

the March massacre of 35 Sikhs at Chatti Singhpora was the responsibility of government forces. In fact, two separate investigations have already implicated Indian government counterinsurgency forces in that brutal massacre.

If we discover that these recent crimes have been committed by this group of BJP militants or government forces, India will have much explaining to do to this Congress. In fact, they should be held accountable for all their senseless actions. For years, I have been providing this Congress with reports that the Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984; 200,000 Christians in Nagaland since 1947; more than 65,000 Kashmiri Muslims since 1988; and tens of thousands of Assamese, Manipuris, Tamils, and Dalits.

As a result, I still believe we should cut off U.S. development aid to India until it respects the human rights of its people. Also, if we are looking for terrorism in South Asia, why are we completely ignoring India? Finally, we should openly support self-determination for the people of Christian Nagaland, of Khalistan, of Kashmir, and all the other nations seeking their freedom from India.

We must make it clear that oppression in India must end and all people in South Asia must enjoy freedom. This pattern of oppression of Christians, Sikhs, Muslims, and other minorities is not going to end until America, the only superpower in the world, takes a strong stand and makes it clear to India that these actions are not acceptable, especially in a country that claims to be democratic.

I am placing the article from Burning Punjab into the RECORD.

[From the Burning Punjab News, June 7, 2000]

CATHOLIC PRIEST MURDERED IN HIS MISSION HOME

New Delhi—A Catholic priest was murdered in his mission home near Mathura in Uttar Pradesh last night, All-India Catholic Union (AICU) alleged here. Quoting information from Archbishop of Agra Diocese Vincent Concessao, AICU said in a statement that "brother George, a 35-year-old member of the Borivili order, was found battered to death in Nevada in the Adviki post area on the Mathura bypass." The Union also alleged that though there were no indications about the motives, the crime seemed to follow the pattern of violence at Kosi Kalan earlier this year in which a priest and two nuns were assaulted and their rooms ransacked. "Early information said some persons, still to be identified, entered the house, locked up the servant, and then entered George's room. They beat him up till he was dead and then escaped in the night," the statement said. Besides AICU, other church and human rights groups, including the United Christian Forum for Human Rights and the All-India Christian Council, lodged strong protests with the Government on the violence. The church groups also condemned the alleged attempt by the National Commission for Minorities, which sent a team to Mathura and Agra in April to probe the attacks on Christians, to "trivialise" the violence in its report.

THE CLASSROOM MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2000

HON. WILLIAM F. GOODLING

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2000

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, today, I am pleased to introduce, along with several of my colleagues, the Classroom Modernization Act of 2000, otherwise known as the CMA. This legislation will provide the necessary federal response to ensure that all children receive a high-quality education in a safe, suitable, and fully equipped classroom.

Research shows that academic performance suffers when students are in school buildings that are below par. Safety code violations, outdated science equipment, inadequate vocational education laboratories, environmental hazards, structural impediments to personal safety, and facilities that are not user friendly for disabled students, can all adversely affect the degree to which students learn.

Joining me today in the introduction of CMA are three Members of the Committee on Education and the Workforce who have been involved from the beginning in developing the legislation. Representatives ISAKSON, CASTLE, and MCKEON have devoted considerable time and effort to this initiative, and the results bear their imprints.

I have said repeatedly that the primary responsibility for school construction is and should remain at the state and local level. In FY 1995, President Clinton chose to rescind funds that Congress appropriated for the school construction program authorized in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. In FY 1996, the administration did not request any construction funds, and Department of Education budget documents stated:

The construction and renovation of school facilities has traditionally been, the responsibility of state and local governments, financed primarily by local taxpayers; we are opposed to the creation of a new federal grant program for school construction. . . . No funds are requested for this program. . . . For the reason explained above, the Administration opposes the creation of a new federal grant program for school construction.

However, I have come to believe that the federal government can provide a measured response to this urgent need without usurping state and local decision-making. That is exactly what the Classroom Modernization Act does. It assists states and local educational agencies, including charter schools, with the expenses of federal statutory requirements and priorities relating to infrastructure, technology, and equipment needs.

Specifically, it provides assistance to states and local schools to help them comply with federal statutory and regulatory requirements. Increasingly, states and school districts are finding that they must spend local funds on federal mandates. The CMA would help alleviate that burden. It is only proper that the federal government provide financing for such activities as facilities modifications in order to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and asbestos removal from school buildings in order to comply with the Asbestos School Hazard Abatement Act.

It is also important that internet wiring, improvements in vocational and science laboratories and equipment, and school facility renovations undertaken to comply with fire and safety codes should be allowable uses of funds at the local level.

Charter schools should also benefit significantly through CMA. Charter schools are public schools established under state law. Although a relatively new concept, charter schools are making great strides in improving and reforming public education. Initial reports show parental satisfaction is high, students are eager to learn, teachers are enjoying teaching again, administrators are set free from bureaucratic red-tape, and more dollars are getting to the classroom.

Unfortunately, charter schools have faced roadblocks in financing the construction and acquisition of school facilities. Often those states that do allow charter schools do not provide a dedicated funding stream for capital improvements or new construction for charter schools. The bill I am introducing today remedies this situation by assisting with the infrastructure expenses of charter schools.

CMA provides flexibility in the use of funds for charter schools. Specifically, as an incentive for states to direct funds to charter schools, the bill does not require a match for federal funds directed toward charter school infrastructure activities. As an incentive for states to operate a state guaranteed loan program in which charter schools participate, CMA allows states to retain funds for the administrative costs of operating such a program.

I ask my colleagues in the House to take a look at the Classroom Modernization Act of 2000 and consider it as a carefully measured approach to dealing with school facilities.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CLASSROOM MODERNIZATION ACT

HON. JOHNNY ISAKSON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2000

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join Chairman Goodling as a co-sponsor of the Classroom Modernization Act of 2000 to pay for federally mandated construction cost and start-up costs for charter school construction.

For years, the Federal Government has passed construction-related mandates on to local school boards for everything from asbestos removal and handicap access, to special education classrooms and IDEA related cost. Each requirement has failed to include a single dollar of federal money. Our proposal will fund these unfunded mandates and free up local dollars for school improvement.

The \$150 Million dollars for start-up charter school related construction cost would be meaningful in expanding new charter school applications, and for more private sector and parental involvement in local schools. Both the White House and the Congress have verbally promoted the public charter school movement, and now we are making a meaningful financial commitment to charter schools.