

at the polls. Under this bill, if a poll worker in California, Florida, Illinois, New York or Texas chooses to challenge the eligibility of a person coming to vote, that poll watcher can do so. Conveniently, these are the states where the majority of our nation's Hispanics live. This is the United States of America. When a person comes to vote, they should not be expected to jump through hoops, clear hurdles or be hindered in any other way. And the Immigration and Naturalization Service should not have to confirm for a poll watcher that a citizen wishing to vote is actually a citizen.

There's always a good reason why anyone does something. And then there's the real reason. This is a Republican ploy to keep certain constituencies from the ballot box. This bill is a dressed up 90's version of the poll tax—designed to clearly intimidate Hispanics and other minorities into staying away from the polls—and it betrays the Privacy Act and the Voting Rights Act.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote against this bill for many reasons. First, it would shut the door to voting rights of any person a poll worker chooses to challenge. Second, raising the annual contribution limit for individuals from \$25,000 to \$75,000 looks to me like a sweetheart deal the Republicans are making with their wealthy donors. Third, it would require labor unions to get written consent from their members before the unions can spend union dues money on political activities. This is one more back door effort by the Republicans to bust the unions. I urge my colleagues to vote against HR 3485, and against the upcoming bill entitled "Paycheck Protection Act," which is a union-busting bill.

These bills do nothing to truly reform our campaign finance system.

IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 247

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 247. This bill, in a small way, recognizes what the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. has contributed to the civil society of the United States and to the world. In a sense, this bill outlines what we owe to Dr. Martin Luther King for the lessons he taught us on how to change our world and how to bring about justice. Dr. King's life and his work are a powerful example to all people who care about freedom, justice and equality.

Dr. Martin Luther King loved this country. Dr. King's America was not perfect, but he envisioned a day when it would be perfect. The America he lived in was not perfectly just, but he saw a day when Justice would be given to all. Not everyone in Dr. King's America was free, but in his mighty and prophetic dream, he saw a day when Freedom would ring from every mountaintop and on that day—as he promised—"all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

Dr. King loved this country because he believed in its promise to all people who make

it their home. Dr. King was a man of faith who believed that Our Creator has endowed us with certain and unalienable rights to life, to liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness. It is a sad fact in our nation's history that these unalienable rights were not always recognized and not always freely granted. Dr. King was like a prophet of old crying in the wilderness. His message was simple: Justice and Freedom are worth fighting for.

But the battles he called us to were not to be fought in the streets with armed struggle and violence. The war that Dr. King waged was not for military dominance or political power, but for the hearts and minds of all who would hear his message. He called on Americans to rise above selfishness and personal ambition, to rise above anger and hate, and to establish Justice and Freedom through non-violent political action and change. His tactics in this war were founded on his deep conviction that morally there was right and there was wrong. It was immoral to segregate people by race and to hate someone because they have a different color skin. It was immoral to oppress other people. It was immoral to financially support institutions that participate in subjugating others.

Mr. Speaker, these things are still immoral. There are still rights that need to be wronged. There are still people living in this world who are oppressed and who are not free. We need look no farther than 90 miles off our shore to see a country where a tyrant rules and the call to freedom is quickly and brutally silenced.

Mr. Speaker, this bill calls on Americans to celebrate the life of Dr. King. This call to celebrate Dr. King's life and contributions comes 30 years after he was gunned down in Memphis, Tennessee. Thirty years go, Dr. King was in Memphis supporting the striking city's sanitation workers exercise of their right to assemble, their right to free speech, their right to determine their own destiny, their basic right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

On April 3rd, 1968, thirty years ago this week, Dr. King stood in the Bishop Charles Mason Temple and called on all within earshot to stand together with greater determination. He called on all to move together through the days of challenge to make America what it ought to be. As if he had foreseen his own death the next day, he called for perseverance and patience in the face of opposition. And he left us with hope. Hope that his dream of an America where Freedom rings and Justice is established throughout the land would one day be at hand.

There is work yet to be done. We should all stand together through the days of challenge because America—while great among all nations of the world and history—has greater days to come.

Mr. Speaker, I have joined with my colleagues to sponsor this bill because I deeply believe that all peoples living under tyranny and oppression must be able to make their voices heard. I too have a dream that all peoples one day must live in a just, equal, and free world. I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill and to call on the people of the United States to study, reflect on, and celebrate Dr. King's life and ideals in order to fulfill his dream of civil and human rights for all people.

