

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN REMEMBRANCE OF HIS
HOLINESS KAREKIN I

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 1999

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, today in Armenia, the spiritual leader of the Armenian Apostolic Church passed away after a serious illness. I was saddened to learn of the death of His Holiness Karekin I, the Catholicos of the Armenian Church.

Elected as the 131st leader of the Armenian Church following the death of Vazgen I in 1995, Karekin I called for a peaceful solution in Nagorno Karabagh.

Karekin I, who led the church for 4 years, spent much of his time visiting with the faithful, who live in many different areas of the world. Prior to rising to become the Catholicos, His Holiness was educated at Oxford, England, and he served the church in Lebanon, Iran and New York.

His Holiness was an important world figure. He was among the most prominent spiritual leaders—a man who was important not only to Armenians but to people of all faiths. He was a well-respected figure throughout America. Not only did Karekin I serve the church in New York, but he also visited communities throughout the United States frequently.

As millions of Armenians mourn his passing, we will all feel a deep loss. He stood for peace and justice. He was known as an eloquent and passionate orator. He worked with other religious leaders to strengthen the ties and understanding between people of different faiths.

Karekin I led a church whose history dates back to 301 A.D., when King Trdat III proclaimed Christianity as the state religion of Armenia. For much of the past fifteen centuries, the Armenian Church and its spiritual leaders have been the embodiment of the national aspirations of the Armenian people.

As the people of Armenia move forward towards peace and prosperity, it is important to remember those who have helped lead the way. The commitment of Karekin I to the faith and to the Armenian people will not be forgotten.

DOING GOOD FOR HUD

HON. CHAKA FATTAH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 1999

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I commend the following article to my colleagues from The Philadelphia Inquirer on the Department of Housing and Urban Development's activities in Philadelphia.

[From the Philadelphia Inquirer, June 22, 1999]

DOING GOOD FOR HUD

FOR A BUREAUCRACY, IT'S A STARTLING MOVE: SENDING SKILLED PROFESSIONALS OUT OF THEIR OFFICES WITH SWEEPING ORDERS TO HELP PEOPLE. THEY ARE "COMMUNITY BUILDERS" IN WHAT HUD SECRETARY ANDREW CUOMO CALLS "AN URBAN PEACE CORPS."

(By Maida Odom)

John Carpenter drives past rubbish-filled lots in Philadelphia, wondering if there's some way to get them into the hands of owners who would clean them up.

Cynthia Jetter solves problems and investigates complaints from advocates for the disabled—the same people who last month protested outside her employer, the U.S. Office of Housing and Urban Development in Washington.

And Michael Levine, a career Washington bureaucrat now in Philadelphia, is getting to see some of the social programs he helped design. "When you come in and meet people in a situation, you realize no program in itself is going to solve the problem," he says.

They are executives who have left their offices—"outsiders" with connections, insiders now on the street.

They are HUD employees, members of a unique group of two-year "fellows" called community builders. Handpicked from inside and outside HUD, these special workers—about 900 at 81 offices nationwide, and 26 in Pennsylvania—have an extremely broad mandate: Do good.

Jetter was a HUD employee who left to work at the Philadelphia Housing Authority and then returned. Carpenter formerly headed a Community Development Corp. Both are assigned to the Philadelphia office, as is Levine.

HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo, who announced the program in March of 1998, dubbed these "fellows" an "urban Peace Corps"—knowledgeable professionals from private industry, social services, other branches of government and elsewhere temporarily added to a HUD talent pool that has been winnowed through years of budget cuts.

Karen Miller, who heads HUD's mid-Atlantic region, which is based here, helped write the "community builders" job description.

"What has been expected of HUD's staff was schizophrenic," she said. HUD bureaucrats were the "cops" who guarded public dollars, she said, while at the same time they were expected to offer technical assistance to the people being monitored.

"The Secretary [Cuomo] separated the two roles," she said. "The great majority [of HUD employees] are still defenders of public dollars," involved in awarding grants, moving applications through the system and monitoring spending.

"Community builders are the ones who go out and work with the community and help them do what they want and need to do."

In almost two decades as a Washington-based bureaucrat, Levine saw himself getting further away from his personal career goal "to go out and help communities develop."

As a HUD executive he was writing programs and evaluating projects. Eventually, there were few fact-finding trips into the field to see firsthand what he was planning and administering.

About half the community builders are like Levine, people who had worked inside

HUD and are now getting a chance to see their work in action.

