

In addition to being an accomplished professional, Meryl Feren always took time to assist in her husband's political campaigns and public service as well. Her husband knew he could always rely on her for advice, enthusiasm on the campaign trail, and an undying commitment to his goals in public service. Besides campaigning for Mayor Feren, Meryl was a board member of the West Broward Democratic Club, where she volunteered in numerous community initiatives.

Mrs. Feren's charity work included helping out with Kids Crusaders, an organization for abused children. Also, Feren always found time to help an organization known as City of Hope, a fundraising group that sought money to fund a California research hospital that studies illnesses such as cancer. Clearly, Mrs. Feren placed a priority on volunteering her time for worthy causes, and she set out to assist others in need.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honor to stand here today and remember the life of an exemplary citizen of South Florida, one who remained devoted to her fellow neighbors and family, and always sought a better quality of life for her community. Her legacy as a wife, mother, and activist for a number of causes will surely last a lifetime. Mrs. Feren is survived by her husband Steve Feren; son Adam Feren; her mother, Anne Mallin of Sunrise; and a sister, Lori Mallin of Sunrise.

HONORING DR. JAMES L.
WILLIAMSON

HON. CHET EDWARDS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the distinguished career of Dr. James L. Williamson. At Baylor University in my hometown, he is not just a teacher, but he is also a mentor and an exemplar of professionalism upon the educational landscape. His service in the development of educational leadership, founded in the principle of integrity and manifested in research and the identification of best practice, continues to positively impact children. His passion for education has directly resulted in a growing association of principals, superintendents, and other school leaders who mirror his model of servant leadership. As a beacon of guidance and hope, Dr. Williamson has dedicated his life to creating a covenant between intellectual scholarship and the call to serve in building foundations for learning, leadership, and life. That is why I rise today to honor the dedication and service Dr. Williamson has given to both Baylor University and to the education profession.

CONTINUOUS RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
CONCERNS IN ARMENIA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise in my capacity as Chairman of the Helsinki Commission to voice concern over Arme-

nia's refusal to register select religious groups and the continuing harassment of certain religious communities, actions which violate Armenia's commitments to religious freedom as a participating State in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Honoring the commitments enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and subsequent OSCE documents would ensure Armenia upholds the freedom of the individual to profess and practice religion or belief, alone or in community with others.

With respect to registration, Armenian law requires all religious communities and organizations, other than the Armenian Apostolic Church, to register with the government. Obtaining registration is critical if a religious community wants to carry out basic functions, like renting property, publishing newspapers or magazines, broadcasting programs on television or radio, or officially sponsoring the visas of co-religionists or visitors.

To acquire registration, a petitioning religious organization must obtain an "expert opinion" from the government, in which four questions from Article 14 of the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations Act must be affirmatively answered: (1) Is the religion based on a historically canonized holy book? (2) Does its faith belong to a system of modern worldwide religious church communities? (3) Is it of a purely spiritual orientation, not created for the pursuit of material goals? (4) Does it have at least 200 believing members, not including minors? A negative finding by the government on any of the four questions will terminate the registration application.

This type of approval system is extremely problematic, as it places the government in the role of determining what is or is not a religion, allowing it to make highly subjective decisions. For example, the government refuses to recognize the Jehovah's Witnesses as an official religion, despite having more than 6,000 Armenian members. Other small groups, including approximately 50 Baptist communities, are unable to pass the numerical threshold, so are not qualified to apply for registration. As a result these groups are indiscriminately denied basic rights enjoyed by those which have the government's stamp of approval.

Last September, Prime Minister Andranik Markarian reportedly stated that the Armenian Government must curb the activities of minority religious communities, even if these actions violate Council of Europe obligations. Mr. Speaker, considering this type of bias, I urge the Government of Armenia to revamp the registration process to prevent arbitrary or politicized decisions. Abolishing the registration requirement and ensuring any system facilitates, rather than hampers, the free exercise of religious freedom for individuals and communities, by methodically granting legal status to groups which seek registration would help bring Armenian policy into conformity with OSCE commitments.

Even more alarming is the Armenian Government's continued imprisonment of conscientious objectors, particularly from the Jehovah's Witnesses faith. According to the State Department's 2002 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom for Armenia, military and civilian security officials subject Jehovah's Witnesses who refuse to serve in the military to harsh treatment, because their refusal is seen as a threat to Armenia's sur-

vival. One particular example is the case of Araik Bedjanyan, sentenced on July 2nd to 1½ years in a labor camp for refusing military service. Mr. Bedjanyan was sentenced under Article 75 of the criminal code, for "evasion of active military service." There are currently 24 Jehovah's Witnesses serving sentences for being conscientious objectors on religious grounds. Suren Hakopyan and Artur Torosyan, whom police arrested in Yerevan on July 3, are currently awaiting trial along with six others for their refusal to serve in the military. Seven more Jehovah's Witnesses are reportedly under house arrest for the same "crime." Despite Article 75 being replaced by Article 327 in the new criminal code, the amendment only reduces the potential sentence from three years to two.

