

center that serves as a gathering place to support the Center's mission, as well as support the work of community organizations that are active in social justice.

To ensure La Peña's long term continuity and growth, the Center is launching an Endowment Campaign to raise \$500,000 over the next three years. This capital base will generate an unencumbered income of \$30,000 annually to support the Center's needs. As this capital base grows, funds generated by The Endowment will enable La Peña's many programs to thrive.

I proudly join people throughout the Bay Area in recognizing this momentous occasion of celebrating 25 years of extraordinary service by La Peña Cultural Center.

FREEDOM FOR THE SIKHS OF
KHALISTAN

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2000

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, the Council of Khalistan recently issued an open letter about the deplorable situation in Punjab, the Sikh homeland which declared its independence on October 7, 1987, as Khalistan.

The Sikhs are under attack from a militant Hindu organization called the RSS. The RSS was formed during World War II in support of the Fascists. It is the parent organization of the ruling BJP and many other organizations also come under its umbrella. Its agenda is to promote fundamentalist Hindu nationalism. Two members of the ruling BJP, which is a part of the RSS, were quoted in the newspapers as saying that everyone who lives in India should be Hindu or subservient to Hinduism.

Now the RSS is trying to form a satellite organization called the Rashtriya Sikh Sangat which is designed to subsume Sikhs under Hinduism and wipe out their religion. Since the ruling party is part of the RSS, it is implicitly part of this effort to eliminate the Sikh religion. As people who believe in freedom of religion, this assault on anyone's freedom of religion ought to concern all of us.

The recent massacre of 35 Sikhs in Chatti Singhpora is just another chapter in this campaign. Two recent investigations have proven that the Indian government was responsible for that massacre. There are still 50,000 Sikhs political prisoners rotting in Indian jails without charge or trial. The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs. Punjab is a police state. The only way to end this campaign against the Sikhs is to support self-determination and freedom for Punjab, Khalistan.

Mr. Speaker, there are measures the United States can take to promote freedom for Khalistan and throughout South Asia. I urge the President to declare India a terrorist nation. We can cut off American aid and trade to India until all people there enjoy their basic human rights. And in accord with American principles, we must declare our support for self-determination for the people of Khalistan, the people of Kashmir, the people of Nagaland, and the other peoples and nations

of South Asia. This can be achieved by allowing the people to vote in a free and fair plebiscite under international supervision on the question of independence. Such a plebiscite is similar to the periodic votes in Puerto Rico and Quebec on their political futures. This is how democratic nations do it and it is how great powers do it. If India wants to be taken seriously as a member of the family of democratic nations, it must allow self-determination and human rights for all peoples and nations within its artificial borders.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to place the Council of Khalistan's open letter on the situation in Punjab into the RECORD.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN, GURU
GOBIND SINGH, THE TENTH MAS-
TER,

Washington, DC, May 12, 2000.

A SOVEREIGN KHALISTAN IS THE ONLY
SOLUTION

ALL SIKH INSTITUTIONS AND PRESENT LEADERSHIP
IN PUNJAB ARE UNDER GOVERNMENT
CONTROL

Khalsa Ji: The militant Hindu fundamentalists of the RSS are now attacking the Sikh Nation. They are trying to insinuate themselves into the Sikh Nation by forming the "Rashtriya Sikh Sangat." They are trying to bring Sikhs under the Hindu umbrella by any means necessary. The Sikh Nation must stay alert and fight back against these efforts.

The only way to stop these efforts is political power. Without political power, nations perish. If we cannot reclaim our lost sovereignty, the RSS will succeed in its efforts to wipe out the Sikh Nation and the Sikh religion. Every day, we pray "Raj Kare Ga Khalsa." Do we mean it? A true Sikh cannot lie to Guru. If we mean what we say, we must do everything we can to establish Khalsa Raj.

The turmoil of the Akal Takht and the SGPC, and the other problems of the Sikh Nation are the result of the fact that we have lost the sovereignty that the Guru gave us. These problems have come about because the entire Sikh leadership and the Sikh institutions in Punjab are under Indian government control. We can only solve these problems by liberating our homeland, Khalistan.

Why are there still 50,000 Sikhs rotting in Indian jails without charge or trial? Why have the Sikh leaders in Punjab been silent about the murders of over 250,000 Sikhs at the hands of the Indian government? There is an Akali government and there are other Akali parties like Mann's Akali Dal. Why can't they start a Shantmai Morcha to free those political prisoners? Why can't they demand that Amnesty International be allowed into Punjab to conduct an independent human-rights investigation?

The government previously sent Professor Manjit Singh to destroy the Khalistan movement abroad. Now it has sent Simranjit Singh Mann. No Sikh leader who speaks for Khalistan will be allowed to leave the country and come here. There is moral degeneration of the Sikh character due to the lack of political power.