Being in the area of welfare-to-work for about a year has been eye-opening, he said. Over that period, Levine has arranged for more than 700 people—public-housing managers and tenant leaders—to get special briefings explaining the new welfare-reform laws.

In Washington, he had administered and written a program offering public-housing tenant councils \$100,000 grants to develop job opportunities. "They didn't want to spend the money for fear of getting into trouble," Levine said.

Now, as a community builder, he's helping bring together public and private sources to create computer centers at public housing developments. "A computer center is a place where children can go after school, where adults can get the literacy they need," he said.

"When I ran that program in Washington I didn't see the money being used that way. You get a different perspective. You don't realize the nuances.

"It's not like I learned any big new things to shock me. But things are much clearer now."

Before she met Jetter, Nancy Salandra, project coordinator for the Pennsylvania Action Coalition for Disability Rights in Housing, generally found herself fighting to get HUD to listen.

Jetter has been "a terrific person to work with," Salandra said. "What she says she's going to do, she does.

"She has the knowledge; she has the understanding of housing; she has the understanding about HUD; and she understands how the system overwhelms people."

In addition to meeting with groups that usually come to HUD with complaints, Jetter is bringing together people who work on housing for veterans and disabled and homeless people. She also is trying to organize a tracking method to keep up with who needs services and who's receiving them.

"We need to track the impact of programs [and] track housing, and we can better address the needs of the population."

Jetter worked for HUD for 14 years before taking over as head of resident services at the Philadelphia Housing Authority. She left there for a research project at the Manpower Demonstration Research Corp. in New York. Last fall, she rejoined HUD as a community builder. When Jetter left HUD, she thought she'd never go back. For most of her years with the agency, she felt it was growing farther away from the people it served.

People "were numbers," she said. "This is a big step for HUD to take people in from the outside. And the response has been overwhelming. P.R. for HUD is a big part of it. We go to every meeting we can, try to be a visible as possible. After a meeting, people are almost knocking you down to get your card.

"We used to be the ones who said 'Gotcha!' Now people can talk to us before they get into trouble."

Carpenter, who formerly headed the New Kensington Community Development Corp., where he won praise for clearing and reusing vacant lots, joined HUD last summer. In this job he's been able to pull together people he could not have assembled in his old job.

For example, a group of American Street area residents and representatives of a community development corporation there were

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

working together earlier this year, hoping to obtain funding to design projects for property acquisition and housing preservation.

Carpenter, according to Santiago Burgos, director of the American Street Empowerment Zone in North Philadelphia, was able to help people working in the area "think through to design a project to consolidate those goals." Carpenter helped them see that they needed money for pre-development and environmental testing. Their improving planning made it easier to identify and get funding, Burgos said.

In addition, Carpenter brought in the right people as advisers and consultants, Burgos said, and "shortened the learning curve" for the community people, moving things forward faster.

Such projects are close to Carpenter's heart.

"Frankly, it's one of Philadelphia's biggest disgraces—what happens to vacant land once the building is torn down. The city essentially abdicates responsibility. They do not clean it, they do not maintain it, they do not cite the owners for not maintaining it.

"For a developer driving by here, the first gut-recoiling reaction is, 'Why would I even build here if the people who live here tolerate this? What would they do to my store? What would they do to my business?'"

Although the problem is vast, Carpenter said—in the city there are about 40,000 vacant buildings and 30,000 vacant lots, most privately owned—he thinks it can be tackled.

"Having the HUD seal of approval gets people to listen to me," he said.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. J.C. WATTS, JR.

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 1999

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I was granted a leave of absence for Monday, June 29, 1999. Following are the Suspension votes I missed and how I would have voted:

On Passage of H. Con. Res. 94: On rollcall vote No. 259, I would have voted "yea."

On Passage of H. Res. 226: On rollcall vote No. 258, I would have voted "yea."

On Passage of H.R. 2280: On rollcall vote No. 257, I would have voted "yea."

Lastly, I would have voted "yea" for H.J. Res. 34; H.R. 1568; H.R. 2014 and H.R. 1327 all passed by voice vote.

IN RECOGNITION OF COACH RAY SMOOT ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT AFTER 41 YEARS AS A TEACHER, COACH AND PRINCIPAL

HON. BOB RILEY

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 1999

Mr. RILEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Coach Ray Smoot on the occasion of his retirement from a teaching career that has spanned 41 years.

Ray Smoot has served children from kindergarten through high school. He has been a teacher, a coach and a principal. Today, he will retire as Principal of Talladega High School in Talladega, AL.

