

BEN GILMAN: A REAL FRIEND OF
THE IRISH

HON. TOM DeLAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 1996

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I commend to our colleagues an article written by Father Sean McManus, the president of the Irish National Caucus, that appeared in the Irish Echo on April 3, 1996, about our colleague, Chairman BEN GILMAN of New York.

This article describes the efforts of the Republican Congress to fight for fairness and peace in Ireland, and the great leadership of BEN GILMAN on these issues.

BEN GILMAN is proving that Republicans in the Congress do fight for justice around the world, especially in Ireland. I applaud him for his leadership, and I urge my colleagues to read the following article:

MY IRISH HERO IS A JEWISH CONGRESSMAN

(By Fr. Sean McManus)

I don't think that Irish Americans are sufficiently aware of the extraordinary revolution that has taken place in the U.S. Congress regarding Irish affairs.

For over 20 years the Irish National Caucus had campaigned for Congressional Hearings on Northern Ireland. But famous Irish-Catholic speakers of the house—with names like O'Neill and Foley—steadfastly blocked all hearings. They didn't want to offend Her Majesty's government:

"An ad hoc Irish committee of 119 members has been formed in Congress. But the committee's attempts to publicize the outrages being committed in Northern Ireland, along with the efforts of the Irish National Caucus, have been blocked by House Speaker Tip O'Neill and other congressional leaders (Jack Anderson, "Carter Pressured on Northern Ireland," Detroit Free Press, Oct. 29, 1978.

When the MacBride Principles were launched in 1984 we had an even more legitimate reason for hearings because U.S. dollars were subsidizing anti-Catholic discrimination in Northern Ireland, where Catholics are twice likely to be unemployed as Protestants. But again—and now under speaker Tom Foley—hearings or legislative action were blocked. Furthermore, the then-chairman of House Foreign Affairs (now called International Relations Committee, Rep. Lee Hamilton, the Indiana Democrat, kept telling me there was no interest in the MacBride Principles among members of the Committee.

This was a deeply distressing experience. We knew we had a perfectly valid case for a hearing, yet it was being unfairly and undemocratically blocked in the interest of the English government (with the connivance of the then Dublin Government).

Yet oddly enough, some Irish Americans thought that when the Republicans seized control of both House and Senate in 1995, the Irish cause would suffer. But not this Fermanagh man. The first thing the Republican takeover meant to me was that our very best ally, Rep. Ben Gilman of New York would become chairman of the House International Relations Committee.

Ireland has never had a more dedicated, consistent, or genuine friend than Ben Gilman.

As far back as July 1979, Rep. Gilman, then a member of both the Committee of Foreign Relations and the Subcommittee on International Economic Policy and Trade, commissioned Rita Mullin, executive director of

the Irish National Caucus, to conduct an investigation of the hiring practices of U.S. companies doing business in Northern Ireland. This was the first-ever American study of those companies and it marked the genesis of the MacBride Principles.

Rep. Gilman has been a champion of every Irish issue: the Birmingham Six, the Guilford Four, the right of political prisoners etc. He has been absolutely fearless on the Irish issue, never allowing the State Department or any foreign government to silence him.

One of the first things Chairman Gilman did early on in the 104th Congress was to hold hearings, the first on Northern Ireland since 1972. Then, despite heavy lobbying and pressure, he attached the MacBride Principles to the International Fund for Ireland. The House International Relations Committee, after spirited debate, voted on the issue on May 15, 1995. There are 41 Members of the Committee. Thirty-two voted for MacBride Principles, only 8 voted against. And yet for all those years I had to listen to Lee Hamilton tell me there was no interest in the Committee on MacBride.

The MacBride legislation is part of the American Overseas Interest-Act, H.R. 1561. The legislation has now been passed twice by the House of Representatives. It has also been endorsed by the House and Senate Conference. And the entire Republican Leadership—from Sen. Jesse Helms—are all on record of supporting the MacBride Principles, while the State Department opposes these efforts.

