

prosperity meditation series, and *Here's to Your Health*—a 10-day health meditation series. She has written articles for the *Oakland Tribune* regarding the local clergy. Dr. Stortz served as a member of the Oakland Police and Clergy Together, and trained numerous assistant ministers.

Rev. Postolaki, originally from Romania, prior to coming to First Church, served the Santa Rosa Church, both as a Practitioner and as an Assistant Minister. In 1986 he became the assistant minister at First Church of Religious Science, Oakland. He conducted weekly circles of Prayer and headed the Pastoral Care.

Rev. Postolaki has brought his spiritual strength, his creativity, and his artistic talents to First Church. He created unique banners reflecting the world's religious beliefs and "The Season for Non-Violence" banner honoring the anniversaries of the deaths of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. Stortz and Rev. Postolaki have been pillars whose commitment has established First Church as a fifty-year-old Oakland spiritual institution.

BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN
INTEGRITY ACT OF 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 20, 1998

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2183) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to reform the financing of campaigns for elections for Federal office, and for other purposes:

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment by Mr. PAXTON to the bill being discussed on campaign finance reform. This amendment would require labor unions to report all financial activities under current labor laws by categories, such as organizing activities and strike activities and political activities. The amendment further requires that reports be posted on the Internet.

These provisions single out unions for special treatment. They would impose expensive, burdensome regulations upon the organizations that represent working people. Companies are not subject to such treatment. This would further tilt the political playing field towards corporations and against working families.

The amendment imposes a substantial accounting burden on union members. It is the responsibility of the Department of Labor to determine the appropriate level of accounting that is needed to fulfill the requirements of American labor laws. This measure amounts to harassment and discrimination against labor unions.

Also, Mr. Chairman, this amendment is clearly a "poison pill." It is part of a continuing effort to load up the major, bipartisan campaign finance reform proposal with provisions that will drive away certain categories of supporters. The attempt is NOT to further campaign finance reform for the good of the American people. The purpose is to obstruct the process. I therefore urge my colleagues to defeat this destructive amendment.

FUNDING OF THE NEA AND
CENSORSHIP

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 23, 1998

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to have printed in the RECORD statements by high school students from my home State of Vermont, who were speaking at my recent town meeting on issues facing young people today.

FUNDING OF THE NEA AND CENSORSHIP

(By Daniel Luzer)

There has been a great deal of controversy lately about the National Endowment for the Arts. The Supreme Court is expected to rule in July in the case of National Endowment for the Arts versus Finley to decide if the federal law requiring the head of the Endowment to consider general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs and views of the American public when considering whether or not to award a grant. In Congress last month, Senator John Ashcroft, together with Senator Jesse Helms, attempted, in an appropriations bill, to kill the endowment program entirely.

From the beginning, the National Endowment for the Arts has been a controversial program. Certainly the endowment is a valuable program. Before 1965, when the endowment was instituted, the arts were, to a great extent, still on the fringes of society and accessible only to the cultural elite. Since then, the arts have expanded greatly, and are now accessible to the masses and have thus begun to educate the majority, which was the point.

In the words of Maryanne Peters, the President of the Board of Directors of the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression, "In creating the NEA, Congress recognized that the arts are integral to fostering imaginative thinking in our culture." In the 33 years which the National Endowment for the Arts has existed, the role of art in our culture has greatly increased. One of the main contributions that the Endowment has made to our culture is to expand the American art world from a largely market-driven world to a system which allows artists to explore and to expose communities to new creative fields, without having to worry about how to purchase materials, or even purchase food.

It is important to remember, though, that money from the National Endowment for the Arts is a prize, bestowed upon artists whose work is either exceptionally good or greatly needed in a given community. Artists who receive money from the Endowment are singled out for the content of the work. Organizations like National Campaign for Freedom of Expression would like us to believe that the law requiring the head of the Endowment to consider standards of decency when awarding grants amounts to a violation of the rights to free speech.

This line of reasoning is flawed, however, in that The First Amendment to the Constitution states that "Congress shall make no law restricting freedom of speech." The fact of the matter is that the above-mentioned law is not a law restricting freedom of speech. The National Endowment for the Arts is not an organization which punishes artists for poor quality work; it is an organization which awards prizes to artists of first quality.

The law simply requires potential grant-givers to consider decency with respect to art. The law does not restrict the freedom to

speak in any way, since no artist is restricted from anything; they will simply find it slightly more difficult to receive federal money for offensive work, which seems a logical and acceptable state for an artist to be in. So the law is not unconstitutional.

