

STATE LEGISLATURES ENDORSE  
"OPERATION RESPECT"

**HON. GEORGE MILLER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2001

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I want to call attention to the recent vote of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) in support of Operation Respect, which works with school administrators, teachers, legislators and others to promote character education and social-emotional learning in our nation's schools. The resolution was unanimously endorsed by the NCSL convention in August and marks a strong commitment on the part of lawmakers throughout this country to ending taunting, bullying and violence in our schools.

This is an enormously important initiative. Our nation has been naturally shocked each time a brutal act of violence has occurred at a school and we are all committed to eliminating such dangerous behavior. We also have to be better attuned to the acts of taunting, violence and bullying that precede many such acts, and that are, unfortunately, far more common on campuses daily.

A Little Hoover Commission report in California earlier this year found that "alienated and disaffected young people are escaping the attention of families, friends and teachers until they explode into violence." A recent survey of more than 2,000 students in grades 8-11 nationwide found that 80 percent said that they had experienced physical or verbal sexual harassment at school.

Parents and teachers cannot allow this situation to continue and neither can legislators. Sound program models like "Don't Laugh At Me," developed by Operation Respect, are being utilized in many classrooms throughout the nation, and we need to give strong federal support for their expansion and integration into the school curricula as local educators see fit.

Earlier this year, Peter Yarrow came to both the Democratic Caucus and the Republican Conference of the House of Representatives to explain the urgent need for programs like "Don't Laugh at Me," and he received a vigorous, bipartisan response. Now is the time for us to follow up on the strong feelings and pledges of support Mr. Yarrow generated by casting our votes in favor of adequate funding for character education and social-emotional learning programs and teacher training both in upcoming appropriations legislation and in the pending education bill.

In the meantime, I want to share with my colleagues in the House the text of the resolution just adopted by the National Conference of State Legislatures in support of this important initiative.

National Conference of State Legislatures  
Resolution in Support of the Efforts of Operation Respect Inc

Whereas, NCSL joins the National Association of Secondary School Principals, American Association of School Administrators, Council of Great City Colleges of Education, National Education Association, Council of the Great City Schools, American School Counselors Association, National School

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Boards Association, National Middle School Association, and American Federation of Teachers in Supporting efforts to "Meet the crisis of violence head-on, while simultaneously addressing the academic needs of students, giving them the tools to become whole, productive human beings; responsible, humane, ethical, participating members of our democracy and our society;" and

Whereas, NCSL applauds the goals of Operation Respect and its efforts to work with state legislatures to ensure the health and well-being of the next generation of children: Therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That, NCSL forwards Operation Respect's proposals for state legislative action for review and consideration where appropriate by the 50 state legislatures, territories and commonwealths of the United States.

HONORING GARO MARDIROSSIAN

**HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2001

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Garo Mardirossian for being selected as Los Angeles' Trial Lawyer of the Year 2000. Mardirossian was selected for the honor by the board of governors of the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles.

Mardirossian is originally from Aleppo, Syria. Due to that government's intolerance of Christian-Armenians, his family moved to Lebanon and lived in Beirut for two years. At the age of eleven, Garo and his family decided to relocate to Cleveland, Ohio. From Cleveland they moved to La Mirada and finally settled in Los Angeles, California.

Mardirossian earned his Bachelor's degree in Economics from UCLA and earned his law degree from Whittier Law School in 1981. Later that same year, he founded the Law Offices of Garo Mardirossian. His firm started out by handling small personal injury and auto injury cases. Garo has established himself and his firm as defenders of the U.S. Constitution. He often speaks at attorney association's conventions, bar association meetings, and at law schools.

Garo's trial achievements include:

Palmer v. Schindler Elevator Company—in which Garo won a \$5.75 million verdict for his client who suffered post-concussion syndrome and a broken arm and leg when a belt in an elevator disintegrated.

Saakyan v. Modern Auto—an eight year case of defective tires where the jury returned a verdict of \$21 million.

Hakiman v. Gabbai—in which a jury returned a verdict of \$6.65 million for a man badly burned due to an apartment complex full of malfunctioning stoves.

Since 1986, Garo has been married to his wife Kathy, who is also a lawyer in his firm. They have three children: Ani, Nora & Kevin.

Mr. Speaker, I want to honor Garo Mardirossian for being selected as Los Angeles' Trial Lawyer of the Year 2000. I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing Mr. Mardirossian and his family many more years of continued success.

THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF AN  
INDEPENDENT UKRAINE

**HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 5, 2001

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues to the Flag Raising celebration of the 10th Anniversary of Independent Ukraine, that was held at 12:30 p.m. in Rockland County, New York, on August 26, 2001, at the County Offices Complex, in New City.

This event was sponsored by the Ukrainian Community of Rockland, under the leadership of Ukrainian American Veterans of Rockland, with their former National Commander, Dr. Vasyi Luchkiw, serving as the Event Chairman. I commend the Rockland County Executive, the Honorable Scott Vanderhoef, the Chairman of the County Legislature, the Honorable Ilan Schoenberger, and our County Legislators for providing a place to hold the celebrations. I also would like to extend a special thanks to the Honorable Theodore Dusanenko for his help throughout the years, and a heartfelt thanks to all of the participants for making this celebration possible.

I join the members of the Ukrainian Community in celebrating this significant anniversary. It is a miracle that, without bloodshed, the Soviet Empire, which held the Ukraine in its thrall, has melted away.

The anniversary program included thoughtful remarks by Commander Luchkiw, which I ask to be printed at this point in the RECORD for the information of my colleagues:

ON THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY . . .

(By Dr. Vasyi Luchkiw)

UKRAINE MADE IT!!! Ukrainian people made it! Contrary to all predictions and against all odds, Ukraine not only survived the past ten years, but actually made significant progress on its way to become a western democratic state. Even economy has been edging upward and there is hope for Ukrainian people who have suffered politically, economically, culturally and even spiritually for so many years. But there remains a lot to be done and Ukraine probably will not be able to do it alone. It needs help. It needs help in the broadest meaning of the word. Yes, it even needs help with fighting corruption. The 75 years of corrupt Soviet government and society left its indelible mark on Ukraine and it does not know how to get rid of it.

Western world must remember, that Ukraine greeted restoration of its independence with empty hands and empty coffers. Since that fateful day in August 1991, Ukraine had to improvise every step of the way. Its people had to suffer the brunt of economic shortfalls. The struggle is not over yet and west better not wait too long with its help.

There has been talk about a type of "Marshal Plan" for Ukraine. Whatever it is, it better come soon. Procrastination with help for Ukraine may turn into disaster for western Europe, if not the entire democratic world. Ukraine's neighbor to the north is waiting "ready and willing." It is aching for a chance to "show" people of Ukraine that it is he that truly cares about Ukraine and that is he to whom Ukraine should turn for support and guidance. Need we say more?