

CONCERN-REGARDING BUSINESS OWNERS AND THEIR EMPLOYEES

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2001

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker and fellow Members of Congress, I want to alert you to a matter of concern that I have regarding business owners and their employees, particularly small business owners, within our country. This problem has been told to me by some of my constituents and is a problem about which business owners throughout the country have written to you.

We are a nation that is built upon the rule of law. This has assured a system of accountability for our conduct as individuals, businesses and institutions. Congress, as elected representatives, meets and acts to improve and refine the system in order to protect the people and their property. The foundation as framed by our nation's founders in the Constitution is the concept of due process and the right thereof. We each have the assurance that the law protects our person and property from libelous, slanderous, and otherwise tortuous interference with our reputation or business. Unfortunately, I have learned that we have within our country a private organization that with the appearance of being quasi-governmental and without any legal or regulatory oversight and control can libel and slander and tortuously interfere with a small business. They can do so with virtual immunity. This organization is the National Better Business Bureau and their franchise local Better Business Bureaus. At times, some of these bureaus classify small business owners as unsatisfactory, libel and slander them with opinion and innuendo, and provide them no due process to correct the problem. If sued in court, they argue qualified immunity under the guise of the public good. No one disputes the right of a Better Business Bureau to print facts. It is when they print falsehoods, opinion, or negative innuendo that a mechanism for redress or correction must be assured.

When closely examined, however, one finds that there are Better Business Bureaus that arbitrarily and capriciously exclude and negatively classify those they don't like. They also frequently rate companies with terrible records as being satisfactory. No written guidelines or rules are available that require the Better Business Bureau to adhere to any legal standard in their dealings with business. (With the internet, the conduct of one local Better Business Bureau is then taken as true and disseminated everywhere.) The Better Business Bureaus also charge money for these reports. They make money without responsibility for how they make it. Why are they above the law and other businesses?

On a first-hand basis, I recently inquired of the National Better Business Bureau regarding the process and I was met with hostility and rebuke. Prominent members of my community who tried to ascertain information about how to redress a concern with a local Better Business Bureau were hung up on by senior ranking National Better Business Bureau employees.

The process I have described is not in the public's best interest. It is not appropriate for us to allow our business owners and their em-

ployees, the men and women who make our country strong, to be exposed to this arbitrary and capricious process. A right to redress the actions of the Better Business Bureau when libelous, slanderous, arbitrary, or capricious action is apparent is a fundamental right we must insure. Thank you.

ENSURE FAIR WAGES AND DUE PROCESS FOR DAY LABORERS

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2001

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the "Day Laborer Fairness and Protection Act," a bill to ensure fair wages and due process for day laborers.

Day laborers are individuals who are hired by agencies to work on a day-to-day basis for employers who pay for the services of temporary laborers. Day labor is not of a clerical or professional nature. Most day laborers perform construction, warehouse, restaurant, janitorial, landscaping or light industrial work—often taking home far less than the minimum wage.

In the absence of federal guidelines, day laborers are often subjected to long, unpaid wait-periods before being assigned to a job. Commonly, these workers also face dangerous working conditions and are paid lower wages than full-time workers performing the same or similar jobs. Further, day laborers are frequently charged high (often undisclosed) fees for on-the-job meals, transportation to and from job sites and special attire and safety equipment necessary for jobs. Some agencies even ask workers to sign waivers in case they are injured on the job.

Partially due to these unfair labor conditions, many day laborers are caught in a cycle of poverty. A recent study by the University of Illinois Center for Urban Economic Development found that 65 percent of 510 surveyed day laborers receive \$5.15 per hour. Taking into consideration the number of hours spent waiting to be assigned to work (often between 1.5 and three hours), the real value per hour of work is reduced to less than about four dollars per hour. This low figure does not reflect transportation and food and equipment fees, which are often deducted from day laborers' wages.

To address these problems, this Act requires day laborer wages that are equal to those paid to permanent employees who are performing substantially equivalent work, with consideration given to seniority, experience, skills & qualifications. Also, it mandates wages for job assignment wait-times lasting more than thirty minutes. Such wages shall be at a rate that is not less than federal or state minimum wages. Further, it requires itemized statements showing deductions made from day laborers' wages. Finally, it mandates that when a day laborer is hurt on the job, the employer who has requested the services of the day laborer provide for coverage of health care costs.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this pro-labor legislation.

