

RAILROAD RETIREMENT AND  
SURVIVORS IMPROVEMENT ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. MELISSA A. HART**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 31, 2001*

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to strongly support H.R. 1140, the Railroad Retirement and Survivors Improvement Act of 2001. As a cosponsor and one of the 384 yeas votes, I am pleased to see the House pass this needed legislation.

One of the original meetings I had in my first months in Congress was with a group of widows whose husbands had worked for Conrail in Beaver County in my Pennsylvania district. These women expressed to me how they struggled to pay their high electricity bills and rising health care costs, and that this legislation would go a long way toward helping them meet those costs. Last session, the House approved similar legislation, but the Senate failed to consider it. I hope that the overwhelming support in the House this time will give the momentum we need to give these widows and retirees the relief they need. It also modernizes the pension plan—ensuring that the program will continue to railroad workers and their loved ones.

This legislation not only increases benefits to widows of railroad employees, but also:

Lowers the minimum age of workers with 30 years service eligible for full benefits;

Creates an independent Railroad Retirement Trust Fund; and

Expands the investment authority of the fund to generate better returns.

In a "railroad state" like Pennsylvania, legislation like this provides the needed security for a large portion of our residents. It has the backing of both railroad labor and management.

Now that we have done our part to pass legislation that strengthens railroad retirement, let's make sure that we follow through and get this legislation to the President's desk.

A TRIBUTE TO THE 116 YEARS OF  
SERVICE BY MANHATTAN'S  
GOUVERNEUR HOSPITAL**HON. JERROLD NADLER**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2001*

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Manhattan's Gouverneur Hospital on the occasion of its 116th anniversary. Since opening its doors to the Lower East Side community in 1885, Gouverneur Hospital has been committed to providing dependable high quality health care at an affordable price. From excellent emergency services to quality long-term care, Gouverneur Hospital has been there for its neighbors time and time again throughout the past century. An excellent medical facility and a haven for the community, the Hospital and its staff provide patients with efficient, thoughtful and affordable care.

On September 12th, 2001, Gouverneur Hospital will be holding a fundraising event in

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

*August 3, 2001*

honor of its 116th year of service. I am pleased to offer my congratulations to Gouverneur Hospital on this occasion. The money raised at this function will enable the hospital to better meet the needs of the community, by expanding its nursing facilities, acquiring a mobile medical van, and increasing its services to the Chinese community. I also commend the recipients of the Gouverneur Hospital Community Service Award for their invaluable contributions to the Gouverneur Hospital community.

For the services they have provided to the Lower East Side and their dedication to the well-being of the community, I offer my sincere congratulations to Gouverneur Hospital for 116 years of outstanding service.

CONGRATULATING THE CHURCH  
OF KHALISTAN ON 15 YEARS OF  
SERVICE**HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2001*

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, for 15 years of service to the Sikhs, the people of South Asia and America.

Fifteen years ago Dr. Aulakh left a well-paying job to begin striving day in and day out in an effort to draw attention to the plight of the minorities of India. Since that time he has succeeded in raising awareness of the treatment of Christians, Kashmiri Muslims, and other minorities in India and throughout the world. Dr. Aulakh has spoken out on behalf of these people; he has highlighted injustices, and in so doing, has raised the level of awareness of such issues throughout the United States.

On October 7, 1987, the Sikh homeland declared its independence from India. At that time, Dr. Aulakh was named to lead the struggle to regain the lost sovereignty of the Sikhs.

If it were not for Dr. Aulakh's tireless efforts, the human-rights conditions in India would go unexposed and unpunished. Because of his efforts, all of us in Congress are much better informed on these matters and we are more able to take appropriate action. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Dr. Aulakh and the Council of Khalistan for their tireless efforts on behalf of freedom.

TORTURE AND POLICE ABUSE IN  
THE OSCE REGION**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2001*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, over the July Fourth recess, I had the privilege of participating in the U.S. Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's annual meeting held in Paris, where I introduced a resolution on the need for the OSCE participating States—all of our States—to intensify our efforts to combat torture, police abuse, and ra-

cial profiling. This resolution, adopted and included the Assembly's final Declaration, also calls for greater protection for non-governmental organizations, medical personnel, and others who treat the victims of torture and report on their human rights violations. The resolution also condemns the insidious practice of racial profiling, which has the effect of leaving minorities more vulnerable to police abuse. Finally, my resolution calls for the OSCE participating States to adopt, in law and in practice, a complete ban on incommunicado detention.

Tragically, recent news reports only underscore how urgent the problem of police abuse is. I would like to survey a few of the reports received by the Helsinki Commission in recent weeks.

