

RECORD: A letter from Bill Gray, President of the College Fund, and a letter from the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.

There being no objection, the letters were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE COLLEGE FUND,
Fairfax, VA, April 19, 2000.

Hon. JACK REED,
U.S. Senator, Senate Hart Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR REED: I write to let you know of the great importance I attach to the passage of legislation that would allow Liberian nationals already in the U.S. for almost ten years to become permanent residents. Your legislation, S. 656, the Liberian Immigration Fairness Act, would accomplish this important goal.

The United States has always shared a special relationship with Liberia, a country created in 1822 by private American philanthropic organizations for freed American slaves. In December 1989, civil war erupted in Liberia and continued to rage for seven years. USAID estimates that of Liberia's 2.1 million inhabitants, 150,000 were killed, 700,000 were internally displaced and 480,000 became refugees. To date, very little of the destroyed infrastructure has been rebuilt and sporadic violence continues.

When the civil war began in 1989, thousands of Liberians fled to the United States. In 1991, the Attorney General granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to these Liberians, providing temporary relief from deportation since ongoing armed conflict prevented their safe return home. For the next seven years, the Attorney General annually renewed this TPS status. Last summer, Attorney General Reno announced that this TPS designation would end on September 28, 1999. Throughout 1999, Liberians faced the prospect that they would be uprooted and forced to return to a country still ravaged by violence and repression. However, on September 27, 1999, President Clinton granted non-citizen Liberians living in the United States a reprieve, allowing them to remain in the country and work for one additional year.

The Department of Justice estimates that approximately 10,000 Liberians are living in the United States under protection of our immigration laws. There are significant Liberian populations in Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Georgia, Minnesota, Rhode Island, and North Carolina. For the past decade, while ineligible for government benefits, Liberians have been authorized to work and are required to pay taxes. They married, bought homes, and placed their children, many of whom were born in this country, in school. Despite their positive contributions to our communities, their immigration status does not offer Liberians the opportunity to share fully in our society by becoming citizens.

When they first arrived, these nationals of Liberia hoped that their stay in this country would indeed be temporary. But ten years have passed and they have moved on with their lives. Liberians have lived in this immigration limbo longer than any other group in the United States. More importantly, other immigrant groups who were given temporary haven in the United States for much shorter periods have been allowed to adjust to permanent residency: Afghans, Ethiopians, Poles and Ugandans after five years and 53,000 Chinese after just three years. It is time to end the uncertainty that Liberians have lived with for so long. It is time to allow them the opportunity to adjust to permanent residency as our nation has allowed others before them.

Following our Nation's tradition of fairness and decency, I am pleased to add my personal support to S. 656 in order to offer Liberians the protection they deserve.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM H. GRAY III.

LUTHERAN IMMIGRATION AND
REFUGEE SERVICE,
Washington, DC, March 7, 2000.

Hon. JACK REED,
U.S. Senator, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR REED: On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we urge your support of the Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act of 1999 (S. 656). This Act would provide relief and protection for some 15,000 Liberian civil war refugees and their families now residing in the United States.

Since March of 1991, over 10,000 Liberian civil war refugees have resided in the United States. Recently, they were granted an extension of their temporary exclusion from deportation when President Clinton ordered the Attorney General to defer their enforced departure. Granted for one year, the order is set to expire in September of this year. Against this general background, legislation has been introduced by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) to adjust the status of certain Liberian nationals to that of lawful permanent residence. We strongly support Senator Reed's proposed legislation, S. 656. We view this bill as being vital to the basic protection of and fairness towards Liberian civil war refugees.

JUSTIFICATIONS

The Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act of 1999 would protect Liberian refugees and their families from being forcibly returned to a nation where their life and freedom may still be threatened. Even the Human Rights reports from the U.S. Department of State and Amnesty International have called attention to the continuing pattern of abuses against citizens by the Liberian government. Additionally, the legislation would protect against the dissolution of families as Liberian parents are forced to choose between leaving their American born children in the U.S. or taking them back to Liberia if they are deported. Further, after nearly a decade of living in the U.S., Liberians have established real ties in their local communities and as such, forced deportation would simply be wrong. Finally, it is imperative that Liberian civil war refugees be accorded the same favorable treatment as other refugee groups seeking relief in the United States.