ARTICLE BY FORMER SEC. BILL RICHARDSON REGARDING KAZAKHSTAN

HON. JULIA CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2001

Ms. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, an article published in The Washington Times of Monday, July 30, 2001, by Mr. Bill Richardson, has especially impressed me. While world attention focuses on major nations, Mr. Richardson reminds us of the strategic importance of a lesser-known, but truly significant nation, Kazakhstan.

We remember Bill Richardson as a former member of this body; as our nation's Ambassador to the United Nations; and, as Secretary of Energy, all excellent credentials for his incisive assessment and powerful reminder of the critical geopolitical importance of Kazakhstan, bounded by Russia, China and Iran, and the enormous store of energy it holds for the world.

I commend the article and urge that my colleagues give it their attention.

[The Washington Times, Published 7/30/01]

CRAZY FOR KAZAKHSTAN
(By Bill Richardson)

As secretary of energy and ambassador to the United Nations during the Clinton administration, I traveled three times to Kazakhstan to underscore the importance of this key Central Asian country to U.S. interests. Of all the countries rising from the ashes of the Soviet Union, few offer the promise of Kazakhstan. In terms of both economic potential and political stability, Kazakhstan is critical to the long-term success of the Central Asian nations. The Bush administration should continue our policy of engaging Kazakhstan to ensure that this key country moves towards the Western orbit and adopts continued market and political reforms.

From its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 to the present, Kazak leaders have made the difficult and controversial decisions necessary to bring their country into the 21st century. In May 1992, President Nursultan Nazarbayev announced that Kazakhstan would unilaterally disarm all of its nuclear weapons. In the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse, Kazakhstan was left with the fourth-largest nuclear arsenal in the world, a tempting target for terrorists and other extremists. Mr. Nazarbayev's courageous decision to disarm in the face of opposition from Islamic nationalists and potential regional instability was one of the fundamental building blocks that have allowed Kazakhstan to emerge as a strong, stable nation and a leader in Central Asia. Then President George Bush hailed the decision as "a momentous stride toward peace and stability."

Since that time, Central Asia has become an increasingly complex region. Russia is re-emerging from its post-Soviet economic crises and is actively looking for both economic opportunities in Central Asia as well as to secure its political influence over the region. China is rapidly expanding its economic power and political influence in the region. Iran, despite recent progress made by moderate elements in the government, is still a state sponsor of terrorism and is actively working to develop weapons of mass destruction. Many of the other former Soviet republics have become havens for religious extremists, terrorists, drug cartels and transit points for smugglers of all kind.

In the center of this conflict and instability Kazakhstan has begun to prosper by working to build a modern economy, developing its vast natural resources and providing a base of stability in a very uncertain part of the world. With the discovery of the massive Kashagan oil field in the Kazak portion of the Caspian Sea, Kazakhstan is poised to become a major supplier of petroleum to the Western world and a competitor to Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). It is critical that we continue to facilitate western companies' investment in Kazakhstan and the establishment of secure, east-west pipeline routes for Kazak oil. This is the only way for Kazakhstan to loosen its dependence on Russia for transit rights for its oil and gas and secure additional, much needed, oil for the world market.

American policy in the region must be based on the complex geopolitics of Central Asia and provide the support required to enable these countries to reach their economic potential. We must continue to give top priority to the development of Kazakhstan's oil and gas industries and to the establishment of east-west transportation corridors for Caspian oil and gas. We must also remain committed to real support for local political leadership, fostering rule of law and economic reforms and to helping mitigate and solve the lingering ethnic and nationalistic conflicts in the region. Only through meaningful and substantial cooperation with Kazakhstan, will we be able to realize these goals.

There are many challenges ahead for Kazakhstan, but there are enormous opportunities for economic and political progress. Mr. Nazarbayev has taken advantage of Kazakhstan's stability to begin transforming its economy from the old Soviet form—giant, state-owned industries and collective grain farms—into a modern, market-based economy. We have much at stake in this development. Will Kazakhstan become a true market-oriented democracy, or will it slip into economic stagnation and ethnic violence like so many of its neighbors? The stability of Central Asia and the Caucasus depends on how Kazakhstan chooses to move forward. The United States must do its part to enhance U.S.-Kazakhstan cooperation and encourage prosperity and stability for the entire region.

IN HONOR OF ED AND LYNN
HOGAN

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2001

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor my close friends Ed and Lynn Hogan: successful entrepreneurs and philanthropists who have seen and changed the world together and who will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on August 13, 2001.

Ed's and Lynn's accomplishments are numerous and far-reaching. In 1959, they opened Pleasant Travel Service in Point Pleasant, New Jersey. Three years later, they moved their four children and the business to Southern California to better serve clients wishing to visit Hawaii.