SENIOR CITIZEN HOUSING—ANOTHER CONTRACT RENEWAL DILEMMA: "SENIOR CITIZENS HOUSING FINANCIAL RESTRUCTURING ACT OF 1998"

HON. RICK LAZIO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. LAZIO of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Senior Citizens Housing Financial Restructuring Act of 1998. As my colleagues will recall, over the last three years the Congress has been dealing with the section 8 project-based renewal issue pertaining to the FHA multifamily inventory. Last year, the so-called mark to market legislation was enacted to deal with this inventory. However, that legislation did not address the Section 202 housing for the elderly inventory.

The section 202 loan portfolio consists of over 4,500 direct government loans to private nonprofit sponsors for developing rental housing for lower income elderly. Projects developed under this program benefit from 40-year direct loans and 20-year section 8 rental assistance contracts. These projects contain approximately 215,000¹ units, for which funds were reserved from 1976 through 1988. Between 2001 and 2015, virtually all of the section 8 rental contracts for these projects will expire. Projects funded subsequent to 1988 were either funded under the new Capital Advance Program or converted from direct loans to capital advances.²

Mr. Speaker, preservation of this inventory is of paramount concern to me as well as all my colleagues since there is considerable demand for the units and few alternatives for many lower income elderly. Like the FHA multifamily portfolio, a primary issue facing this housing program is the need for renewals of section 8 contracts. Current HUD policy allows annual renewals only. In 2001, approximately 300 projects will come due for renewal. The number will climb each year until it reaches 4,500 projects in 2013. The estimated annual cost of renewals is approximately \$250 million in 2001 and \$2.9 billion in 2021.

As elderly housing becomes more market-oriented and residents age, the older section 202 projects must meet the cost of (1) service coordination, (2) structural retrofitting, and (3) other improvements required to serve more service-dependent residents in the future. However, in the current budgetary environment, Congress will have difficulty meeting these costs under section 8.

My legislation allows that elderly housing operating under earlier versions of section 202 should be allowed to convert to the new, improved form of elderly housing assistance.

¹ Since the program was created in section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959, the program has assisted not-for-profit sponsors, dedicated to serving the special needs of the elderly, in building 337,000 residential rental units—a major portion of the nation's supply of quality, affordable housing for the elderly.

² Since 1990, the revised section 202 program provides (1) a capital advance to finance construction and (2) periodic operating subsidies to fill the gap between the cost of elderly housing and rent revenues that low-income residents can afford. The capital advance is, in effect, an interest-free loan on which no payments are due as long as the housing meets program requirements. Operating support goes to elderly housing through a "project rental assistance contract" (PRAC), renewable in five year increments.

The unpaid principal balance of an older section 202 loan would be converted to a capital advance, essentially forgiving outstanding debt. The project would then receive cost-effective operating assistance under a project rental assistance contract that is better designed to provide quality elderly housing in local markets.

In its simplest form, conversion is likely to have no financial impact on the projects, but the federal subsidy would be scored in the budget process in a different manner. By forgiving the direct loan, the need for section 8 subsidy is reduced by the amount of principal and interest. Thus, the forgiveness of outstanding section 202 loans would initially have a one-time mandatory budget cost. However, the up-front costs of conversion would, over time, be more than offset by ongoing discretionary savings and lasting benefits to HUD's budget, elderly housing sponsors, and elderly residents.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that Congress has a unique opportunity to address these issues because, unlike much of the rest of the section 8 inventory, the contract renewal problem does not become significant until after the year 2000. I urge all my colleagues to join me in sponsoring this legislation.

HONORING THE SESQUICENTENNIAL OF BRIDGEPORT TOWNSHIP

HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to recognize the Sesquicentennial of Bridgeport Township, Michigan. This community was founded on April 4, 1848 and is currently Michigan's oldest charter township. In April of 1848 Bridgeport Township's population was 15, today there are 9,158 residents. Although the township has grown, Bridgeport Township has worked hard to preserve and protect its rich history. Bridgeport Township's motto is "A Community Living and Growing Together." This is a fitting motto because time and time again the residents have worked together to improve their community. When the old school house was going to be torn down—the citizens of Bridgeport Township worked together to save the historic building. Today, it stands in the township's historic village and is used by classes each year. When they needed a Gazebo constructed in the historic village, they joined as a community to complete this important project. Today, the gazebo is used for musical events and other gatherings.

John Oldham said:

To live is to meet life eager and unafraid—to refuse none of its challenges, and to evade none of its responsibilities; but to go forth daily with an adventurous heart to encounter its risks, overcome its difficulties, and seize its opportunities with both hands.