What an extraordinary political realignment. None of which could have happened without Ben Gilman's leadership.

For years I have been preaching the message: "Human Rights for Ireland is an American issue—not just an Irish-American issue." And I deeply believe that. Nonetheless, I am still deeply touched when someone who is not Irish stands up for Ireland. And there are many in the Congress who do: African-Americans, Italians, Polish, Jewish, etc.

Rep. Gilman is Jewish American. Isn't it extraordinary that it took a Jewish American to move the Irish agenda to the very top of the U.S. Congress? Isn't it truly amazing that while some powerful Irish Americans in Congress were too scared to take a stand, this quiet, unassuming man has emerged as Ireland's best friend in the U.S. Congress.

Every Irish-American worth his or her salt must stand up and cheer Ben Gilman. He is my Irish Hero.

I should end by explaining that the Irish National Caucus is nonpartisan: neither Democrat nor Republican. So I do not want readers to think this is a pro-Republican article. It is not. In fact, I've personally never voted Republican in my life. But then, I've never lived in Ben Gilman's district.

TRIBUTE TO DICK HOAK

HON. RON KLINK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 1996

Mr. KLINK. Mr. Speaker, when I think of the past 35 years of the Pittsburgh Steelers organization, certain memories come to mind. The rough and tumble Steelers of the early sixties with Bobby Layne and John Henry Johnson; the glory years of the seventies when the Steelers won an unprecedented four Super Bowls coached by Chuck Noll and under the leadership of Terry Bradshaw, Mean Joe Greene, Jack Lambert, Franco Harris, and

other stars too numerous to mention; and finally the current Steelers, the reigning AFC champions. All these memories have one constant. That constant is Dick Hoak.

As we honor Dick Hoak this evening, we remember the enormous contribution he has given to the Steelers as both player and coach. When Dick graduated from Penn State in 1961, he was drafted by the Steelers in the seventh round. During his 9 years as a player, Dick led the Steelers in rushing for 3 years and also was named to the Pro Bowl in 1969. Dick is the fourth highest leading rusher in Steelers' history.

Dick also has made a profound impact as a Steelers' coach. For the past 24 years, Dick has been in charge of the offensive backfield and most recently has exclusively coached the running backs. Under Hoak's guidance, the Steelers have produced such notable running backs as Franco Harris, Rocky Bleier, Frank Pollard, Earnest Jackson, and more recently Barry Foster and Bam Morris. Dick has the distinction of being the longest-tenured coach in Steelers' history.

I am honored to present Dick with this letter of commendation. The city of Jeanette is truly blessed to call Dick one of its own.

A VISION OF VALUES

HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 1996

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, all too often people dwell upon the failings of our society, and ignore the true accomplishments of many devoted Americans. Nowhere is this more evident than in the case of talking about the misfortunes of those who either lose their jobs or simply fail to find one all together. I want our colleagues to know about a man who believes that success breeds success, and who for more than 30 years has worked to have that success serve as the foundation for even more success. I am talking about Rev. Leon H. Sullivan, the founder of the Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America, Inc.

There are many people in our society who need retraining to gain improved skills to find new jobs, and others who need basic training to find meaningful jobs. Since 1964, Reverend Sullivan has worked to provide comprehensive employment training and placement for disadvantaged, unemployed, and unskilled Americans. Many of us recognize the symbol, OIC, and have seen it in our congressional districts. I am sure, however, that not many fully appreciate the effort and devotion demonstrated by Reverend Sullivan over these years.

The first OIC was founded in an abandoned Philadelphia jailhouse. It expanded to more than 70 centers around the country, and 28 centers overseas. In its more than 30 years of operation, OIC has trained and provided assistance to more than 1.5 million people.

Particularly at times like these when we are looking for private solutions to significant national problems like unemployment, Opportunities Industrialization Centers are more important than ever before. Growing from his ministry at the Zion Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Reverend Sullivan established a day care center, a credit union, an employment agency, a community center for youth and