The company is now a limited liability corporation with more than 1,700 employees and revenues exceeding \$400 million. Their four children—Brian and Christine, and twins Gary and Glenn—are all executives in the company.

Ed is chairman and chief executive officer of Pleasant Holidays, L.L.C., and Lynn serves as vice chairperson. Lynn, a graphics artist who did picture cells for Disney's animated classic "Peter Pan," oversees the development of major promotions, ad campaigns and brochures, and is actively involved with the decoration and renovation of the company's hotels.

The company has expanded to serve Mexico, Tahiti, Japan and other destinations in the Orient, in addition to the ownership of several hotels in Hawaii.

In 1987, Ed and Lynn formed the Pleasant Hawaiian Holidays Foundation to grant annual scholarships and awards to benefit Hawaiian residents. The non-profit Hogan Family Foundation, founded in 1998, is dedicated to promoting an understanding of the importance of travel and tourism "by creating and operating educational, humanitarian, and civic-minded programs that encourage meaningful communication between persons of all cultures."

With the formation of the Travel and Tourism Institute, the Ed and Lynn Hogan Program in Travel and Tourism is funded at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles to prepare college students for executive careers in the travel industry.

Ed and Lynn volunteer for numerous other non-profit organizations focused on health care, child abuse and education, and sit on several boards, and have been honored frequently for their efforts.

Not surprisingly, they also have been honored extensively by the tourism industry and the government and people of Hawaii. A few highlights: In 1993, Ed and Lynn were inducted into the American Society of Travel Agents' "Hall of Fame," the travel industry's highest honor. In 1995, Ed served as a delegate to the first White House Conference on Travel and Tourism. Lynn has been named to Working Woman magazine's top 500 list of female executives in the United States for the past five years, number 53 in 1998 and number 34 this year.

In their spare time, Ed and Lynn train and show their Arabian horses, play in travel industry and celebrity golf tournaments, and fawn over their two grandchildren, Michael and Shalyn.

Mr. Speaker, Ed and Lynn Hogan are loving people who are dedicated to their profession, their community, their family and each other. I know my colleagues will join Janice and me in congratulating them on a lifetime of success together in each of those areas as they celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS IN
INDIA CONTINUES

HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2001

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, there has been a disturbing pattern of oppression of Christians and other religious minorities in India. This persecution of Christians in India continues. It has been going on steadily since Christmas 1998, with occasional flare-ups before that, as exemplified by one incident when the state police used unnecessary and overwhelming force to stop a Christian religious festival.

The animosity towards Christians and other religious minorities in India is well known. High-ranking officials of India's governing coalition have said openly that everyone who lives in India must either be Hindu or be subservient to Hinduism. They have called for nationalization of the Christian churches in India, severing them from the denominations to which they belong.

Since the current wave of violence exploded on Christmas 1998, more than two and a half years ago, Christian churches have been burned, and assaults have been carried out on priests and nuns.

Mr. Speaker, that is the state of religious freedom in India. The Indian government has much work in front of it. It is time for India to stop trampling the rights of minorities and begin protecting religious freedom, civil liberties, human rights, and the other important rights that are the mark of a true democratic state.

54TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDIA'S
INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2001

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to join with the people of India and the Indian-American community to commemorate India's Independence Day. The 54th anniversary of India's Independence will actually occur on August 15th, while Congress is in recess, so I wanted to take this opportunity tonight, before we adjourn, to mark this important occasion before my colleagues in this House and the American people.

Last month, Americans celebrated the Fourth of July. For a billion people in India, one-sixth of the human race, the 15th of August holds the same significance. I am proud to extend my congratulations to the people of India, and to the sons and daughters of India who have come to the United States, enriching American society in so many ways.

On August 15, 1947, the people of India finally gained their independence from Britain, following a long and determined struggle that continues to inspire the world. In his stirring "midnight hour" speech, India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, set the tone for the newly established Republic, a Republic devoted to the principles of democracy and secularism. In more than half a century since then, India has stuck to the path of free and fair elections, a multi-party political system and the orderly transfer of power from one government to its successor.

India continues to grapple with the challenges of delivering broad-based economic development to a large and growing population. India has sought to provide full rights and representation to its many ethnic, religious and linguistic communities. And India seeks to be a force for stability and cooperation in the strategically vital South Asia region. In all of these respects, India stands out as a model for other Asian nations, and developing countries everywhere, to follow.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most difficult situations for a democracy is their relationships with their neighbors, especially if they do not share the same democratic ideals. India has