

charging that local selective purchasing legislation violates US trade policy. That legislation has now stalled in the City Council.

Earlier this month, the government of Venezuela threatened to complain to the World Trade Organization unless the state of Florida lifted a ban on Orimulsion, a highly-polluting fossil fuel produced by Venezuela's state oil company.

By adopting the Kucinich Amendment, Congress can take immediate action to ensure that state, local, and tribal governments can set their own environmental and health standards, free of unnecessary interference by international trade rules. Yet, the Executive would still be free to pursue state preemption on important matters where Congress first made a specific appropriation. Please vote "yes" to the Kucinich Amendment to HR 4276.

Sincerely,

CARL POPE,  
Executive Director.

SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER,  
MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE,  
July 27, 1998.

Hon. DENNIS J. KUCINICH,

*U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR CONGRESSMAN KUCINICH: The Simon Wiesenthal Center is grateful for Congressman Kucinich's leadership in proposing Amendment H.R. 4276, which will have the effect of forcing the Swiss Banks who have profited from stolen Nazi loot to promptly return to the negotiating table with representatives of the Holocaust survivors and the Jewish community.

Please let us know if the amendment becomes law.

Once again, on behalf of the 400,000 constituent families of the Simon Wiesenthal Center we commend you and your colleagues on this important initiative.

Sincerely,

RABBI ABRAHAM COOPER,  
Associate Dean.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
SERVICE COMMITTEE,  
Cambridge MA, July 29, 1998.

Hon. DENNIS KUCINICH,

*U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE KUCINICH, I applaud your leadership in sponsoring the Kucinich, Sanders, DeFazio, Stearns, Ros-Lehtinen amendment to the Commerce, Justice and State Department Appropriations bill that would deprive the Administration of funds to bring legal challenges to any state and local laws based on the contention that the WTO finds these laws inconsistent with international trade and investment agreements.

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) has been involved in efforts to focus public attention on the need to end repression and foster democracy and human rights in Burma since 1995. As you probably know Burma's repressive military junta established a totalitarian state in that nation in 1988. The military crackdown begun at that time has resulted in the deaths of over 10,000 people. This regime has brought Burma, renamed Myanmar by the military, the dubious distinction of having one of the world's worst human rights records. One very effective way to focus public attention on the human rights crisis in Burma is to enact selective purchase legislation at the state or local level that bars government agencies from purchasing goods produced by companies that do business there. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and several cities, towns and counties have passed such legislation. However, unfortunately federal government officials have tried to pressure many of these governments and their legisla-

tive officials to repeal or modify that legislation because of objections raised to it by the WTO.

The amendment you have proposed would end this type of interference. After all, how Massachusetts—or any state or city decides to spend its tax dollars is a matter for the citizens of Massachusetts or any other state or city to decide. I wish you every success in passing this important amendment.

Sincerely,

JEFF SIEFERT,  
Acting Director.

TRANSAFRICA  
Re: Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment to H.R. 4276  
To: Members of Congress  
From: Randall Robinson

I write in strong support for the Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment to H.R. 4276, the Commerce, Justice, State Appropriation.

This amendment will provide necessary protection to state and local initiatives that promote human rights and justice. Earlier this year, the State of Maryland was considering passing a selective purchase law to promote human rights and correct environmental abuses in Nigeria. The Federal government lobbied in Annapolis to preempt this state action. An official from the State Department said to the Maryland lawmakers that the law would be WTO-illegal. The threat of a federal lawsuit stood behind the State Department official's warning. Maryland backed down.

With the threat of WTO decrees and consequent federal lawsuits, what state or local legislature will be able to pass important procurement laws like the Nigeria selective purchase law? Had the states been bound by such trade rules during our struggle to free South Africa, Nelson Mandela might still be imprisoned.

I hope you will support the Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment to H.R. 4276.

U.S. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY COUNCIL,  
July 29, 1998.

Re: The Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment to HR 4276  
To: Republican Members of Congress

From: Kevin L. Kearns, President, USBIC

On behalf of the more than 1,000 member companies of the United States Business and Industry Council (USBIC), I strongly urge you to support the Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns Amendment to HR 4276, the Commerce, Justice, State appropriation bill.

This amendment, which would deny the use of taxpayer funds for federal government challenges to state, local, and tribal laws deemed inconsistent with America's NAFTA and World Trade Organization obligations, will serve as a vital bulwark in the defense of American sovereignty.

As an organization that for more than 60 years has promoted policies to serve the broad national interest, USBIC does not believe in general that sub-national authorities should have the right to make their own trade and foreign policies. The Constitution reserves these powers for the federal government, and USBIC believes that this arrangement has served the nation well.

Yet the ultimate fate of these sub-national policies should be decided by the American political system—which, after all, is the only political system on earth that places first and foremost the interests of the American people and the only one that is fully accountable to them. Foreign governments and international bureaucracies should play no official or formal role whatever in these decisions.

