

greatest gift we can give to our children—the gift of a strong and viable education.

Both my parents being educators, I grew up surrounded by reminders of how important public education is in America. As a parent myself of three school-aged children attending public schools in Fort Collins, I understand the value of liberal access to community schools and academic professionals.

Indeed, the reason I have devoted nine years in the Colorado State Senate and my first year in the United States Congress to improving the quality of local public schools is because I am convinced my parents were right. The future strength of the Republic lies in the hands of a well-educated citizenry.

Clearly, parents bear the primary responsibility for educating their children. Public school districts were established by states to assist, and it is at the state level, and under state constitutions that public school systems are properly organized. In Colorado, the management of public schools is entrusted to 176 locally-elected boards.

As a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workplace, I face routinely those who would dismantle America's traditions of local control and parental authority with respect to educating kids. Their preference always seems to entail centralizing education authority in Washington, D.C. as a way to address any shortcomings of America's schools.

The White House, for example, is working to abandon independent standardized testing in favor of a government-owned national test. The administration has already engaged the early stages of developing a national curriculum.

The Federal government actually has no Constitutional authority to manage public schools, but it gets around that barrier by handing out lots of cash. With every federal dollar comes strings. Of course, no school is forced to take the money, but few can resist.

Deploying such strategies, the federal government has found ways to influence almost every aspect of public schooling from the design of new school buildings, to the qualifications of teachers, to students' diets. Rarely do these tactics improve the quality of education, but more often only suppress the ability of local schools and teachers to do the jobs for which they are best trained.

My strenuous objections to various schemes to centralize education authority in Washington have at times been misinterpreted by my political foes to suggest I am somehow "anti-education." Quite the opposite is true.

My firm resistance to federalizing public schools is based entirely on my belief that public schools should be decentralized, local, parent-drive, student-centered, efficient institutions which offer competitive services enabling students to be the world's best.

We would all do well to remember that the most valuable gift we can give to any child is a quality education. As both a father, and a member of Congress, ensuring an effective public school system will continue to be among my chief objectives.

IN COMMEMORATION OF SAINT DAVID'S DAY

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 12, 1998

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Saint David, the Welsh Patron Saint. Many of my friends and colleagues may not know that I am of Welsh descent—but then again maybe my name, Lewis, gives me away. I am very proud of the Welsh blood running through my veins. What American wouldn't be if he knew just how many great Americans were also Welsh! Let me take a moment to share some interesting facts with you.

Did you know that twenty percent of our Pilgrim Fathers were Welsh? Almost fifty percent of the signers of the American Declaration of Independence were also Welsh or of Welsh heritage—as were nine of the Presidents of the United States, including John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams and Abraham Lincoln. There are just too many great Welsh-Americans to name!!

Another interesting fact I would like to share with you pertains to Saint Patrick, the Patron Saint of Ireland. Did you know that Saint Patrick was really a Welshman? As a boy of sixteen, Patrick was taken from the Welsh village where he was born by an Irish slave trading party. He was a slave in Ireland until the age of twenty-two, when he escaped and returned to Wales. Later, he became a priest and was sent back to Ireland where the Welshman Patrick became revered as Saint Patrick of Ireland.

When you are in Washington, D.C., the more athletically-inclined Welsh among you might like to hike half-way up the stairs in the Washington Monument to read an inscription there: "Fy Iait, Fy Ngwlad, Fy Nghenedl, Wales—Cymru Am Byth." My language, my country, my nation, Wales—Wales forever!

On March 1st, Welsh Americans across the Nation will honor the birth of Saint David, the Patron Saint of Wales. At the Welsh Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles, the Welsh Choir of Southern California will give its premiere performance, conducted by famous, Welsh-born Hollywood composer Michael Lewis! I know that this concert will be a treat for all who hear it. I only wish I could be present!

I would say to my colleagues, let us all remember that March 1st is the birthday of Saint David, the Patron Saint of Wales.

COMMENDING THE SCHOOLS OF BASEL, SWITZERLAND, ON THE HOLOCAUST EDUCATION PROGRAM IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 12, 1998

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleagues to join me in commending the public schools of the Canton and City of Basel, Switzerland, on the comprehensive program of Holocaust education which has been adopted for their public schools.

Much has been written and said about the outrageous behavior of some Swiss banking executives with regard to deposits of gold and other valuables by Holocaust victims during the period before and during World War II, but little attention has been focused on the outstanding degree to which the people of Basel and other Swiss cities and cantons have assumed the responsibility of teaching Swiss children about the horrors of the Holocaust. By making this a communal priority, they have determined to never let such atrocities take place again.