First, on July 7 in Slovakia, the body of Karol Sendrei, a 51-year-old Romani father, was returned to his family. The convoluted account of his death has included mutual re-cremations among police officers and, so far, has led to the resignation of the mayor of Magnezitovce and indictments against three police officers. While much remains to be sorted out, this much is clear: On July 5, Mr. Sendrei was taken into police custody. The next day, he died of injuries, including shock caused by a torn liver, cranial and pericardial bleeding, and broken jaw, sternum, and ribs. According to reports, Mr. Sendrei had been chained to a radiator and beaten for the last twelve hours of his life.

The deaths in police custody of Lubomir Sarissky in 1999 and now Mr. Sendrei, persistent reports of police abuse in villages like Hermanovce, and the reluctance of the police and judicial system to respond seriously to racially motivated crimes have all eroded trust in law enforcement in Slovakia. As Americans know from first-hand experience, when the public loses that trust, society as a whole pays dearly.

I welcome the concern for the Sendrei case reflected in the statements of Prime Minister Dzurinda, whom I had the chance to meet at the end of May, and others in his cabinet. But statements alone will not restore confidence in the police among Slovakia's Romani community. Those who are responsible for this death must be held fully accountable before the law. I will continue to follow this case, along with the trials of the three men still being prosecuted for the murder of Anastazia Balazova last year.

Although it has received far less press attention, in Hungary, a Romani man was also shot and killed on June 30 by an off-duty police officer in Budapest; one other person was injured in that shooting. While the police officer in that case has been arrested, too often reports of police misconduct in Hungary are ignored or have been countered with a slap on the wrist. I remain particularly alarmed by the persistent reports of police brutality in Hajduhadhaz and police reprisals against those who have reported their abuse to the Helsinki Commission. In one case, a teenager in Hajduhadhaz who had reported being abused by the police was detained by the police again—after his case had been brought to the attention of the Helsinki Commission, and after Helsinki Commission staff had raised it with the Hungarian Ambassador. In an apparent attempt to intimidate this boy, the police

claimed to have a "John Doe" criminal indictment for "unknown persons" for damaging the reputation of Hungary abroad. These are outrageous tactics from the communist-era that should be ended.

I urge Hungarian Government officials to look more closely at this problem and take greater efforts to combat police abuse. I understand an investigation has begun into possible torture by a riverbank patrol in Tiszabura, following reports that police in that unit had forced a 14-year-old Romani boy into the ice-cold waters of the Tisza river. There are now reports that this unit may have victimized other people as well. I am hopeful this investigation will be transparent and credible and that those who have committed abuses will be held fully accountable.

In the Czech Republic, lack of confidence in law enforcement agents has recently led some Roma to seek to form their own self-defense units. Frankly, this is not surprising. Roma in the Czech Republic continue to be the target of violent, racially motivated crime: On April 25, a group of Roma were attacked by German and Czech skinheads in Novy Bor. On June 30, four skinheads attacked a group of Roma in Ostrava; one of the victims of that attack was repeatedly stabbed, leaving his life in jeopardy. On July 16, three men shouting Nazi slogans attacked a Romani family in their home in As in western Bohemia. On July 21, a Romani man was murdered in Svitavy by a man who had previously committed attacks against Roma, only to face a slap on the wrist in the courts.

These cases follow a decade in which racially motivated attacks against Roma in the Czech Republic have largely been tolerated by the police. Indeed, in the case of the murder of Milan Lacko, a police officer was involved. More to the point, he ran over Milan Lacko's body with his police car, after skinheads beat him and left him in the road. In another case, involving a 1999 racially motivated attack on another Romani man, the Czech Supreme Court issued a ruling that the attack was premeditated and organized, and then remanded the case back to the district court in Jeseník for sentencing in accordance with that finding. But the district court simply ignored the Supreme Court's finding and ordered four of the defendants released. Under circumstances such as these, is it any wonder that Roma so lack confidence in the police and judiciary that they feel compelled to defend themselves?

I am not, however, without hope for the Czech Republic. Jan Jarab, the Czech Government's Human Rights Commissioner, has spoken openly and courageously of the human rights problems in his country. For example, the Czech News Agency recently reported that Jarab had said that "the Czech legal system deals 'benevolently' with attacks committed by right-wing extremists, [f]rom police investigators, who do not want to investigate such cases as racial crimes, to state attorneys and judges, who pass the lowest possible sentences." I hope Czech political leaders—from every party and every walk of life—will support Jan Jarab's efforts to address the problems he so rightly identified.

