

fought in Desert Storm and the families who supported and prayed for them back at home. Families much like the Hart's from my district, who went without a father for almost two years. Steve Hart was not designated to fight in the Gulf Crisis, but rather volunteered to go overseas to protect American values and beliefs. Upon his return, he was welcomed back with a hero's reception as were all of our deserving soldiers. Perhaps the greatest reward was given to him recently, when his son wrote a tribute to him and his colleagues. I would like to submit that tribute, written by Steve's son David. I think it speaks for itself.

THE PRIDE OF AN ARMY SON

As a young adult blessed with the opportunity to have been born and raised in the United States of America, I feel it is essential for every American citizen to reflect on the fact that the many freedoms, which we enjoy, were bought with a price.

The Declaration of independence issued by our forefathers reflected centuries of struggle for freedom from England. From the battlefields at Lexington, Concord, and Yorktown, came our Constitution of the United States and a form of government that provides Americans freedom, opportunity, and justice under the law.

However, neither the victory at Yorktown nor the Constitution would have come about without the perseverance, dedication, and ingenuity of the American soldier.

Millions of Americans have put on this nation's uniform in war and in peace since those brave early Americans who fought for our freedom in the Revolutionary War. While our independence was won more than 220 years ago, it has been secured by those who have stood sentry over those ideals since.

It gives me great pride to acknowledge the fact that my Father is one of the many members of the United States Army who protect the way of life that sets our nation apart from the rest. One incident in particular epitomizes the privilege I celebrate to have been born into the military community.

My mind is drawn to 1990 and 1991 when my family (my Mother, brother and I) was separated for seven months due to my Father's deployment to the Persian Gulf for Operations Desert Shield and Storm. I recall not having my Father around to take me Trick-or-Treating during Halloween. I remember how solemn the normally joyous Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays were in 1990 because our family unit was disrupted. And my thoughts are brought back to how cavalier my friends were about the pending war with Iraq, with seemingly little regard for the death and destruction that accompanies war.

I am proud of my Dad, for he volunteered to go to the Persian Gulf. His section was not scheduled to deploy. Dad's job was supposed to stay at Fort Steward, Georgia and support the soldiers from behind the front lines. I remember him telling me that he "had to go." He likened the call to duty like being on the sports team and not getting playing time. He said he could not live with himself knowing that his friends and comrades were going to fight a war without him. Dad said, "there's plenty of time to accomplish things in civilian life; right now, my country needs me."

I remember how much I worried about my Dad being wounded or killed on the battlefield. I would always take refuge in the text of his many letters and his words during the few phone calls he was able to make. He told "me" to be brave, that everything would be all right and he would be home soon.

As the deployment wore on, my friends, as did much of America, experienced a renewed

sense of patriotism. During the height of the Gulf War, many in my neighborhood would show their support for the soldiers of Fort Steward and Hunter Army Airfield, and the entire country, by displaying flags. I saw flags on people's homes, on kids' lunch boxes, on neckties, and on marquees.

When our soldiers came home, there were marching bands, colorful parades and an admiring public. The people of Coastal Georgia and the nation lavished heartfelt thanks upon its returning soldiers, both for their victory and their sacrifice.

Although most of the men and women from Fort Steward did return safe-and-sound, many returned severely wounded or with emotional scars. Some did not return at all.

As our nation and its democratic ideals and institutions have evolved since colonial times, so, too, has our flag's message of freedom, equality, justice, and hope evolved to embrace all who choose the American way of life.

Our members of the Armed Forces know the loneliness of separation from family and friends, and the fear of dying in a foreign land, alone, far from home, away from their families. In serving America, they sweat, they bled, and they agonized. They have served for their devotion to duty and their love of this country and its ideals.

This is the sacrifice paid by the military and their families to maintain the way of life enjoyed by every United States citizen. The next time you take for granted your freedom of speech, your civil rights, your academic freedom, religious freedom, and the freedom of the press, remember, those freedoms were bought with a price.

DRAFT LAW ON RELIGION THREATENS FREEDOMS IN KAZAKHSTAN

HON. JOSEPH R. PITTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2001

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice concern about attempts underway in Kazakhstan to limit freedom of religion. Currently, several drafts of amendments to that country's 1992 law on religion are under consideration. In the view of the Keston News Service, one of the world's most respected organizations on religious liberty, the passage and implementation of these amendments would move Kazakhstan into the ranks of former Soviet republics with the "harshes climate for religious freedom."

Draft amendments to the religion law have surfaced in October 2000, as well as in January and February of this year. Oddly, they lack any indication of origin, which allows government officials to decline to comment on them. It seems clear, however, that the drafts in January and February did not include some of the most onerous and egregious earlier provisions, perhaps in response to criticism. Nevertheless, what remains is more than enough to evoke serious concern.

For example, Amendment 5 of the January and February drafts prohibits "the activity of religious sects in the Republic of Kazakhstan." Amendment 16 bans "the preparation, preservation and distribution of literature, cine-photo and video-products and other materials containing ideas of religious extremism and reactionary fundamentalism." Amendment 11 of the February version introduces the provision that the charter of all religious organizations "is subject to registration."

Furthermore, Amendment 6 of the February draft would permit citizens of Kazakhstan, "foreign citizens and persons without citizenship" to conduct missionary activity in Kazakhstan "only with the permission of the competent state organ." The drafts also introduce harsh penalties for conducting missionary activity without permission. January's version stipulates fines ranging between two and five month's wages, or up to one year corrective labor, or up to two months in jail. The February draft strengthens these draconian provisions: those convicted could be sentenced to two years of corrective labor, up to six months arrest, or deprivation of freedom for up to one year.

Amendment 10 of the February draft would give the state enormous power over religious practice by the people of Kazakhstan—the activity of foreign religious organizations on the territory of Kazakhstan, "as well as the appointment of leaders of religious organizations in the Republic by foreign religious centers must take place with the agreement of the corresponding state organs." Moreover, Amendment 11 requires Islamic religious groups to "present a document confirming their affiliation with the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of Kazakhstan."

To quote Keston News Service, "Any requirement that registration be made compulsory would violate Kazakhstan's international human rights commitments, as would a ban on missionary activity and a requirement for state involvement in the selection of leaders for any religious group."

Because these drafts have been "unofficial," even local representatives of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Almaty have been unable to obtain any official texts. Nevertheless, on March 6, the head of OSCE center, Herbert Salber, communicated his concerns to the chairman of Kazakhstan's Senate (the upper chamber) of parliament. Mr. Salber described the drafts as having "masses of shortcomings" and running "counter to international legal norms."

Mr. Speaker, if these draft amendments to the religion law are passed, the effect could be to make only Islam and Russian Orthodoxy the permitted religions in Kazakhstan. Other faiths and religious organizations would be severely restricted if not actually outlawed.

It appears that attempts are being made to pass this legislation on March 16, 2001 without even a public reading. Mr. Speaker, I hope the Bush administration will join me in conveying to the leaders of Kazakhstan that we are deeply concerned by this initiative to turn the clock back and to limit the rights of religious believers in Kazakhstan.

TRIBUTE TO MR. DONALD G. CARLSON

HON. JOHN CULBERSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2001

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, our greatest asset as individuals is our good name, and few people in the United States Congress have earned as good a name as Donald G. Carlson. Today marks a very important occasion in the history of this great institution because this is the final day of Don Carlson's