The schools of Basel address the subject of the Holocaust with children of all ages, at all academic levels and in a wide variety of disciplines, primarily in history and in German language and culture classes. In the *Wieterbildungsschule* (elementary schools), young people learn about the fate of children in the Third Reich, the resistance efforts against Nazi occupation, and other introductory topics ranging from a basic understanding of anti-Semitism to the existence of ghettos, concentration camps, and Hitler's Final Solution.

In the secondary level (Grades 5–9) adolescents encounter a wealth of documentary material dealing with anti-Semitism and the murder of the Jews, including *The Diary of Anne Frank*, the new reader *Bilder in Kopf* (Pictures in the Head), and numerous short stories which provide an assortment of different approaches to the Holocaust. In *Gymnasiums* (high schools), older student face an even more comprehensive and substantive treatment of the topic. They survey various theories dealing with the development and forms of anti-Semitism, as well as an analytical and unprejudiced look at their own country's position during World War II. Such syllabus topics include thoughtful subjects such as "The Refugee Question in the Second World War and Neutrality."

Mr. Speaker, the people of Basel have recognized the truth of the oft-quoted Santayana observation, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Their schools are helping to raise a new generation of citizens unfettered by hatreds and prejudices of the past, a people that can use the painful lessons of decades ago to engender tolerance and understanding in the future. It is my pleasure to recognize and to commend the fruitful efforts the people of Basel.

TRIBUTE TO SAM JOHNSON "OPERATION HOMECOMING" 25TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 12, 1998

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, today, Thursday, February 12, 1998 marks the 25th anniversary of Operation Homecoming, the day on which the first group of heroes whose experience as prisoners of war ended as they were released from captivity in North Vietnam. Our colleague, Representative SAM JOHNSON was one of those heroes.

SAM JOHNSON began his 29-year career in the United States Air Force after realizing his love for adventure and his love of flying. Although his training prepared him for the war,

his training did not prepare him for what he had to endure next. On April 16, 1966, SAM's F-4 was shot down over North Vietnam. It took only seconds for the enemy to capture SAM, but it took nearly seven years for SAM to see his wife, three children and his home again.

The enemy tried to break SAM JOHNSON on numerous occasions, but SAM was unbreakable. His faith in God and his strong will to live enabled him to survive. SAM was an officer, a leader, and a teacher. He would secretly communicate with the new prisoners that were brought into Hanoi, teaching them how to survive. These were the qualities of a true leader, risking his life to protect his fellow man.

SAM JOHNSON is a fighter. He fought for his country, his family and his faith. As a member of Congress, SAM valiantly wages this fight today—for all of us.

Today we honor the heroes who endured the horrible pain and suffering as prisoners of war. Today is a celebration of SAM JOHNSON's strength and courage. He demonstrated an unflinching devotion to duty, honor, and country. Let us commemorate SAM and all American POWs for their courage and determination in upholding the principles of freedom and democracy.

“EQUALITY FOR ISRAEL AT THE
UNITED NATIONS ACT OF 1998”

HON. STEVE R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 12, 1998

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to introduce the “The Equality for Israel at the United Nations Act of 1998.” With the strong support of over 60 original co-sponsors, including both the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House International Relations Committee, this bill seeks an end to the institutional discrimination Israel has faced at the United Nations for far too long.

Specifically, this bill requires that the Secretary of State report on actions taken by our Ambassador to the United Nations to encourage the nations of the Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG) to accept Israel into their group.

The bill also calls on the Secretary of State to solicit and receive responses from each of the nations of WEOG on their position concerning Israel's acceptance into their organization. In this manner, Congress can know which nations are supporting Israel's admittance to WEOG and which nations are opposed.

As many of my colleagues are already aware, the State of Israel has been a member of the UN since 1949. But what my colleagues and the American public might not know is that Israel is the only long-standing member of the United Nations to be denied acceptance into any of the organization's five regional blocs.

Membership in a regional bloc is critical because it is a prerequisite for any nation to serve on the powerful Security Council or other key U.N. bodies such as the Economic and Social Council. Due to its exclusion from a regional bloc at the United Nations, the State of Israel has been precluded from fully participating in the workings of that world body.

This amounts to institutional discrimination against Israel at the United Nations.

