

ten years Taft has pioneered a "Transition to Independent Living Program" (TIL) which provides a structured environment for post-secondary special needs students to successfully meet the demands of our modern world. According to the statistics compiled by Taft Community College President, Dr. Roe Darnell, the achievements of these students and graduates are truly remarkable. I understand that fully 81 percent of the program's graduates are employed and 94 percent live independently. When you consider that the national employment average for all classes of people with a disability is only 37 percent, these results are noteworthy.

According to Dr. Darbell, other "Snapshots of Success" include: 93 percent of graduates receive no financial help; 90 percent of graduates use public transportation; 95 percent have a checking account; 80 percent have a savings account.

The Taft Community College curriculum teaches life skills and independent living strategies to its students, with TIL students receiving vocational training, ethics training and assistance in developing sound work habits. A moderately size dormitory in the middle of campus is utilized by Taft Community College as a "laboratory" to practice life skills, and Taft officials believe that one of the keys to the success of their TIL program is its emphasis on residential living.

Now I understand that the Taft program handles high functioning adults with autism, which means that the techniques and skills taught to these students may not be completely applicable to young adults, who are more severely autistic, but the pioneering efforts and achievements of President Darnell, his teachers, students and TIL program graduates should be applauded.

Programs like those at Taft will not solve the whole problem of how to deal with the impending boom of autistic adults, but I think it is certainly possible that they are a part of the solution. I sincerely hope that many of the approximately 2,000 community colleges around the country will also begin to recognize the growing educational needs of this underserved population and explore the idea of adopting programs like Taft's TIL, if appropriate, and if not, push the boundaries of what is possible for these victims of autism.

SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE: MOVING FROM ETHNIC CLEANSING AND GENOCIDE TO EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION

**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 7, 2006*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, when I was appointed chairman of the Helsinki Commission in early 1995, Mr. Speaker, the U.S. foreign policy establishment and its European counterparts were seized by a genocidal conflict of aggression against Bosnia-Herzegovina. Many here in the Congress were already deeply involved in bipartisan efforts to end the conflict by urging a decisive, international response under U.S. leadership. I can still recall the sense of horror, outrage, and shame when the Srebrenica massacre occurred and nothing was done to stop it and

other atrocities committed against civilians. Slobodan Milosevic, meanwhile, was comfortably entrenched as Serbia's leader, with Kosovo under his repressive thumb. The situation was truly bleak.

Today, relative calm prevails throughout the Balkans region, though simmering tensions and other serious problems could lead to renewed crisis and conflict, if left unchecked. Overcoming the legacy of the past and restoring dignity and ensuring justice for the victims will require sustained engagement and vigilance. Integrating the countries of the region into European institutions can advance this process.

Slovenia has become a full-fledged member of both NATO and the European Union. Croatia is well on its way to similar membership, and Macedonia and Albania are making steady progress in the right direction. In a welcome development, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the epicenter of bloody carnage and mass displacement in the mid-1990s, was invited last week to participate in NATO's Partnership for Peace Program, along with Serbia and the newly independent state of Montenegro.

As a longstanding member and leader of the Helsinki Commission, I want to highlight some of the numerous initiatives we have undertaken in an attempt to draw attention to developments in the Balkans and to influence related policy. Since 1995, we have convened more than 20 hearings on specific aspects of the region as well as related briefings, legislation, letters, statements and meetings. These efforts have been undertaken with an uncommon degree of bipartisanship. In this regard, I particularly want to thank the Commission's outgoing ranking member, Mr. CARDIN of Maryland, for helping to make this a reality.

Among the Commission's most noteworthy accomplishments, I would include garnering the strong support that contributed to the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and pressing countries to cooperate in bringing those responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide to justice. I would include the change in U.S. policy from relying on Milosevic to implement the Dayton agreement to supporting democracy in Serbia as the long-term and genuine partner in building regional peace and stability.

We have maintained a significant focus on elections, encouraging all the countries in the region to strive to meet international standards for free and fair elections as well as referenda. There has been tremendous progress in this regard.

The Commission's support for the OSCE, I believe, has helped the organization's field activities in southeastern Europe to be more successful in promoting respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all the people, regardless of ethnicity. Finally, on the more controversial policy of NATO's action against Serbia in 1999, the Commission served as a forum to air differing views on the policy response while finding common ground in addressing the humanitarian crises, documenting human rights abuses and holding human rights violators to account.

Mr. Speaker, while welcoming this progress in southeastern Europe, I would caution against complacency as the region faces significant challenges. Maintaining positive momentum will require much from actors in the region as well as the international community, including the United States.