That being said, the other issue that artists and artists' groups have brought up is the law's potentially harmful vagueness, which could lead to arbitrary and dangerous selection and rejection of an artist's work, which is absurd in a federal program, where standards are needed in order to determine an artistic piece's relevance in relation to the policies and purpose of the National Endowment for the Arts.

This is certainly a legitimate concern, and one which needs to be addressed in order for the National Endowment for the Arts to continue to function in a manner that benefits society. What the National Endowment for the Arts needs to continue in a way that benefits America are clearer laws and a stricter codification of the grant system. In this way, artists can be granted money based on whether and where their work is needed. If a given community was seriously lacking in, say, quality theater, then playwrights could be sent, with NEA grants, to the said community.

To a certain extent, the National Endowment for the Arts already works in this manner. However, greater clarity on this issue would lead to a better relationship between the art and political communities, which would decrease artists' frustration and improve the quality of the overall art program in the United States.

This plan does, to a certain extent, lead to discrimination against certain forms of art. While that is unfortunate, there is no way that the United States government could ever equally support all forms of art. But that was never the purpose of the National Endowment for the Arts. Another objection that could be raised for this plan for greater codification of the endowments program is that placing restrictions would adversely affect the quality of art. While that is a legitimate concern, as the arts are an expression of emotion, it is important to realize that, in order for the arts to flourish, they do not need to be unrestricted. Some of the greatest works of art were created under severe restrictions. The entire Renaissance, which for example, produced such masterpieces as Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel, Donatello's Madonna and Child, and Dante's Divine Comedy, was funded in large part by the Florentine banking families, not to mention the Vatican.

An additional argument against the idea of greater codification for the National Endowment for the Arts might be that the organization would therefore not be supporting the artistic community at all, since the award of grants would be based on the need for certain artists, rather than absolute support for artistic expression. One needs to realize, however, that the purpose of the National Endowment for the Arts should not be to encourage artistic expression among the artistic community. That would exist whether the National Endowment for the Arts does or not.

The purpose for the NEA ought to be to support the viewers of art, extending their horizon so as to foster the greater artistic understanding of the nation as a whole, not to support the ever-expanding imagination of the elite artistic community.

STATEMENT BY DAN WELCH REGARDING
VERMONT EDUCATION STANDARDS

My name is Dan Welch, and two years ago—well, last year, second semester, I was

given the opportunity to work with the Vermont Institute for Math, Science and Technology on developing a handbook for understanding the Vermont framework of standards that is in place in our education system right now. And I found, through visiting other schools and talking to college-level people, that the Vermont frameworks are not understood by anyone, and they are the basis for our entire education system for the next decade.

I think that putting standards into education is asking a lot of students for a lot of things, especially the standards as high as these, and my concern is that, when students see standards for the first time, which won't be for a couple years, they are going to choke.

I come from CVU, which is a school where you have to do a standard-based project to graduate, and when this project first started off—the number was 88 percent of kids, three years ago, failed to meet the standards on their first time around. Had there not been a second chance to meet that standard, had it been like an exam for their final in the course, 88 percent of those kids, of a class of 200, would have stayed back and joined the class behind them.

Putting standards into schools is a good thing, to level the playing field and say, well, everyone's getting their education based around this one concept or these ideas. But putting it into such pass-fail stringencies and saying that they are a standard is going far beyond what should be done. And the setup for Vermont's framework of standards is based on a program that was started in Essex, I believe, and they want to work like a rubric for point systems, where it is not necessarily pass-fail.

The Vermont framework for standards is an excellent idea, it is a little vague in the English area, but I would like to see programs like it going up nationwide, because it would really make a difference in the education system as soon as it is fully implemented.

My biggest concern is that, once it is implemented, at what point do students find out about the standards that are expected to be met? I found out my junior year. I would have liked to have known my freshman year, and maybe earlier. This is one of the issues I brought up when I was working with VISMT on rewriting the handbook for understanding the standards, is that the students should know what is expected of them from day one, and the handbooks that I was given should be made available to everyone from, probably, 7th grade, or earlier, on. And parents should be kept informed of what the standards are from the time their child enters the school system until long after, because they should continue their role as an active member of the community to know what is being expected of their local students and how they can get involved to change that.

STATEMENT BY RHYS MARSH REGARDING ACT 60/FEDERAL EDUCATION FUNDING

Act 60 is one of the most controversial and monumental bills to pass the Vermont legislature in recent years. It comes in response to a 1996 decision by the Vermont Supreme Court which declared Vermont's system of education funding illegal according to the Vermont constitution.