The real story here is two-fold: On the one hand there are Arab states who have denied Israel the consensus vote it needs to join its natural, geographic, regional bloc—the Asian bloc. On the other hand, there are the member states of the Western Europe and Others Group, otherwise known as the WEOG regional bloc, who have failed to embrace Israel's request to temporarily join their grouping.

This is where the United States must step up and show true leadership. And this is why I have introduced “The Equality for Israel at the United Nations Act of 1998.”

WEOG, to which the U.S. belongs, is one of the five regional blocs at the United Nations. Other non-European countries: Western-style democracies such as Canada and Australia already belong to the WEOG. Israel would be a perfect fit, at least temporarily.

The issue is not whether Israel deserves to be treated as an equal among nations, it surely does. The challenge is how to achieve equality at the United Nations. World-wide recognition of Israel as an equal at the United Nations would be the right message to send now to help advance the struggling Middle East peace process.

But this is not just an Israel issue, this is a United Nations issue. And clearly, Israel's acceptance into the WEOG would be a welcome sign of real reform taking place at the United Nations.

There already has been a groundswell of support in the U.S. Congress for this issue. Seventy-six Members of Congress, many of whom serve on the House International Relations Committee, joined me and Representative ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN last year in sending letters to the member states of the WEOG, asking them to allow Israel to join the WEOG as a temporary member.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and our Ambassador to the United Nations, Bill Richardson, both agree that this issue needs to be pursued. In fact, Ambassador Richardson told me personally that he will work to “re-dedicate U.S. efforts on this issue.”

Supporting Israel's right to be a full member of the United Nations is the right thing to do. We owe no less to Israel, a strong U.S. ally, and to the United Nations, whose credibility is threatened if all countries are not treated as equals.

For these reasons, I ask my colleagues to lend their support for “The Equality for Israel at the United Nations Act of 1998.”

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT
RAUSCHENBERG

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 12, 1998

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, it is with tremendous pride that I recognize a native of Port Arthur, Texas who has gone forth into the world and become a legend in the world of art. Robert Rauschenberg is the first American to win the prestigious Venice Biennale Grant Prize, as well as the first living American artist to have his work published on the cover of Time Magazine. In a career that has spanned

the latter half of this century, Robert Rauschenberg's groundbreaking work has been included in the most prestigious collections and won awards around the world.

Robert has used his artistic voice to benefit humanitarian causes. He created the first Earth Day poster in 1970. In 1990, he established the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation to promote medical research, education, the environment, and to aid the hungry and homeless in the United States and across the globe.

This weekend, Robert Rauschenberg will be honored in Houston for the greatness of his life's work. Though Robert left Port Arthur to seek his fortune in the world, he is a symbol of the greatness that lurks within each child. A child who grows up among oil refineries became one of the most important artists of his generation. He is a native of our area and we are duly proud, but we know that Robert Rauschenberg, through his work, belongs to the world and to the ages.

TRIBUTE TO LEVI PEARSON

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 12, 1998

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Black History Month to pay tribute to a true pioneer, Levi Pearson. As today is the 89th anniversary of the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, I should note that he was President of the Clarendon County, SC, branch of the NAACP. However, it is the work he did as an ordinary citizen from a small county in South Carolina for which he should be remembered.

Last week, I paid tribute to the 20 plaintiffs of *Briggs v. Elliott*. Those plaintiffs were the foundation on which the case of *Brown v. Education of Topeka* was based that eventually won the battle of public, desegregated education in our nation. Today, I pay tribute to the man who took the first courageous step on that very long road.

In 1947, the search was on in Clarendon County for a parent who had the courage to test the legality of the discriminatory bus transportation practices that were the norm. Pearson had three children who attended Scotts Branch school nine miles from their home with no public transportation. On July 28, he signed a petition asking that “school bus transportation be furnished, maintained and operated out of public funds in School District Number 26 of Clarendon County South Carolina for use of the said children of your Petitioner and other Negro school children similarly situated.” The petition was submitted to the local school board chairman and the secretary of the State Board of Education by the Reverend Mr. Joseph Albert DeLaine, a prominent Clarendon County schoolteacher. No response was given.

After 8 months of silence, Pearson's attorneys filed a brief in the United States District Court. In the brief, they cited the “irreparable damage” Pearson's children suffered from being denied the free bus service to which white children were entitled. The case was dismissed saying Pearson has no legal standing because his farm straddled the line between the school district where he lived and where his children went to school.