specific suggestions on what should be done next.

(1) This administration and the next should make greater efforts to work multilaterally, especially with Asian nations, both to enforce China's compliance with WTO standards over the next decade and to create regional support for human rights. This will help create internal pressures for government conformity with international standards.

(2) Congress should work to establish good working relations with the National People's Congress of China in order to encourage good legislative practices. Congress should fully fund all the functions it has mandated to the Department of State and other government agencies.

(3) The Commission on International Religious Freedom (CIRF) should organize and fund a cooperative government-nongovernmental effort to improve the accuracy of reporting on the religious situation in China. It should encourage reporting by province and major city to highlight the responsibilities of local officials.

(4) The formation of a new bipartisan commission to coordinate all the goals (including religious freedom) of a consistent long-term policy toward China would be most effective if it focuses not on a single set of issues or short-term aims, but on effective strategy and tactics, and fosters dialogue with representatives of all the diverse sectors in our society that are involved with China.

(5) Congress should demonstrate the strength of its resolve on matters of human rights and religious freedom by enacting—not broad and blanket sanctions—but targeted and measured sanctions designed to accomplish their intended objective. For example, firm action against China National Petroleum Company's role in financing genocide in Sudan would send an indirect signal to China about our commitment to deal with religious persecution.

It is especially disturbing to me that during the past year there has been an esca-

lation of harassment, intimidation, and persecution of people of faith. However, in my opinion (and that of organizations such as China Source, which represents dozens of Christian organizations working in China), granting permanent normal trade relations with China will ultimately result in greater religious freedom for the Chinese people, not less.

Sincerely Yours,

REV. RICHARD CIZIK,
Vice President for Governmental Affairs.

WILLIE PELOTE: FRIEND OF THE
LABOR COUNCIL AWARD

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 19, 2000

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, today I recognize Willie Pelote, as he is honored by the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO, at its 12th annual Worker's Memorial dinner with its Friend of the Labor Council Award.

As the California Political and Legislative Director of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Willie oversees statewide political and legislative affairs for the nation's largest union of public employees and health care workers. He is responsible for developing and implementing the union's political strategy for campaigns at all levels of public office.

Through his work at AFSCME, Willie has been a strong supporter of and partner with the Labor Council. Willie helped AFSCME local unions in San Diego build strong member education and involvement programs, and he supported the development of the very successful Labor to Neighbor Program.

Willie's leadership has helped advance labor priorities across the state, as well as locally and for that he deserves our highest praise and admiration. My congratulations go to Willie Pelote for these significant contributions. I believe him to be highly deserving of the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO Friend of the Labor Council Award.

COMPREHENSIVE BUDGET
PROCESS REFORM ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. WALTER B. JONES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 16, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 853) to amend the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to provide for joint resolutions on the budget, reserve funds for emergency spending, strengthened enforcement of budgetary decisions, increased accountability for Federal spending, accrual budgeting for Federal insurance programs, mitigation of the bias in the budget process toward higher spending, modifications in paygo requirements when there is an on-budget surplus, and for other purposes:

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the Comprehensive Budget Process Reform Act and I

thank Congressman NUSSLE for bringing this important budgetary reform to the floor.

I also came to the floor this afternoon in support of an Amendment that my colleagues, Representatives DREIER, LUTHER, REGULA, and HALL will be debating shortly that would provide for a two-year federal budget process.

Mr. Chairman, like many of my friends on both sides of the aisle, I served in the state legislature before my election to the House in 1994. The North Carolina General Assembly, like many other states, operates under a two-year, biennial budget process.

That is what brings me to the floor today. Like many of my colleagues, I am frustrated with the annual budget system.

We spend months of every year debating the same issues. That leaves very little time for Members to explore many of the issues that directly affect the citizens of this nation.

A biennial budget would allow Members to devote the first session of any Congress to the budget resolution and appropriations decisions. The second session would be dedicated to program oversight in order to help eliminate wasteful government spending.

This process would provide Congress time to better address issues of important national interest, like the state of our military readiness, how to protect our nation's seniors and improve the current health care system, and how to best provide an effective safety net for our nation's farmers.

A biennial budget would also allow Congress to better manage unforeseen emergency budget situations that face our nation like the forest fires New Mexico is currently battling, or the hurricanes that have devastated North Carolina's coastline for the last few years.

When hurricanes have hit North Carolina, the General Assembly has been able to successfully help the State meet its unmet needs without creating undue hardship on the State or on our communities.

Mr. Chairman, Congress has a constitutional responsibility to oversee government spending and to improve the way government works. When we dedicate such a significant amount of time each year to appropriate funds for government programs, we lose out on needed opportunities to evaluate the performance of those programs and make necessary changes. A biennial budget would allow a full year of oversight to determine what is working and what is not so that the appropriations process can move more smoothly and the government can run more efficiently and effectively.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support the Comprehensive Budget Process reform. I also hope my colleagues will join me in voting for the biennial budget amendment to ensure American taxpayer dollars are being spent wisely.