For more than 200 years, the American people have looked to their own elected leaders to safeguard national security and manage their international economic affairs. They have never voted to delegate these responsibilities to foreign bodies, or give such bodies binding oversight. The American political system has all the legitimacy it needs to act on their behalf. This legitimacy—along with the power to enforce the decisions made by the system—is the sine qua non of U.S. sovereignty.

Using taxpayer money to finance U.S. federal government court challenges ordered by an international organization to overturn political decisions made by legitimate American officials and legislators at the state or local level betrays more than two centuries of struggle and sacrifice for American independence and freedom. It's bad enough that President Clinton and his multilateralist advisors have meekly acquiesced in the creeping power grab being engineered by the World Trade Organization. If Republicans and conservatives don't stand up to them, who will? I strongly urge you to vote for the Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment.

If you should have any question about the amendment or the sovereignty issue in general, please feel free to contact either myself or USBIC Educational Foundation Research Fellow Alan Tonelson at 202-628-2211.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE YEAR 2000 READINESS DISCLOSURE ACT

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 7, 1998

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, today my colleague, Representative DREIER and I introduced the "Year 2000 Readiness Disclosure Act." Its purpose is to help solve the Year 2000 computer problem. Billions of computer chips are in devices from telephones to oil rig valves, and billions of lines of software code now run computer systems we rely on for issuing paychecks to operating traffic signals. Now we are faced with the threat these devices and systems may not operate because they cannot read the number 2000 as a year.

The challenge to solve the so-called "Y2K" problem is an incredibly complex process in our interconnected world. Each of us has a stake in all of us succeeding. After all, if a business that issues paychecks or another that operates our elevators fixes its Y2K problems, what will be accomplished if the electricity needed by those businesses cannot be delivered or transit systems cannot provide transportation for the employees of those businesses?

Solving this problem means that every company must make available as much information as is possible, as soon as possible, so that others can use it to meet the threat present in the Y2K problem. Unfortunately, current law provides an opportunity to file frivolous lawsuits against those providing this information and subject them to costly litigation. Consequently, these Y2K "Good Samaritans" are reluctant to provide vital information because of the litigation they may have to endure.

This bill will give companies the freedom to disclose Year 2000 readiness information to

help all of us deal with this unique crisis, without penalizing them for their efforts. With January 1, 2000 fast approaching, more information rather than less—shared sooner rather than later—may be the difference between inconvenience and disaster.

I am pleased to see the Administration has proposed similar legislation to address this issue. It is a worthy effort, although it may fall short in some areas. For example, the Administration bill protects statements that are good-faith mistakes but does not include protection for statements shown to be true. The bill introduced today by myself and Mr. DREIER will protect all Year 2000 disclosure statements, giving companies incentives to provide more information, not less.

Mr. Speaker, I hope we can quickly pass this timely legislation during this Congress, and I look forward to working with the Administration and others on this important issue. Also, I welcome suggestions on how we may improve the legislation introduced today. The Y2K challenge is extensive and the stakes are very high. I believe the legislation we have introduced here today is a critical step in successfully meeting that challenge.

I hope my colleagues will join me and Mr. DREIER in supporting this bill.

**PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS  
HEALTH CARE AND RESEARCH  
ACT OF 1998**

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOSEPH P. KENNEDY II**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, August 3, 1998*

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, for the past seven years, since the Persian Gulf War ended, our veterans have suffered from a myriad of symptoms with no end in sight—dizziness, severe headaches, chest pain, shortness of breath, aching joints and depression, to cite just a few examples of what they are going through.

Seven years ago, when the Persian Gulf War ended, a hearing was held here in Washington to investigate reports that Persian Gulf Veterans were suffering a series of mysterious symptoms. But there were no veterans at the witness table in the Committee room. So in 1992, I held a hearing in Boston to gather testimony from sick veterans who could tell me about their health problems. At that time, sick veterans were being called malingerers or worse, by the Defense Department. People didn't believe they were really sick.

But by early 1993, it was clear that there was a problem. Literally hundreds of veterans were calling my office to report of symptoms ranging from skin rashes and respiratory problems to kidney failure and cancer that they believed were linked to service in the Gulf conflict. The Pentagon continued to deny any link but was forced to take a closer look at the facts once countries that were members of the Persian Gulf Coalition began reporting exposures of their own troops to chemical and biological weapons.

Finally, in April 1996, the CIA released a report showing solid evidence that thousands of chemical weapons had been stored at Khamisiyah and that our troops may have been exposed to those deadly agents after the allied forces bombed the storage facilities.

Now here we are, seven years after the war. We've financed 103 research projects, at a cost of \$49 million dollars, and we've had a presidential panel study the veterans health problems. But DoD and VA have not answered the veterans' questions about what caused them to get sick and when they will get effective treatment.

