

of social and economic justice in America. I thank you all for keeping the focus where it should be, on the hardworking communities of New York.

I salute the Caucus today upon the opening of its Annual Conference with the presentation of this CONGRESSIONAL RECORD statement for all that this fine body has attempted to do and all that it has done on behalf of New Yorkers. To the Caucus members, I with you many more years of success and I thank you for your fine service and dedication to the state of New York.

CHINA IS AWARE OF THE NEED TO CONSERVE WILDLIFE

HON. DANA ROHRBACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 1998

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that since the introduction of the American Champion "Super Scout" spotter aircraft in antipoaching operations in Kruger National Park, South Africa, in September, 1996 by the non-profit United States-based Wilderness Conservancy, not one rhinoceros or elephant has been killed by poachers there. That is a success story that was made possible by a grant to the Wilderness Conservancy from the Forestry Department of the government of the Republic of China on Taiwan.

In the past, some conservation groups have criticized the Republic of China's government for what they believed was an insufficient effort to stop the illicit importation of ivory, rhino horn and other wild animal parts into Taiwan. In recent years, however, the ROC government has adopted ever-stronger laws to curb that illicit traffic, has strictly enforced them and has imposed stiff penalties on violators.

Beliefs in folk medicine techniques that employed wild animal parts took root over many centuries, and it has not been an easy task for the ROC government to change those beliefs (held especially by older persons). Nevertheless, the ROC has undertaken a concerted effort to end the illicit trade in animal parts in light of both human population growth and the drastic reduction of the wildlife populations upon which the traditional remedies were based. Today, the government of the Republic of China is engaged in a comprehensive environmental education program in its schools to make all of its young people aware of the need to conserve wildlife.

The ROC has done more. They have made an additional grant to the Wilderness Conservancy for the purchase of another aircraft, a refurbished Cessna 206. It will undertake a multi-purpose role in southern Africa this year. It will support the spotter aircraft by flying antipoaching teams to airstrips ahead of fleeing poachers, in order to intercept them before they can reach safe havens. The new aircraft also will resupply game-scout teams deep in the bush, thus permitting longer patrols over larger areas. It will carry scientists of the Wildlife Breeding Research Center and their portable cryogenic laboratory into the field to facilitate Assisted Reproduction Technology (embryo transfer and in-vitro fertilization) and the creation of a Genome Resource Bank (the collection, processing, storage and use of

gametes and other biological material from rare and endangered wildlife species). Finally, the aircraft will fill a humanitarian role by transporting volunteer doctors, dentists and nurses to remote villages to administer to those in need.

In addition to the Republic of China's grant to purchase the aircraft, the Wilderness Conservancy has received a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, under the African Elephant Conservation Act of 1988, to provide hand-held aircraft radios, hand-held Garmin GPS units and portable repeater stations to assist the anti-poaching effort. These will be in place this year and will make radio communication between pilots and ground teams possible, greatly enhancing the poacher-interception effort.

Saving the rhinoceros and elephant from extinction is dangerous work and requires great dedication by those who do it. These generous grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Republic of China will help greatly toward the goal of ending the poaching of large wild animals. In the process, there is a unique four-way cooperative effort between the people of Taiwan, a conservation-minded American organization (with expert knowledge of aviation and anti-poaching), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the men and women on the anti-poaching front lines in South Africa.

IN OPPOSITION TO H.R. 1428, THE VOTER ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION ACT

HON. LOUIS STOKES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 1998

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 1428, the voter eligibility verification act. This bill is unnecessary. This measure is based on the unsubstantiated premise that registration and voting by noncitizens in this country is a major problem that cannot be successfully addressed under current federal and state laws.

Under current law, the INS is already required to cooperate with election officials in investigations of voter registration and vote fraud.

This bill undermines the voting rights act of 1965 by placing the final determination of voter eligibility back into the hands of state and local election officials bypassing the protection of the voting rights act.

This bill also weakens the protections of the privacy act by exposing citizens' social security numbers.

This bill will not work. There are no federal lists of citizens, particularly of citizens who are born in this country. Two federal agencies, the Social Security Administration and the Justice Department argued against this proposal last year before the Judiciary Subcommittee on immigration and claims. The Social Security Administration stated that "it is unable to confirm citizenship." The Justice Department stated that the INS "cannot systematically use its automated databases to confirm whether an individual is a citizen."

This bill will discourage, not encourage voter participation. Very few citizens can produce their birth certificates in a few hours or days

and replacement takes weeks and costs a fee. H.R. 1428 would subject citizens, especially first-time voters, or established voters who move, to inconvenience which will easily deter participation.