HONORING TOPSFIELD,
MASSACHUSETTS

HON. JOHN F. TIERNEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 19, 2000

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, Topsfield, Massachusetts is observing a year-long celebra-

tion of the 350th anniversary of its founding as a town by the General Court of the Commonwealth in 1650. The observance will not only reflect upon the town's proud history, but will look with optimism toward the future.

When Governor John Winthrop arrived in Salem harbor in 1630, Masconomet, the sagamore of the Agawam tribe, who lived in the Topsfield area, welcomed him. The regional high school is named for Masconomet, who always lived peacefully with his new neighbors.

The early settlers of Topsfield, named after Toppesfield, England, were mostly farmers. But as British encroachment on their liberty through passage of various taxes escalated through the late 1600s and the 1700s, they became more and more concerned about defending against attack. On April 19, 1775, 110 of Topsfield's citizenry in two companies joined with other towns in a march to Lexington and Concord to fight the redcoats at the very beginning of the Revolutionary War. Topsfield citizens have served with distinction in every war since.

While the town's character has changed through the years from farming to light manufacture and small business, it has retained its rural character. It is home each autumn to the Topsfield Fair, the Nation's oldest agricultural exposition. Its Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary is the largest sanctuary in the Massachusetts Audubon system.

A number of famous people have called Topsfield home. The Stanley family of the Stanley Steamer automobile arrived in 1659 and lived in the town until 1778. The ancestors of two leaders of the Mormon Church, Joseph Smith, its founder, and Brigham Young, its second president, were near neighbors in Topsfield.

Today, Mr. Speaker, Topsfield stands at the beginning of this new century looking optimistically toward a bright future while celebrating its long and proud heritage. A time capsule is being assembled that will include essays by fourth graders about what life was like in the year 2000, as well as recollections of seniors about the century just past. To those residents of Topsfield in the year 2100, as well as to the town's current citizens, may I add my sincere congratulations and best wishes.

HONORING ST. FRANCIS PRAYER
CENTER

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 19, 2000

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on behalf of a group of people who have made the community a truly joyous place to live. On Saturday, May 20, the St. Francis Prayer Center in Flint, Michigan, will celebrate their 25th Anniversary.

For many years, Father Phil Schmitter and Sister Joanne Chiaverini have worked diligently to do the Lord's work throughout the Flint community. Their selfless nature is tremendous and the compassion they show is indescribable. When creating the St. Francis Prayer Center in 1975, they were committed to simple goals: they wanted a central location

where even the poor could walk, where they could provide guidance and promote spirituality regardless of denomination, and work to help bridge the gap between racial and religious lines. As a lifelong Flint resident, I am happy to say that their efforts have indeed improved understanding, acceptance, and genuine positive regard within the city of Flint, and the surrounding communities. They have provided a resource that we all can be very proud of. They have helped people come closer to God and to one another.

Also, the accomplishments of St. Francis would not be as strong if not for the work of the members of the Prayer Center Board and the many volunteers who are always there to lend a helping hand. These people also give much of themselves to further the impact that the center makes.

Mr. Speaker, our community would not be the same without the presence of Father Phil Schmitter, Sister Joanne Chiaverini, and the St. Francis Prayer Center. Just as I consider it an honor and a pleasure to serve here as a Member of Congress, they also understand the joy of serving. I am pleased to ask my colleagues in the 106th Congress to join me in congratulating them on 25 wonderful years, and wish them success toward the next 25.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
VERSAILLES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT
AWARD RECIPIENTS NONA AND
BILL CAINE

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 19, 2000

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I was recently informed that the Versailles Chamber of Commerce will present Nona and Bill Caine with the Lifetime Achievement Award on May 26, 2000, in a ceremony at the Morgan County Historical Society Heritage Garden in Versailles, Missouri.

Bill owned and operated Versailles Furniture for over 30 years. In addition to running his business, he served as the First Sergeant of the Army Reserve Unit and as the Mayor of the City of Versailles for six years. During his term in office, he oversaw installation of the airport, construction of the water tower and server for the southwestern part of the city and development of the parks system. Bill is also responsible for reviving the Versailles Chamber of Commerce and served as both Chamber President and Board Member. He shared responsibility, along with Rufus Harms, for organizing the Versailles Industrial Trust. Additionally, Bill served as President of the Versailles Lions Club and was twice the Fair Board Chairman for the Morgan County Fair.

Bill led three major community fund drives for the Brown Shoe Company, the Sheltered Workshop and the railroad spur. He was involved in the acquisition of Brown Shoe Company, Dixon Ticonderoga Pencil Company and Gates Rubber Company in Versailles. He presently serves on the Versailles Cemetery Board, Good Shepherd Nursing Home District Board and Bank of Versailles Board of Directors.