First and foremost is the situation in Kosovo. The pending decisions that will be made on Kosovo's status give rise to growing expectation as well as apprehension and concern. Despite the many debates on larger issues of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and self-determination, these decisions should and will ultimately be judged by whether or not they lead to improved respect for human rights, especially the rights of those people belonging to the Serb, Roma and other minority communities in Kosovo. The members of the minority communities deserve to be treated as people, not as pawns in a fight over territory and power. They should be allowed to integrate rather than remain isolated, and they should not be discouraged from integration when opportunities arise. I remain deeply concerned that these issues are not being given the attention they deserve. Whatever Kosovo becomes, OSCE and other international human rights standards must apply.

Similarly, there is a need to ensure that justice is vigorously pursued for the victims of horrendous human rights violations. Conditionality on assistance to Serbia, as well as on that country's integration, must remain firmly in place until Belgrade cooperates fully in locating at-large indicted war criminals and facilitating their transfer to the ICTY in The Hague. It is an outrage that Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic remain at large. After refusing to take meaningful action on these cases, Serbia can not be let off the hook now, but should be pressed to comply with its international obligations.

A related issue is that of missing persons. Ten years after Dayton, additional mass graves continued to be uncovered, and the identification of the remains of relatives and loved ones is important for the survivors of past atrocities and their societies. The Commission recently held a briefing on identifying remains found in mass graves in Bosnia, and I hope that support for determining the fate of missing persons can be further strengthened.

While some progress has been made in combating trafficking in persons in the region, all countries there need to intensify their efforts to end this modern-day form of slavery. Political will and adequate resources will be required, including through enhanced efforts by law enforcement and more vigorous prosecution of traffickers while providing protection for their victims.

Religious freedoms also remain a cause for concern. Various laws in the region allegedly providing for religious freedom do more to restrict this fundamental right by establishing thresholds for registration, by discriminating against small or new religious groups through tiers of recognition with associated privileges for traditional faiths, and by precluding the sharing of creeds or limiting free speech. These restrictions are particularly burdensome to smaller religious groups and can lead to stigmatization, harassment, and discrimination against their members. For instance, Kosovo's new religion law singles out certain communities for special status while failing to address how other religious groups can obtain juridical personality as a religious organization, thereby creating a significant legal void from the start. I urge Kosovo authorities to follow the progressive Albanian system and create a neutral registration system of general applicability. Macedonia is considering a draft law now, and I hope authorities will fully adopt the recommendations of the OSCE Panel of Experts

on Religious Freedom, as certain provisions of the draft regarding the granting of legal personality need additional refinement. I similarly call on Serbian officials to amend their current law and ensure all groups seeking registration receive legal status. Meanwhile, there is a need to step up efforts to respect the sanctity and ensure the safety of places of worship that have in the past been the targets of ethnically based violence in Kosovo, Bosnia, Serbia and elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, concerted efforts by courageous leaders in the Balkans and elsewhere have helped move the region from the edge of the abyss to the threshold for a brighter and more prosperous future. I congratulate the countries of southeastern Europe on the progress achieved thus far and encourage them to make further progress to ensure that all of the people of the region benefit.

TRIBUTE TO WESTERVELT  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2006

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Westervelt Christian Church on the occasion of its induction into the National Register of Historic Places in February 2006. Westervelt Christian Church celebrated this special occasion with a ceremony on October 8, 2006.

The church was formed in 1921 after the Antioch Church families, living in Westervelt, felt they were traveling too far for services and desired that a new Christian church be built in Westervelt. It is believed that charter members of the First Christian Church were accepted on October 31, 1921 and that a list of these members was placed in the cornerstone of the church.

The church, built in classical revival style, was built during the years of 1921, 1922 and 1923. The lots for the church were donated by E.D. and Alpharetta Kerr and Charles and Minnie Donnel. The architect was Charles Harris and he designed the interior of the church to have outstanding acoustics while the outside of the building was designed to resemble a Greek temple. The building was dedicated on May 6, 1923. To this day, the church still uses the original theater seats, an original serving table in the basement as well as the original hanging lights.

In 1968, the congregation of First Christian Church decided to remove themselves from the Disciples of Christians Churches. The church formed new articles of incorporation and changed the name to Westervelt Christian Church, a now independent Christian church. Today, the church has the following mission statement, "The mission of the Westervelt Christian Church is to exalt and worship Almighty God by living, teaching and preaching the gospel of His Son and our Savior Jesus Christ as revealed to us by His holy word, the Bible."

I am pleased to congratulate Westervelt Christian Church on this special occasion. My prayers are with the church during this special time. May God bless the congregation of Westervelt Christian Church.

GAMBLING EXPLOSION

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2006

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, gambling is exploding throughout our country. I am deeply concerned about the impact this is having on our society. Gambling destroys families and preys on the poor.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share some comments from a recent speech delivered by Rev. Tom Grey, national spokesman and field director for the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling and National Coalition Against Gambling Expansion. Rev. Grey gave these remarks to the Seventh Annual Commercial Real Estate Deal Maker Forum on October 24, 2006, in Cleveland, Ohio, as Ohio voters were considering the question on the Ohio ballot to legalize casino gambling. The proposal, which included money allocated for education, was dubbed the "Earn and Learn" initiative. Voters defeated the initiative 57-43 percent on election day, November 7.