The main purpose of Act 60 is therefore to equalize public school funding opportunities in the State of Vermont. Act 60 accomplishes this by introducing a statewide property tax of \$1.10 per \$100 of property value, which funds block grants of approximately \$5,000 per student for each local school district.

As all but 13 of Vermont's 252 towns are currently spending more than the \$5,000

block grant per student, towns are given the option of raising additional money for their schools through a local property tax. Under Act 60, the distribution of moneys raised through local taxes has been equalized as well. A tax increase of one cent per \$100 of property value in Vernon, which has a fair market property value of about \$9 million would obviously not yield as much money as a one cent increase would in Stowe, which has a fair market property value of \$769 million. Because of this discrepancy, so-called gold towns such as Stowe and Stratton must give some of their money raised through local taxes to the state. This has the effect of making a one cent tax increase in Stowe produce as much money for the school system as a one cent tax increase would produce in Vernon.

Opponents of the bill say Act 60 has put an unfair tax burden on the more wealthy towns, as they must now share their property tax dollars with other, poorer towns. Some also complain that less affluent families who own property in gold towns will be hurt by the tax increase those towns are likely to face.

However, Act 60 has, in reality, only given all Vermont students equal chance for education funding, regardless of geographical location. Before Act 60 was passed, property taxes varied immensely within the State of Vermont. For example, Stratton provided lavish funds to its schools with a tax rate of only 42 cents per \$100. However, in Standard, a grueling tax rate of \$4.39 per \$100 was necessary to provide adequate school funding. This means that property valued at \$100,000 in Stratton would be taxed only \$420, while, in Standard, the same property would be taxed \$4,390. Under Act 60, both properties will be taxed \$1,100, unless their towns decide to spend more than the \$5,000 per pupil block grants the state provides.

This means that the property-rich towns will now get the same bang for the buck as property-poor towns. Even if the gold towns continue to fund their schools at the current high levels, the property taxes will not increase the levels any greater than the rates some towns currently pay to send moderate moneys to their schools.

In addition, families with incomes of less than \$75,000 have been protected from the possible tax increases associated with Act 60, by capping their property taxes at between 3 and 5 percent of the household income. Act 60 has provided an effective and equitable solution to the problems of Vermont's property taxes and education funding.

However, the property tax is still a regressive tax, and there are still enough inequalities in the state and local taxes within the nation. While there is no stipulation in the Federal Constitution that requires equal education funding from state to state, increased equalized federal aid to states could help to ease the downfalls of the property tax and the funding inequities nationally.

Therefore, I believe the Federal Government should write new legislation based on the ideas behind Act 60 and increase the contributions to public education. This would help to distribute the wealth of the United States more homogeneously and improve school quality, especially in the nation's poorer school districts. It also would move more of the tax burden on Americans from the regressive and volatile local property tax to the progressive income tax of the Federal Government.

Act 60 has done wonders for Vermont. The United States of America could utilize the benefits of legislation similar to Act 60 on a national level, to reduce our reliance on regressive taxes and provide more equal funding for our nation's schools.

Thank you.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 17, 1998

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4194) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes:

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the Lazio Amendment to the VA-HUD Appropriations bill. While I supported H.R. 2, the housing reform bill when it was brought to the floor last year, I do not believe the appropriations bill before us in an appropriate vehicle to move the bill forward. I am supportive of reforming our public housing, however, reform needs to take place in the proper forum.

Attaching a complicated bill like H.R. 2 to an appropriations bill has the potential to delay critical funding for our nation's veterans, housing for low income families and other vital programs. Conference negotiations on the bill could even be delayed to the point of another government shutdown. After witnessing the negative effects of the government shutdown in 1995, we must ensure that we never face that situation again.

I have concerns about the provision in H.R. 2 dealing with the untested home rule provision. The home rule provision would essentially eliminate the role of housing authorities in any decision affecting Section 8 and public housing programs by turning the administration of these programs over to local governments. This and other modifications to public housing need to be thought through carefully. Unfortunately, an appropriations bill does not provide for that type of comprehensive consideration.

TRIBUTE TO FOCUS: HOPE

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 23, 1998

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an organization that is near and dear to my heart. They are celebrating their 30th anniversary this year and on July 25, 1998, they will celebrate another triumph over adversity as they cut the ribbon to re-open their resource center which was badly damaged last year by a tornado. This civil and human rights organization was created by my beloved friends Father William T. Cunningham (1930-1997) and Ms. Eleanor M. Josaitis, and since Father Cunningham's passing, Ms. Josaitis has valiantly continued their work assisting those in need in our community.

Its name is Focus: HOPE, and it unites our multi-cultural community with common efforts