One of the conditions for Armenia's admission to the Council of Europe in January 2001 involved the adoption of a law on alternative military service conforming to European standards within three years. However, while drafts continue to circulate, no laws have been passed that provide for alternative civilian service outside the framework of the army. In the meantime, conscientious objectors continue to receive harsh sentences. Should the Armenian Parliament pass such a law, the service length should not be punitive in nature, but rather be comparable to military service requirements.

As Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I urge the Armenian Government to abide by its OSCE commitments regarding religious freedom. Armenia should overhaul its registration scheme, dropping the registration requirement, and liberalize its system for bestowing legal personality to religious communities and organizations. Furthermore, all Jehovah's Witnesses currently imprisoned for "evasion of military service" should be unconditionally freed, and a law in line with Council of Europe standards for alternative military service should be passed as soon as possible.

RETIREMENT OF EVE BUTLER-
GEE, CHIEF JOURNAL CLERK

HON. JIM RYUN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to stand before you today to honor Mrs. Eve Butler-Gee, a Virginian by birth but a Kansan by marriage, on her 20 years of service in the House of Representatives. Eve's husband, Tom, was raised in Leavenworth, Kansas, and his mother, Gertrude, still lives there as a constituent of mine. In addition to seeing Eve on the House floor, we have run into each other at social events as we are both members of the Kansas Society.

In 1987, Eve was appointed as the Minority Enrolling Clerk of the House by Minority Leader Bob Michel. In 1995, she became the first woman appointed as Chief Journal Clerk of the House, and in this position she has faithfully served for the past 8 years.

Eve's many years of service were performed with character worthy of praise and emulation. Her attentiveness and thoroughness were proved by successfully fulfilling her duties as Journal Clerk, duties which require great attention to details. Her initiative, enthusiasm, and resourcefulness were proved by

her promotion to Chief Journal Clerk. And her dependability, endurance, faithfulness, and loyalty were proved by her 20 years of selfless public service to the House of Representatives.

Not only does Eve serve others at her job, but she also actively serves others in her private life as well. She is Head Verger of the Church of the Holy Comforter in Vienna, Virginia, and she has recently been invited to serve as Volunteer Verger at the National Cathedral. Also, Eve plans on returning to her activities in the community theater, which she has been unable to participate in due to the demanding schedule of the House.

An ancient Hebrew Proverb teaches that, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." To earn the "good name" spoken of in this Proverb, one must be committed to utmost integrity. Eve's unwavering commitment to integrity has rewarded her with a "good name." Moreover, Eve's shining inner character allows her to leave the House with truly significant "riches" worth far more than money or wealth—a legacy of 20 years of honorable service and an unscathed reputation of utmost integrity.

IN TRIBUTE TO EVE BUTLER-GEE,
HOUSE JOURNAL CLERK, ON THE
OCCASION OF HER FORTHCOMING
RETIREMENT

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, the hard-working, dedicated employees who sit here on the dias behind the Well of the House are the heart and soul of this institution. Their sacrifice and service are the glue that enables the House to proceed with its business and that helps all of us to serve our constituents and the American people.

On a daily basis, the employees who sit on the dais are an invaluable resource to all of us who are privileged to serve in the House of Representatives. They serve all of us, without regard to party. Every day that the house is in session, and certainly when we have weeks as lengthy and as challenging as this one, we all surely have to admire the selfless devotion to service that keeps the House staff at their posts working to serve all of us.

Whether it is two or three o'clock in the morning during a heavy legislative week, or simply recording the proceedings on a routine Suspensions Monday, no matter what the challenges may be, our reading and journal clerks are always here to assist us and serve this institution.

It is all too rare that we say thank you for their hard work, their patience, their good humor, and their devotion to this body. Today, however, is a very special occasion and I want to take this time to thank and salute one of the giants of the staff of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank and pay tribute to the House's Chief Journal Clerk, Eve Butler-Gee, who will be retiring when we adjourn at the end of this legislative week for our Summer recess. According to the Congressional Research Service, Eve is the first woman Journal Clerk in the history of the House of Representatives.

Ms. Butler-Gee and her three Assistant Journal Clerks are always on duty at the rostrum to ensure that the House meets its constitutional responsibility to maintain an official record of the parliamentary proceedings of the House. Eve has done a great deal to modernize Journal procedures and enhance the professionalism of the Journal clerks.