We remain appreciative to Congress for its continued attention paid to the general issue of immigration relief for those in need, and we trust the same will be devoted to the Liberians. We appreciate your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

RALSTON H. DEFFENBAUGH,
President.

On behalf of:

Nancy Schestack, Director, Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services Program.

Douglas A. Johnson, Executive Director, Center for Victims of Torture.

Richard Parkins, Director, Episcopal Migration Ministries.

Tsehaye Teferra, Director, Ethiopian Community Development Council.

Eric Cohen, Staff Attorney, Immigrant Legal Resource Center.

Curtis Ramsey-Lucas, Director of Legislative Advocacy, National Ministries, American Baptist Churches USA.

Jeanne Butterfield, Director, American Immigration Lawyers.

William Sage, Interim Director, Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Program.

John T. Clawson, Director, Office of Public Policy and Advocacy, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota.

Muriel Heiberger, Executive Director, Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition.

Oscar Chacon, Director, Northern California Coalition for Immigrant Rights.

Skip Roberts, Legislative Director, Service Employees International Union.

David Saperstein, Director of the Religious Action Center of Reformed Judaism, Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Ruth Compton, Immigrant and Latin America Consultant, United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society.

Katherine Fennelly, Professor, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota.

Asylum and Refugee Rights Law Project of the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs.

Don Hammond, Senior Vice President, World Relief.

Morton Sklar, Director, World Organization Against Torture, USA.

Mr. REED. These two letters are strong statements on behalf of the legislation, the Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act, which I have spoken about and which I ardently desire to see acted upon in this session in the next few weeks.

Bill Gray, as many know, is a former distinguished Congressman from Philadelphia, PA. He is now President of the College Fund, which was formerly known as the United Negro College Fund.

He points out in his letter the long association between the United States and Liberia and urges that we act quickly and decisively to pass this legislation.

The letter from the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service also makes that same plea for prompt and sympathetic action on this legislation. It is signed also on behalf of numerous organizations: the Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services Program; the Episcopal Migration Ministries; the National Ministries of American Baptist Churches USA; the Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota; the Union of American Hebrew Congregations; the United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society; and it goes on and on.

Again, this is the heartfelt plea by the church community and the religious community in general of this country for a favorable and immediate response to the plight of these Liberians who are here with us.

VISIT TO THE SENATE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

RECESS

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess for 6 minutes while Senators and others have an opportunity to meet a distinguished guest, the President of the Philippines, the Honorable Joseph Estrada.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 3:57 p.m., recessed until 4:03 p.m.;

whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SESSIONS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island has the floor.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I extend my welcome to President Estrada of the Philippines. The Philippines and the United States are allies. We have a special relationship with them, as we have a special relationship with the country I have been speaking about; that is, the country of Liberia.

TREASURY AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2001—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. REED. Mr. President, let me conclude my overall remarks by saying, as I began, that we are in the doldrums. We are here but we are not moving. I do not think it is sufficient to simply, on a day-by-day basis, make a little concession here and a little concession there.

I think to get this Senate under full sail again, moving forward, proudly, purposefully, is to once again summon up the spirit which I always thought was inherent in this body, the spirit of vigorous and free and open debate, of vigorous and wide-ranging amendment, unfettered by the individual proclivities of the leader, whoever the leader may be, and then, ultimately, doing our job, which is to vote.

This afternoon, I have tried to suggest several areas where we have neglected that obligation. With respect to Federal judges, it seems to me that there has been an attitude adopted here that our advice and consent is sort of an optional thing. If we do not choose to do it, then no judges will be confirmed. In a way, it is very subversive to the Constitution.