Clearly, problems of police abuse rarely if ever go away on their own. On the contrary, I believe that, unattended, those who engage

in abusive practices only become more brazen and shameless. When two police officers in Romania were accused of beating to death a suspect in Cugir in early July, was it really a shock? In that case, the two officers had a history of using violent methods to interrogate detainees—but there appears to have been no real effort to hold them accountable for their practices.

I am especially concerned by reports from Amnesty International that children are among the possible victims of police abuse and torture in Romania. On March 14, 14-year-old Vasile Danut was detained by police in Vladesti and beaten severely by police. On April 5, 15-year-old Ioana Silaghi was reportedly attacked by a police officer in Oradea. Witnesses in the case have reportedly also been intimidated by the police. In both cases, the injuries of the children were documented by medical authorities. I urge the Romanian authorities to conduct impartial investigations into each of these cases and to hold fully accountable those who may be found guilty of violating the law.

Mr. Speaker, as is well-known to many Members, torture and police abuse is a particularly widespread problem in the Republic of Turkey. I have been encouraged by the willingness of some public leaders, such as parliamentarian Emre Kocaoğlu, to acknowledge the breadth and depth of the problem. Acknowledging the existence of torture must surely be part of any effort to eradicate this abuse in Turkey.

I was therefore deeply disappointed by reports that 18 women, who at a conference last year publicly described the rape and other forms of torture meted out by police, are now facing charges of "insulting and raising suspicions about Turkish security forces." This is, of course, more than just a question of the right to free speech—a right clearly violated by these criminal charges. As one conference participant said, "I am being victimized a second time." Turkey cannot make the problem of torture go away by bringing charges against the victims of torture, by persecuting the doctors who treat torture victims, or by trying to silence the journalists, human rights activists, and even members of Turkey's own parliament who seek to shed light on this dark corner. The charges against these 18 women undermine the credibility of the Turkish Government's assertion that it is truly seeking to end the practice of torture and hope these charges will be dropped.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw attention to the case of Abner Louima in New York, whose case has come to light again in recent weeks. In 1997, Abner Louima was brutally, and horrifically tortured by police officials; he will suffer permanent injuries for the rest of his life because of the damage inflicted in a single evening. Eventually, New York City police officer Justin Volpe pleaded guilty and is serving a 30-year sentence for his crimes. Another officer was also found guilty of participating in the assault and four other officers were convicted of lying to authorities about what happened. On July 12, Abner Louima settled the civil suit he had brought against New York City and its police union.

There has been no shortage of ink to describe the \$7.125 million that New York City

will pay to Mr. Louima and the unprecedented settlement by the police union, which agreed to pay an additional \$1.625 million. What is perhaps most remarkable in this case is that Mr. Louima had reached agreement on the financial terms of this settlement months ago. He spent the last 8 months of his settlement negotiations seeking changes in the procedures followed when allegations of police abuse are made.

As the Louima case illustrated, there is no OSCE participating State, even one with long democratic traditions and many safeguards in place, that is completely free from police abuse. Of course, I certainly don't want to leave the impression that the problems of all OSCE countries are more or less alike—they are not. The magnitude of the use of torture in Turkey and the use of torture as a means of political repression in Uzbekistan unfortunately distinguish those countries from others. But every OSCE participating State has an obligation to prevent and punish torture and other forms of police abuse and I believe every OSCE country should do more.

IN HONOR OF THE LAKE CITY  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH'S 125TH  
ANNIVERSARY

**HON. SCOTT McINNIS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2001

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize the Lake City Presbyterian Church. The Lake City Presbyterian Church celebrated its 125th anniversary last month, making it the oldest church in Colorado that still utilizes its original building.

Lake City's Community Presbyterian Church, originally called Lake City's First Presbyterian Church, was started in 1876 with an organizational meeting in Del Norte, Colorado. Reverend Alexander Darley had scoured the area months before looking for Presbyterians and related religious groups to justify his idea to make Lake City the home to the first Presbyterian Church on the Western Slope of the Continental Divide. According to the church's historical record, Rev. Darley went to every house and tent within six miles of Lake City to acquire names for his petition. After the meeting in June of 1876, a piece of land was secured for the 24'x40' frame where the church was to be built. Construction began in August, and by the end of October the church was completed. The estimated cost of the church was \$2,100.

Rev. Darling was officially ordained as the minister in 1877, and served Lake City for three years before taking leave. Throughout the years, many ministers have taken the pulpit, including a tape recorder for the winter months of the 1940's and 1950's that filled in the gaps between the summer student ministers that traveled to Lake City. The membership has also fluctuated reaching a high in 1889 of 132 members to its current membership of 84. Many stories accompany the well-kept historical records of the church, and on June 24, 2001 many community members gathered to reminisce about the beautiful old church.