Tom has worked to bring attention to the harm gambling can bring to families and communities. Excerpts of Tom Grey's speech follow:

Gambling is like a fungus. If it gets started in one region, it tends to spread. We saw this happening, and in 1994 we formed, from the bottom up, a national organization to fight it. We gathered local and state activists and formed the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling. We started sharing information and we challenged the spread of gambling at the ballot box. We did that in the peak of hard times for states. State budgets were upside down all across the country, and the casinos were pitching gambling as 'the force of history, the wave of the future.' In the beginning there were bands playing while governors cut ribbons and welcomed the riverboats as economic salvation. The promoters declared that gambling was 'inevitable,' but a decade later we now know it isn't even desirable.

The wave of gambling hit a wall when we started exposing the product. Key votes in Ohio, Rhode Island, Missouri, and Florida surprised the gambling promoters. Voters turned it down. They burst the balloon of inevitability. The promoters lost. Ordinary citizens were successful. It's at the ballot box where we have our best results. They can buy legislators with their threats and big campaign contributions, but they can't buy elections.

Gambling is and always has been an 'other side of the tracks business.' Do you really believe that valued lakeside museums and gateway sports complexes are enhanced by having a casino next to them? In addition, there are terrible side effects with this product. Read the label. 'May Cause'—no—WILL cause addiction, bankruptcy, crime and corruption.'

Well, most of you are here this morning because you are business people whose businesses rise with the tide of a flourishing Cleveland, the community where you live and do business. Let me use an example from one of America's most admired businessmen from the past named Herb Taylor.

For Taylor, a deal wasn't a good deal unless it was a good deal for everyone. Every deal, and every major business decision, had to pass these four questions, or tests:

Is it the truth?

Is it fair to all concerned?

Will it build good will and better friendships?

Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

IS IT THE TRUTH?

The casino crowd has made billions turning teachers, school kids and PTA parents into gambling lobbyists. They do this by promising money for education, and that's exactly what they're doing in Ohio. Gambling promoters need to pick education or some other worthy community cause to buy their way into our communities or states. They want us to overlook the fact that the lion's share of the money goes to them. In Ohio, it's 55 percent. They want us to think the money's not going to the gambling promoters; they want you to think it's going to the schools.

Gambling isn't new money. It's re-directed money. It's trading dollars. Gambling came to New Mexico in 1994, and by 1998 the state's Secretary of Taxation and Revenue reported roughly \$1 to \$1.2 billion per year in other taxable sales had fallen off the balance sheet. Entertainment, retail, restaurants, and services took huge hits from the casinos, and as a result, paid far less in taxes. The best the economists could say was the economy was playing a 'zero sum game.' The casinos were winning and the other businesses were losing.

Is the gambling sales pitch the truth? NO! No state has gambled itself rich, including Nevada—a state that should serve as a model for what a state can produce with gambling. Nevada recently passed the largest tax increase in that state's history. Republican Governor Kenny Guinn told his legislature in his inaugural address, 'Our revenue system is broken because it has relied on regressive and unstable taxes.' (Guinn understands that when you take money from the citizens to run the government, it's still taxes, even if you do it with a slot machine.) Guinn told his legislature, 'Implicit in this (gambling) tax strategy was a belief that the revenues from gaming and tourism could keep pace with our growing and diverse population. Unfortunately, this strategy has failed.'

Nevada ranks near the bottom in per pupil spending on education, and spends less per capita on Medicaid than any other state. If those two areas don't concern you, take a look at where Nevada ranks in high school dropout rates, teen pregnancy, and children living in poverty. If the epicenter of gambling can't gamble itself rich—if the poster-child of casino-gunned government can't balance the budget, and if the model of slot machine largesse fails its kids so miserably, why would Ohio want to follow Nevada on its downward path?

IS IT FAIR TO ALL CONCERNED?

The simple truth is that 30 to 50 percent of casino gambling money comes from problem and pathological gamblers. Can anyone think of anything more cynical than funding education on the backs of sick and troubled people?

There are about 400 of you here this morning. If casinos come to town, you can expect about 12 of you will become this kind of addicted gambler. You might not steal, but the addiction will likely cost you your home, your savings, your family, and your self respect. It could be you, your spouse, your siblings, your children. In the end, this addiction humiliates formerly great citizens to the point of desperation and even suicide. Gambling addicts think about suicide more than any other addictive group, and they act on those thoughts.

Inviting a casino to town is playing Russian roulette with your friends and neighbors; employees and business partners. At 3 percent, which is conservative in a casino town, it would be like giving you a handgun with 400 chambers, and 12 of them are loaded. Are you sure you want to pass that around