Frankly, I don't think anyone would object if judges were brought to this floor and voted down. That is a political judgment, a policy judgment, a judgment based upon their jurisprudence, their character, a host of issues. But what is so objectionable is this notion of stymying the Constitution by simple nonaction, by pushing it off into the shadows, allowing individual nominees to languish, hoping that no one pays attention to it, and that at the end of the day these judges will go away and more favorable judges will be appointed. I do not think that is the way to operate this Senate.

We have legislation, such as the ESEA, which has been permanently—or apparently permanently—shelved, not because there is something inherently wrong with the bill as it has been presented—we can debate the merits of that—but because to bring it back to the floor would invite amendments that might be uncomfortable. I think that is also wrong.

Then I think we have a measure which everyone claims is critical to our economy, critical to our future national security, critical to our relation-

ships with Asia and China, particularly, over the next several decades. That, too, has been shunted aside, not because of substance, but because of political calculation. Once again, I think that is wrong.

In return, what has been suggested, is: Why don't you take a little of this and a little of that, and we will give you an amendment here, and we just might bring up two judges, but we don't know who they are. That, in comparison, is not an appropriate response to the basic question of: Will the Senate be the Senate?

I would hope that we would return to that spirit, that spirit which I think drew us all here initially, with the hope and the expectation that we would debate and we would vote—we would win some; we would lose some—but ultimately, by debating and by voting, and by shouldering our responsibilities—not avoiding them—the American people would ultimately be the great victors in this Democratic process.

I hope we return to that spirit.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I appreciate the comments from the Senator from Rhode Island. I will have some responses to them in a moment.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2912

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due for its second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2912) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to remove certain limitations on the eligibility of aliens residing in the United States to obtain lawful permanent residency status.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I object to further proceedings on this bill at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

The Senator from Utah has the floor.

PROVIDING FOR NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE CREATION OF A TRUST FUND TO COMBAT THE AIDS EPIDEMIC

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3519, and the Senate then proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3519) to provide for negotiations for the creation of a trust fund to be administered by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development of the International Development Association to combat the AIDS epidemic.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 4018

(Purpose: To authorize additional assistance to countries with large populations having HIV/AIDS, to provide for the establishment of the World Bank AIDS Trust Fund, to authorize assistance for tuberculosis prevention, treatment, control, and elimination, and for other purposes)

Mr. BENNETT. Senator HELMS, for himself and others, has a substitute amendment at the desk, and I ask for its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Utah [Mr. BENNETT] for Mr. HELMS, for himself, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. FRIST, Mr. KERRY, Mr. SMITH of Oregon, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. FEINGOLD proposes an amendment numbered 4018.

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 4018) was agreed to.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, passage of the Global AIDS and Tuberculosis Relief Act is a priority for this Administration, but that is not why I support it. I am aware of the calamity inflicted by HIV/AIDS on many Third World countries, particularly in Africa.

Children are the hardest hit and they, Mr. President, are the innocent victims of this sexually transmitted disease. In fact, the official estimate of 28 million children orphaned in Africa alone could easily prove to be a low estimate. This is among the reasons why Senator BILL FRIST wrote the pending amendment, which is based on S. 2845, with solid advice from and by Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan's Purse and son of Billy and Ruth. That is why I support it.

Several items in the pending bill should be carefully noted. First, authorization for appropriations for the World Bank Trust Fund is scaled back from the House proposal of five years to two years. There is no obligation for the U.S. Government to support the trust fund beyond two years.

If the trust fund performs as expected, Congress may decide at that time to make additional funds available. However, if the Trust Fund is not transparent, if there is not strict accountability—and if money is squandered on second rate or politicized projects—I intend to do everything in my power to ensure that Congress does not provide another farthing.

The pending bill requires that twenty percent of U.S. bilateral funding for HIV/AIDS programs be spent to support orphans in Africa. That could be as much as \$60 million. This is one of the provisions on which I insisted, and I wish it could have been an even higher percentage.