Ray Smoot had to work hard for his education, and he has always promoted the importance of education. He might have chosen another field, but he wanted to teach. Now he can take pride in knowing that he has made a difference in the lives of so many people, helping them to see the value of education and recognize their potential.

I salute Ray Smoot on his outstanding career.

IN HONOR OF VINCENZO MELENZIO

HON. PAUL RYAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 1999

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Vincenzo Melenzio for his assistance to the United States forces during World War II.

Mr. Melenzio, or "Enzo," was an Italian navy radioman who after the Germans had taken over the Italian Government, defected and volunteered for action against the Germans with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

Mr. Melenzio was employed by the OSS for four months in the winter of 1945 as a behind-the-lines radio operator. He served with the OSS 2677th Regiment along with approximately 750 Italian partisan led by 9–10 Americans.

On May 11, 1945, Mr. Melenzio received a certificate of appreciation for his services from Col. Russell D. Livermore, commander of all Special Operations Units in the Mediterranean area. Furthermore, the United States Army, in a memo to the Italian Navy, recommended Mr. Melenzio for the bronze medal.

It is appropriate that Mr. Melenzio be recognized for his bravery, and for his service to both the United States, and to the international community at large.

THE HOLOCAUST ASSETS COMMISSION EXTENSION ACT

HON. RICK LAZIO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 1999

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, as we approach the new millennium, it is right and proper that we look forward to the bright future before us. Yet mileposts like these, like old photographs, evoke reflection on the past, not just of our triumphs but also our tragedies. Today I want to draw our attention back to the past, back to one of the most tragic chapters in all of human history, to the Holocaust and its aftermath.

The horrors of the Holocaust are well known: six million Jews murdered, along with millions of others deemed "undesirable" by Adolf Hitler and his followers. It is often overlooked, however, that the Holocaust was not only one of the largest mass murders in history, but also the largest organized theft in history. The Nazis stole, plundered, and looted billions of dollars of assets. A half-century later we still lack a full accounting.

One year ago, Congress passed and the President signed legislation creating the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust As-

sets in the United States. The Commission has two goals. The first is to conduct original historical research into the question of what happened to the assets of Holocaust victims that came into the "possession or control" of the Federal Government. This research will also include a review of work done by others looking into the matter of assets that passed into non-Federal hands, commodities that included gold, non-gold financial assets, and art and cultural property. The second is to recommend to the President the appropriate future action necessary to bring closure to this issue.

As a member of the Commission, I feel compelled to address the question, "why now?" Why, as we look forward to the new millennium, are the resources of the United States and 17 other nations being devoted to learning the truth about the treatment of Holocaust victims half a century ago?

The answer is simple. Holocaust survivors are aging—and dying. If we are ever to do justice to them, and the memory of the six million Jews and millions of other victims who perished, we must act quickly. The intransigence of the Swiss and others has inflamed passions and energized advocates throughout the world. Justice delayed is justice denied. And with the end of the Cold War, we have the opportunity to look at the immediate post-World War II period with a fresh perspective.

Even if the world were so inclined, it is now impossible to pretend that justice was done. We know too much. We know that in Europe banks sat on dormant accounts for five decades; that insurance companies evaded their responsibilities to honor policies held by victims; that unscrupulous art dealers sold paintings that were extorted from Jews who feared for their lives; and that gold from Holocaust victims was resmelted, often becoming the basis for financial dealings between large corporate entities.

The Holocaust Commission Act assumes a sunset date of December 1999. Because of the delay in starting a new enterprise from scratch and because of the enormous volume of archival and other resources that need to be examined, it is clear that the commission must have more time and more funding to accomplish its mission.

Therefore, in acknowledgment of this need, I am introducing the Holocaust Commission Extension Act. This act will do two things: extend the sunset date of the Commission to December 2000 and authorize the Commission to receive additional funding. I am joined today by my colleagues on the Commission: Chairman BEN GILMAN, JIM MALONEY and BRAD SHERMAN, as well as JOHN LAFALCE of the House Banking Committee, and Banking Committee Chairman JIM LEACH, who has led the way on this issue. The effort to create the Commission has been bipartisan and will remain so. Honoring the memories of the victims and the pursuit of justice in their names cannot be sullied by politics as usual. I invite my colleagues on both ends of the aisle to co-sponsor and support this bill.

We are all familiar with George Santayana's famous quote—"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." With this quote comes the unspoken prerequisite: the truth must be established and acknowledged before it can be remembered. The United States, along with every other nation, must therefore remember the Holocaust as