Eve began her professional career in the House while in her early twenties. She left the House in the middle of her working years to work for a charitable foundation, and then returned to the House in 1987 when then Minority Leader Bob Michel appointed her as the Minority Enrolling Clerk of the House.

In her tenure as the Journal Clerk, like all those who have preceded her and all those Clerks who will follow her, Eve has been a witness to history, to events of great joy, those of great sadness, events that often truly have changed the shape of our world. What remarkable stories she will take with her as she concludes her service!

I could use my time to review more of Eve's professional accomplishments, but those of us who are privileged to know her, and to experience her wisdom, her humor, her warmth and friendliness, know that Eve is so much more than her resume.

Eve has been a good friend to all of us and a person whose service has brought great credit upon this institution. I understand that Eve intends to spend her retirement traveling, enjoying her family, pursuing her interests in writing and community theater, and continuing active service with the Episcopal Church.

I value Eve's ability and her diligent service greatly. What I value even more is the friendship and warmth that she brought to all of her contacts with me, and, I know, with so many other Members.

So I conclude simply by saying: Thank you, Eve for your pioneering service, for your professionalism, and for your friendship. I wish you well and know that the future will continue to hold great things for you. Congratulations and Godspeed in your retirement.

ON THE FCC'S RULING CONCERNING
UNBUNDLED NETWORK
ELEMENTS

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, when Congress enacted the Telecommunications Act of 1996, it created three ways to spur telecommunications competition—the interconnection of competing networks, use of parts of competitors' networks, called unbundled network elements (UNEs), and the resale of the incumbents' retail services. Congress intended that UNEs and resale, or wholesale, prices be set to equal the retail cost, minus the avoided costs of not having to sell to the public, such as advertising.

However, when the Federal Communications Commission wrote the rules, it set rates for UNEs at a bizarre below-cost rate called TELRIC. Furthermore, the FCC allowed competitors to put all the UNEs together into a platform, called UNE-P. For all intents and purposes, UNE-P and resale are the same product. While the Congressionally mandated

rate for this service amounts to about a 20% discount, the FCC-created UNE-P price can have a discount of up to 55%.

In February, the FCC reviewed its UNE rules and decided to keep the current UNE-P regime for the mass market. This was an unfortunate decision. Business plans built on regulatory arbitrage rarely last, they witness reciprocal compensation and are certainly not going to create new investment and new innovation. If the FCC wanted a truly competitive telecommunications market, based on sound economic principles, with strong companies and resulting jobs, it should have eliminated the UNE-P regime for the mass market in February.

IN HONOR OF JACK WITTEN

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Jack Witten, a man with a distinguished record of military and private sector service. Mr. Witten's career has spanned decades and encompassed a number of notable accomplishments in the field of aeronautical engineering. Mr. Witten has also had an accomplished personal life that I am sure his seven Eagle Scout grandchildren can attest to.

It was Charles Lindbergh's 1927 flight over the Atlantic Ocean that initially sparked Mr. Witten's interest in aviation. After that historic flight, Mr. Witten began spending much of his time observing local airport hangars and taking in Army air shows and national air races in his boyhood home of Illinois. He spent many a Saturday afternoon hitchhiking to the hangars and air shows with his cousin Tom.

In 1938, Mr. Witten quit his steeple-jacking job and joined the Navy Reserve. He was put on active duty at the Wright Reynolds Airport in Glenview, Illinois almost immediately. There, he and his fellow reservists maintained a fleet of 26 aircraft and trained a reserve squadron of 400 men. During the course of his service in the Navy Reserve, Mr. Witten instructed, developed, and reorganized training programs in aircraft maintenance and engineering for both pilots and ex-GI's.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Witten has also spent much of his career serving our area through his work for the Navy Bureau of Aeronautics at the Pax River Naval Air Station. Mr. Witten first came to Pax River in 1943, just six days after the air station was commissioned. He was able to realize his dream of both working and living on the Atlantic Coast when he and his family later moved to St. Mary's County. During his time at Pax River, Mr. Witten helped to establish aeronautical maintenance engineering as both a term and function.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Witten has had a number of other notable accomplishments throughout his distinguished career. He created the Aircraft Maintenance Officer category of military service, established the annual meeting of the Depot Aeronautical Engineering Superintendents, revised contract requirements for military hardware design changes, and conducted materials review of new aircraft designs. Mr. Witten also instituted the use of improved aircraft testing techniques and devices, such as the spectrographic analysis of engine oil to detect failing engines, now in worldwide use by