The veterans are frustrated, and rightly so. They still suffer from a myriad of illnesses like stomach disorders and painful muscles and joints, to name just a few of them. The veterans don't want to hear the argument that their illnesses are caused by stress.

When I talk to the veterans, they tell me they do want to know what caused them to get sick, but they also want research to be done to find effective treatment into exposure to biological and chemical agents. That is what they believe is the key to the problem.

These are brave men and women who answered their country's call at a time of need. They deserve a full accounting of how their service might be linked to these horrible illnesses that have so devastated their family lives and careers.

So based on the discussions I've had with Persian Gulf veterans over these seven years, I am pleased to have participated in negotiations to create a bi-partisan bill, HR 3980, "The Persian Gulf War Veterans Health Care and Research Act of 1998" with Chairman BOB STUMP, Ranking Member LANE EVANS, Health Subcommittee Chairman CLIFF STEARNS, and Health Subcommittee Ranking Member LUIS GUTIERREZ.

I don't believe we have had a focused, coherent federal research strategy. HR 3980 will give the Persian Gulf Veterans confidence that priority is being given to researching their exposure to biological or chemical weapons, and the resulting effects on their health, so that effective treatment can be found and administered, to fight the detrimental effects of this exposure on the veterans' health.

Through this bill, we will ensure priority is given to exposure to biological and chemical weapons by setting up a Public Advisory Committee to advise the Persian Gulf Veterans Coordinating Board on what kind of research to target. I am pleased that members of this Advisory Committee will represent groups that were formed specifically to help Persian Gulf Veterans. Their active participation on the Committee will ensure that adequate, targeted research into exposure to biological and chemical agents will be done.

Physicians at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and at the Pentagon, don't have a training program to become updated on how to administer the latest treatment protocols as they become available from research findings. This is essential, and is badly needed. I am pleased that HR 3980 includes provisions to provide training to physicians at VA and the Pentagon, so they can give the best possible care to our Persian Gulf veterans.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this bill provides a provision I sought to publish treatment protocols on the Internet and in peer-reviewed medical journals because many Persian Gulf veterans receive health care in the private sector. If we publish the research findings, private sector physicians who treat Persian Gulf Veterans will have access to those treatment protocols.

It is my hope that HR 3980, "The Persian Gulf War Veterans Health Care and Research Act of 1998" will restore the veterans' con-

fidence in our government's efforts to make them well again, will give them a fresh start, and will take the needed steps to finally solve the Persian Gulf veterans' health problems.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. RON PACKARD**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 7, 1998*

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from the House of Representatives on August 6, 1998 for rollcall votes 406 to 416. Had I been present, the following is how I would have voted:

Rollcall No. 406 "YEA"; Rollcall No. 407 "NO"; Rollcall No. 408 "NO"; Rollcall No. 409 "NO"; Rollcall No. 410 "NO"; Rollcall No. 411 "AYE"; Rollcall No. 412 "AYE"; Rollcall No. 413 "NO"; Rollcall No. 414 "AYE"; Rollcall No. 415 "AYE"; and Rollcall No. 416 "YEA".

WHITE HOUSE REMARKS OF  
OFFICER GERRY FLYNN

**HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 7, 1998*

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the stirring and insightful remarks of Lowell Police Officer Gerry Flynn at a White House Rose Garden event yesterday, on the importance of preserving and strengthening the Federal Brady Law. Officer Flynn spoke eloquently about the price we pay as a society when guns find their way into the wrong hands and the need to extend the Brady five-day waiting period. I congratulate Officer Flynn for the honor bestowed upon him in being invited to speak at the White House in front of the President, and I congratulate him upon seizing that opportunity to do the entire city of Lowell proud. I am submitting Officer Flynn's White House remarks for the RECORD, so that his words may remain with all of us.

STATEMENT OF LOWELL POLICE OFFICER  
GERRY FLYNN AT THE WHITE HOUSE ON THE  
BRADY HANDGUN LAW

Good morning. As National Vice-President of the International Brotherhood of Police Officers (IBPO) and President of the Lowell Police Patrolmen's Association, it is truly an honor and a privilege to be here with you this morning. On behalf of those of us in law enforcement, it gives me great pleasure to speak in support of an issue of such enormous importance as "The Brandy Handgun Law."

Robert F. Kennedy once said, "It is a responsibility to put away childish things, to make the possession and use of firearms a matter undertaken only by serious people who will use them with the restraint and maturity that their dangerous nature deserves and demands. For far too long, we have dealt with these deadly weapons as if they were harmless toys. It is past time that we wipe this stain of violence from our land."

Yet, thirty years after his death by a handgun, we are still attempting to wipe the stain of violence from our land—except the stain of violence has now spread into the classrooms occupied by our children.