

lost loved ones through suicide. The bill recognizes that there is a need to increase awareness about youth suicide and make it a national priority.

I would like to recognize the Light for Family Foundation of America and their founders, the Emme family, who tragically lost their teenage son, Michael, to suicide in 1994. It was through the vision of the Emme family that the Yellow Ribbon Program, which has helped save countless lives, has become an integral part of the fight against youth suicide.

Mr. Speaker, teenage suicide is extremely tragic. I hope and pray that this resolution can increase awareness and hopefully prevent the loss of more of our Nation's children.

MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL K. WYRICK GIVES 30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

### HON. LARRY COMBEST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 23, 1999*

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of our nation's finest military leaders. General Michael K. Wyrick proudly has given 30 years of uniformed service to our country, and now begins his retirement. Capping his stellar career by serving as Deputy Surgeon General of the United States Air Force, he is the only healthcare administrator in the Air Force to ever attain this position. It is both fitting and appropriate to take a moment to celebrate the accomplishments of this decorated officer.

General Wyrick, a young West Texas gentleman, entered the military in 1969 as a graduate of the Texas Christian University Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps. General Wyrick displayed his natural leadership abilities in successful early, military assignments at Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina and Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. General Wyrick then earned a Master's Degree in Health Service Administration from Baylor University. His vast knowledge of administrative strategy and leadership was complemented by additional, highly competitive academic endeavors. Graduation from Air War College and participation in select leadership development programs at Duke University and Cornell University are included among his most recent academic accomplishments. Baylor University has since recognized General Wyrick with the Distinguished Alumni Award from the Graduate Program in Health Care Administration. Many additional honors have also been bestowed upon the General for his administrative excellence, including the Outstanding Federal Services Administrator Award from the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States and the Healthcare Administration Award from the American Academy of Medical Administrators.

General Wyrick has held numerous key domestic and overseas assignments in the Air Force Medical Service. In addition to being named the Chief Administrator of four Air Force hospitals, he directed the medical programs and resources in the headquarters of the Office of the Surgeon General prior to being named the Deputy Surgeon General of the Air Force. As Chief of the Air Force Med-

ical Service Corps, General Wyrick's vital task was coordinating and executing the health care mission of the United States Air Force. The finesse with which he shoulders every responsibility has helped General Wyrick become such a highly decorated leader. Today, he proudly wears the Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the Meritorious Service Medal with four oak leaf clusters, and the prestigious Legion of Merit.

Major General Wyrick's wife, Carol, and children, Brian and Lauri, and his hometown of Amarillo, Texas look to General Wyrick as a source of great pride. He has brought honor to the distinguished uniform of the United States Air Force that he has proudly worn for the past 30 years. His unmatched leadership ability and strength of character set him apart as one of our nation's finest citizens and most valued military officers. It is my pleasure to recognize General Michael K. Wyrick's outstanding career of exemplary service.

SIKHS SHOULD NOT BE HARASSED FOR CARRYING A RELIGIOUS SYMBOL, THE KIRPAN

### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 23, 1999*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, America is a country where everyone enjoys religious freedom. There are about 500,000 Sikhs in this country and they have every right to practice their religion in this country. Sikhs have contributed to America in many walks of life, from agriculture to medicine to law, among others. Sikhs participated in World War I and World War II, and a Sikh even served as a Member of Congress in the 1960s. His name was Dalip Singh Sand and he was from California.

When a Sikh is baptized, he or she is required to have five symbols called the five Ks. They are unshorn hair (Kes), a comb (Kanga), a tracelet (Kara), a kind of shorts (Kachha), and a ceremonial sword (Kirpan). Sometimes law enforcement officers in this country consider a Kirpan a concealed weapon and arrest the Sikh carrying a Kirpan.

Earlier this week, Gurbachan Singh Bhatia, a 69-year-old Sikh, was arrested in the suburbs of Cleveland for carrying a concealed weapon. He is to appear at a pretrial hearing on October 4. I hope that the case against Mr. Bhatia will be dismissed.

A similar case happened in Cincinnati in 1996. The First Ohio District Court of Appeals overturned a municipal court conviction of a Sikh man for carrying a concealed weapon. Judge Mark Painter of that court wrote that "to be a Sikh is to wear a kirpan—it is that simple. It is a religious symbol and in no way a weapon."

Like Christianity, the Sikh religion is a monotheistic, divinely revealed and independent religion which believes in the equality of the whole human race, including gender equality. They pray, work hard to earn an honest living, and share their earnings with the needy.

I know many Sikhs in my district who are baptized and carry this symbol Kirpan. I would not like any of my constituents to be harassed for practicing their religion. We must educate our law-enforcement agencies regarding this religious symbol of the Sikhs.

Our Constitution grants religious freedom to all. We want Sikh Americans to practice their religion without any interference, even if we have to pass special legislation allowing the Sikhs to carry Kirpans.

I would like to put the Detroit News article on the Bhatia case into the RECORD.

[From the Detroit News, Sept. 23, 1999]

CAN A WEAPON BE A RELIGIOUS ICON?

MENTOR, OHIO—When he was baptized a Sikh in India, Gurbachan Singh Bhatia, now 69, vowed to always wear a kirpan, a 6-inch knife symbolizing his willingness to defend the faith.

But during investigation of a minor traffic mishap in this Cleveland suburb, Bhatia was arrested for carrying a concealed weapon. At the time, he was returning home from a religious ceremony blessing the new home of a Sikh family.

Police Chief Richard Amriott said his officers acted properly in enforcing the law banning concealed weapons. "How can you describe for me the difference between a ceremonial knife and any knife?" he asked.

Bhatia must appear for a pretrial hearing Oct. 4. If convicted, he could face up to six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine. But Ron Graham, city prosecutor, said he may be willing to drop the charges if the Sikh priest can demonstrate that he is required by his religion to carry the kirpan.

Although state law does not allow for exceptions, Graham said, "We don't want to prosecute anyone for exercising religious freedom."

In a similar case in Cincinnati in 1996, the 1st Ohio District Court of Appeals overturned a municipal court conviction of a Sikh man for carrying a concealed weapon.

"To be a Sikh is to wear a kirpan—it is that simple. It is a religious symbol and in no way a weapon," Judge Mark Painter wrote.

RECOGNITION OF JOANNA LUBKIN AND THE STUDENT HISTORIC PRESERVATION TEAM

### HON. CHARLES F. BASS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 23, 1999*

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to your attention an event in which I participated celebrating the 35th anniversary of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and to bring recognition to the remarkable young girl I met and the group to which she belongs.

On July 22, 1999, I joined civic and conservation leaders on a bicycle tour of Mine Falls Park in Nashua, New Hampshire, which has received four separate state-side grants totaling \$684,496. During the tour, we stopped at a gatehouse built in 1886. Fairgrounds Junior High School student Joanna Lubkin told us about her involvement with the Student Historic Preservation Team (SHPT) and their efforts to restore the building.

The team's restoration efforts began last May with the removal of graffiti from the building's exterior. Once the removal is complete, the students plan to landscape the area surrounding the building and create inside a museum. The museum would highlight the gates that regulated the flow of water into a canal that runs from Mine falls to Nashua's millyard, providing power to the textile mills that were a vital part of Nashua's development as a manufacturing center in the 19th century.