Four years ago, the Sikh leadership passed the Amritsar Declaration. It said that if India did not grant Punjab complete autonomy within six months, they would start a peaceful agitation for Khalistan. Four years later, Mann still supports the Amritsar Declaration. He still says that there should be a federation with India controlling defense, foreign affairs, and finances. These are the

things that define your political status. The other Sikh leaders in Punjab have backed away from even that position. On February 12 at the celebration of Sant Bhindranwale's birthday, Mann opposed the speakers who spoke for Khalistan, saying that they spoke only for themselves and that Bhindranwale supported secularism.

The proposal for a federated India still keeps Hindustan in control. That is why Mann made it. At the Sikh Day parade, U.S. Congressman Major Owens raised slogans of "Khalistan Zindabad," yet Mann would not even use the word Khalistan. He has long posed as a Khalistani. Even last year at the 300th anniversary celebration, he raised slogans of "Khalistan Zindabad" but now he has changed his stand. He, too, is clearly under government control. There is only one solution: a sovereign, free, and independent Khalistan, as declared on October 7, 1987. Only in a free Khalistan can Sikhs live in freedom, dignity, prosperity, and peace.

The Sikh Nation will not achieve its legitimate aspirations with any of the current political parties in Punjab. None of these parties will bring us a free Khalistan. Whether the Akalis, Congress, or the Akali Dal Mann is elected, elections under the Indian constitution will not free Khalistan and they will not end the slavery of the Sikh Nation and the corruption in the Punjab government. Badal made three promises to get elected: that he would release all political prisoners, that he would punish guilty police officers, and that he would appoint a commission to look into the excesses by the Indian government against the Sikh Nation. He could not even keep these modest promises. Instead, he put the heat on the People's Commission and shut it down.

The massacre of 35 Sikhs in Chatti Singhpora shows that without sovereignty, the Indian oppression of the Sikh Nation will continue. An investigation by the Ludhiana-based International Human Rights Organization, led by D.S. Gill, showed that the Indian government was responsible for the massacre. A recent report by the Justice Ajit Singh Bains, chairman of the Punjab Human Rights Organization, Sardar Inderjit Singh Jaijee, convenor of the Movement Against State Repression, and General Kartar Singh Gill, also found that the government counterinsurgency forces were responsible. This atrocity underlines the need for a sovereign, independent Khalistan.

Punjab is a police state. None of the political parties will bring us Khalistan. The Sikh Nation needs new leadership and a new party that are committed to liberating Khalistan. We need a Khalsa Raj Party. The Khalsa Raj Party should be committed to self-determination. It should demand freedom for Khalistan and any peaceful, democratic, non-violent means should be used to achieve this goal, whether it is a plebiscite or any other democratic means.

The only way to escape Indian slavery is to liberate Khalistan. New Sikh leadership emerge to free the Sikh Nation. They should raise the slogan "India Quit Khalistan" and start a Shantmai Morcha until we achieve freedom. We have now seen how the Indian government controls Sikh institutions and the entire Sikh leadership in Punjab.

Unless the Sikh Nation brings back the Sikh spirit and fight for truth and justice, the Khalsa Panth will not prosper. Remember the Guru Ka Bag Morcha and the Jaito Morcha. We did it then and we can do it now. Only in a free Khalistan can the Sikh religion flourish. Only in a free Khalistan will Sikhs be able to live in freedom and dignity.

Only then can the Sikh Nation finally enjoy the glow of freedom that was promised to us so many years ago.

Khalsa Ji, the onus is on us. The time is now. We must start a Khalsa Raj Party and begin a Shantmai Morcha to liberate Khalistan. We must reclaim our lost sovereignty. New, young leadership which has dedication and the spirit of sacrifice must emerge. Support only these new leaders who are honest, dedicated, fearless, and committed to freedom for Khalistan. India is on the verge of disintegration. Kashmir is going to be free from Indian control. Let us make use of this opportunity to free Khalistan.

Sincerely,

DR. GURMIT SINGH AULAKH,
President, Council of Khalistan.

TELEPHONE EXCISE TAX REPEAL
ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support today of H.R. 3916, the Telephone Excise Tax Repeal Act. This tax is a regressive tax that now collects over \$5 billion each year from local and long distance phone calls. The working families of this country deserve lower taxes and this tax repeal will benefit them the most. This tax cut is also an issue that people care about. I wish to express my appreciation to Robert Fuchs, a constituent from the 10th District of Ohio, for bringing this issue to my attention. This tax cut is fair and is long overdue.

The taxation of Americans is necessary to pay for the service of our government. The difficult question is how to structure these taxes. Regressive taxes, which levy taxes regardless of one's ability to pay, are not fair. The telephone tax is a regressive and unfair tax. Progressive taxes, which levy taxes proportional to one's ability to pay, are much fairer. The income tax is a type of progressive tax. I believe that the current budget surplus is large enough to consider repealing other regressive taxes that harm lower-income Americans. As such, I remain committed to creating a more fair tax system.