This is how the community of Bridgeport Township has met each day during the past 150 years. It is through the dedication and hard work of many generations that this community gathers to celebrate 150 years of prosperity and very special memories.

On Saturday, as the citizens of Bridgeport Township reflect on their past—they can be

very proud of how their community started and where it is today. It is a special, caring community that has grown without sacrificing their special heritage.

MCCOLLUM V. BOARD OF EDUCATION: A MILESTONE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in the case of *McCullum versus Board of Education of School District No. 71*, in which the Court clearly expressed the importance of maintaining the separation of church and state. As the Congress considers a proposed constitutional amendment which threatens that important principle, I urge every member of this House to read the Court's decision. It clearly illustrates how the separation of church and state, enshrined in the First Amendment, protects the fundamental rights of free conscience and religious liberty.

The McCollum family had a son attending the fourth grade in a public school in Champaign, Illinois. The Champaign school district allowed a local private organization, the Champaign Council on Religious Education, to send religious teachers into the public school during regular school hours. Students were released from regular classes to attend private religious instruction in the public school building.

In theory, any remaining students were required to leave their classrooms and pursue their regular studies elsewhere in the school building. In practice, James McCollum was the only student in his class who did not attend the religious instruction. He was sent to the principal's office or made to sit at the detention desk for problem students out in the hall—as though he were being punished.

The family was also subject to ostracism. They became outcasts in Champaign, and the children, particularly James, were harassed. The family cat was killed, and once, on Halloween, the family answered the door to trick-or-treaters only to be pelted with garbage. The verbal abuse grew so great that when James got to junior high, he moved to Rochester, N.Y., to live with his grandmother and go to school there. According to James, now a retired attorney, his mother worked at the University of Illinois, but when it became known that she had brought this lawsuit, she was fired.

Unfortunately, this sort of situation is far from a thing of the past. Many of my colleagues may remember the testimony of Lisa Herdahl whose family challenged prayers and religious Bible instruction in the public schools in Pontotoc County, Mississippi. The Herdahl children were harassed at school and singled out by teachers and other students. The family was subject to community protests and hostile newspaper coverage. After school officials ignored the Herdahl family's requests to put an end to the coercive practices, People for the American Way Foundation and the ACLU of Mississippi filed suit in federal court, citing the McCollum case among others. Two years ago, a federal judge ruled against the school dis-

trict, and school officials decided not to appeal.

We are often urged to blur, or even eliminate, the line that has long separated church from state. But experience shows us that when we allow this to happen, the rights of individual Americans are trampled upon by the majority. The purpose of the "wall of separation" is not to protect government from religion, as it is often alleged, but to protect religion, and particularly the individual religious beliefs of all Americans from government.

When some in the community attempt to use the power of government, in these cases against children required by law to be present in school, to further their own sectarian goals, the hand of government will inevitably be coercive. If religious freedom is to have any meaning at all, if must be that no one should ever be allowed to use the power of government to coerce another citizen, especially a vulnerable and impressionable child, on matters of faith.

Justice Hugo Black wrote in his opinion in *McCullum*, "the First Amendment rests upon the premise that both religion and government can best work to achieve their lofty aims if each is left free from the other within its respective sphere." The hard and bitter experience of families, like the McCollum family fifty years ago, and the Herdahl family in this decade, is that the authors of the First Amendment were right to keep government away from religion, the Court was right in remaining true to the principle, and it would be a terrible mistake for Congress to ignore the lessons of history and wisdom of our Bill of Rights.

Justice Felix Frankfurter, put it well in the *McCullum* case, when he wrote, "The great American principle of eternal separation . . . is one of the vital reliances of our Constitutional system for assuring unities among our people stronger than our diversities." I hope the members of this Congress will defend our national unity, the rights of all Americans, and leave the First Amendment the way it is.

INTRODUCTION OF SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION BONDS LEGISLATION

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the introduction of my legislation to assist fast-growing states to build new schools, reduce class sizes and overcrowding and foster an orderly and disciplined learning environment. I urge my colleagues to join me in signing on to this important legislation.

As the former Superintendent of North Carolina's schools, I know firsthand how important quality facilities are to our children's education. The General Accounting Office has identified more than \$112 billion in school construction needs across the country. The Secretary of Education has reported that the "Baby Boom Echo" will create an explosion of growth in the school-age populations in many states over the next ten years. Congress must assist these states to meet their school construction needs of the coming decade.

My bill will create \$7.2 billion in school construction bonds over the next ten years. The school bonds will be allocated to the states based on the growth we know they will experience in the coming decade. The Etheridge bill