We need to encourage, foster increased voter participation. Members of this distinguished House know the importance of each vote. We have, since the civil rights struggles began, worked to eliminate barriers to voting, not to erect new ones to meet phantom problems. I urge my colleagues to join me and defeat this bill.

INDIAN GENOCIDE BETRAYS GANDHI'S PRINCIPLE OF NON-VIOLENCE

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 1998

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, will you please insert the following remarks as part of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD's extension of remarks section.

INDIAN GENOCIDE BETRAYS GANDHI'S PRINCIPLE OF NONVIOLENCE

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, recently 22 of my colleagues and I wrote a letter to the Chief Minister of Punjab, Parkash Singh Badal, urging him to deliver on his campaign promise that he would appoint an independent judicial commission of inquiry to investigate the atrocities and genocide in Punjab. If South Africa can have its Truth Commission, why can't the truth about Indian genocide be brought to light?

This letter is not the product of a small ideological coterie. The signers come from both parties and they range across the political spectrum. What we have in common is a love of freedom and a belief that basic human rights must be respected, especially in countries that call themselves democratic.

The Indian government wraps itself in the mantle of Mohandas Gandhi, the spiritual leader of its independence movement. It has spent a lot of money to erect statues of Gandhi throughout the United States and around the world. Yet the genocide against the Sikhs of Khalistan, the Christians of Nagaland, the Dalits, the Muslims of Kashmir, the tribal people of Manipur, and others continues. Since Mr. Badal's government took power last year, at least 75 atrocities have been reported in the newspapers or otherwise documented.

In a democracy, especially one so overt in its dedication to the nonviolent principles of Gandhi, such genocide and ethnic cleansing should not be occurring. At the very least, the government should be investigating the genocide and bringing those responsible to justice. Instead, the Badal government in Punjab boasts that it has not taken action to punish any police officer. The central government in New Delhi is no better. Apparently, building statues to nonviolence is much easier than practicing it. No statue ever saved the life of a victim of state terrorism or police tyranny. What good did those Gandhi statues do Jaswant Singh Khalra, the human-rights activists the police kidnapped over two years ago?

It is time to make India start living up to the principles it espouses. A judicial commission to investigate the genocide is the first step that must be taken. This would show the world that India is finally beginning to get serious about respecting the

human rights of all people, not just upper-caste Brahmin aristocrats. Letting Amnesty International and other human-rights monitors into the country would also signal India's commitment to finding and punishing those who violate human rights. If India will not take even these minimal steps, then we must take strong action. It is time to impose tough economic sanctions on the Indian regime, cut off aid to that theocratic satrapy, and publicly support the freedom movements in the many captive nations of South Asia. By these steps we can help give the gift of freedom to all the people of the subcontinent. That is much more valuable than any statue.

On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to enter our letter to Chief Minister Badal into the RECORD.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, January 30, 1998.

The Honorable PARKASH SINGH BADAL,
Chief Minister of Punjab, Chandigarh, Punjab,
India.

DEAR CHIEF MINISTER BADAL: On January 5, four human-rights activists led by Colonel

Partap Singh, President of the Khalsa Raj Party, and co-signed by Justice Ajit Singh Bains (Punjab Human Rights Organization), Inderjeet Singh Jaijee and Major General Narinder Singh (Movement Against State Repression) wrote a joint letter requesting that you fulfill your campaign promise to appoint an independent commission to investigate atrocities which have occurred in Punjab over the last 14 years.

The Central Bureau of Investigation, the Supreme Court of India and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights have found that the Punjab police have engaged in a deliberate policy of abduction, torture and illegal cremation of Sikh youth on a massive scale. All have urged your Government and the Government of India to facilitate a fully empowered and impartial inquiry into these and other custodial deaths.

We are also concerned that the police continue to engage in acts of murder, rape and torture of Sikh youth. Over 75 cases have been documented thus far. It is imperative that your Government fulfill its pledge to appoint an independent judicial inquiry to

determine just who was killed and who was responsible. It will send a signal to those elements in the security forces that your Government will no longer tolerate security elements that engage in lawless and brutal conduct.

Just as we are witnessing in South Africa's Truth Commission, it is time for the truth to come out in Punjab, for better or for worse.

Sincerely,

Edolphus Towns, Dan Burton, Cynthia A. McKinney, Dana Rohrabacher, Richard Pombo, Donald M. Payne, Collin C. Peterson, William J. Jefferson, Jerry Solomon, Phil Crane, George Miller, Gary Condit, Roscoe Bartlett, Tom Coburn, John N. Hostettler, Sheila Jackson-Lee, J.C. Watts, John T. Doolittle, Sam Farr, Esteban E. Torres, Bernard Sanders, Wally Herger, Randy "Duke" Cunningham.