TRIBUTE TO LARRY WILKINSON—
EXTRAORDINARY LIBRARY AD-
VOCATE

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2000

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this moment to recognize Larry Wilkinson for receiving the Extraordinary Library Advocate of the 20th Century award that is presented by the ALA/ALTA National Advocacy Honor Role. This award recognizes individuals who encourage and promote library services at both the state and national levels. Larry was one of five individuals chosen for this award.

Some of Larry's accomplishments, with regards to his library service, include initiating the inception of two public libraries in the State of Colorado. Perhaps his greatest achievement was the restoration of a former jailhouse into the current library in the town of Telluride. Today, Larry volunteers one day a week to continue his public passion and also serves on the Colorado Council of Library Development.

The many contributions that Larry has made have markedly improved the public's access to information, especially in the Telluride area. Before Larry's involvement and the creation of the library, residents would have to travel to the city of Montrose in order to obtain access to literary materials. Thanks to Larry, that is no longer the case.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to pay tribute to Larry's efforts and to thank him for his work to provide access to information that is only available in public libraries. Larry is exceedingly worthy of this prestigious award and deserves the praise of this body.

WELLTON-MOHAWK TRANSFER
ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 6, 2000

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today at the end of this long journey to fully support this legislation which transfers the title of the Gila Project/Wellton Mohawk Division facilities from the Bureau of Reclamation to the Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation and Drainage District.

I want to thank the Gentleman from Alaska, Chairman YOUNG, the Gentleman from California, Mr. MILLER, the Chairman of the Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power, Chairman DOOLITTLE, and the Ranking Member of that Subcommittee, Mr. DOOLEY, for their help in getting this legislation through the Subcommittee, through the full Resources Committee, and now on the Floor of the House.

I also want to thank my colleagues from Arizona for their help. Congressmen STUMP, HAYWORTH, and KOLBE joined me in introducing the legislation, and Congressman SHADEGG quickly joined them in seeing the wisdom of co-sponsorship. And in the other body, both Senators from Arizona joined to introduce the bill we are considering today.

The Gila project in Western Arizona was originally authorized for construction by President Roosevelt in June, 1937. Construction for the Wellton-Mohawk Division was started in August, 1949, and water from the Colorado River was turned onto the Wellton-Mohawk fields for the first time in May, 1952. The project was completed by June, 1957 and the Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation and Drainage District fully repaid its project costs and was given its certificate of discharge on November 27, 1991. In 1998, the District and the Bureau of Reclamation signed a Memorandum of Agreement that covers the details of the transfer of title.

This bill, S. 356, which is virtually identical to the bill I introduced, H.R. 841, simply authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to carry out all provisions of the Memorandum of Agreement covering the transfer of title, including the authority to convey lands as required. It also requires the Secretary of Interior and the Secretary of Energy to continue to provide water and power as provided under existing contracts.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, this has been a long road, but we are finally ending the legislative journey. This is simple legislation which will help shrink the role of the Federal government and shift the responsibilities for ownership into the hands of local entities. In short, passage of this legislation will ensure a smoother and more efficient operation, which in turn will better serve the American taxpayer and the citizens of Southwest Arizona.

I ask that my colleagues support passage of S. 356 and I look forward to watching the President sign it into law.

TEXAS' CHILD HEALTH
INSURANCE PROGRAM

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2000

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Texas' Child Health Insurance Program.

Today, our children should not have to fight to get the health care coverage they deserve. I am sad to say, in Texas they do. A child born in the year 2000 is far more likely to grow up healthy and to reach adulthood than a child born in 1900 was. Over the past 100 years, our nation's scientific, technological, and financial resources have built the most advanced health care system in the world. But the doors of the health care system are not open to everyone.

Millions of children have inadequate medical care. Ensuring that every child in our nation receives the best possible health care must be a top priority for the nation. Unfortunately, not all children have benefited equally from the medical, public health, and public policy achievements of the 20th century. To a large extent, health status is still determined by race, language, culture, geography, and economics. In general, children in low-income communities get sick more often from preventable acute and infectious illnesses such as measles, conjunctivitis, and ear infections. Low-income children and teens are also more likely to suffer from chronic medical conditions such as diabetes and asthma, the leading cause of school absences. In fact, the sharpest increases in asthma rates are among urban minority children.

Despite the tremendous advances in medical technology and public health, millions of children have less of a chance to grow up healthy and strong because of unequal access to health care. Children without health insurance or a regular source of health care are most likely to seek care from emergency rooms and clinics, which have long waits to see a provider, limited follow-up, and little or