

HONORING ARABELLA MARTINEZ

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2005

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and work of Arabella Martinez, a legendary figure in Oakland and throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. For almost four decades, Arabella has been a tireless advocate for community and economic development within Oakland and beyond, and the scope of her exemplary work on behalf of her community is truly unparalleled. I take pride in adding my voice to those of my constituents in honoring Arabella today on the occasion of her retirement.

A student of social welfare, Arabella received both her BA and MA from the University of California at Berkeley. After receiving her degrees she became involved with the Community Service Organization, a Latino civil rights group.

In 1967, Arabella became the first executive director to the Spanish Speaking Unity Council. She is best known for her position as CEO of this council and for developing programs to build responsibility and economic preparedness in the Latino community. During this time, she helped build this organization into a strong economic development and community organization with considerable assets.

In 1974, Arabella took an absence from her work at the Unity Council and joined the Carter administration as assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. After her term in 1980, she returned to Oakland and worked for almost a decade as the President of the Center for Policy Development.

In 1992, Arabella returned to the Spanish Speaking Unity Council and helped the organization through complex financial problems. During her second term she spearheaded the Fruitvale BART project and sponsored the Fruitvale Community Collaborative. Both of these projects were formed to bring together residents, community groups, churches, schools, merchants, and agencies to improve the quality of life for children and families in the Oakland area.

Arabella is also involved with many organizations such as the National Council of La Raza, the Drug Abuse Council, The Women's Initiative for Self-Employment, the Oakland Business Development Corporation, the Bank of America's Police Advisory Committee, the Oakland Housing Authority, the Oakland Parks and Recreation Commission and the University/Oakland Metropolitan Forum. She has received numerous awards for her work, such as the Hank Rosso Outstanding Fundraising Professional Award, the 1993 MTC Award, the David C. Lizarraga Community Development Award, and the Oakland Citizen of the Year Award.

It is clearly evident through Arabella's activism that she is an extraordinary leader, friend and advocate for her community. Her exemplary humanism is an inspiration to us all, and it with great pride that I join the Oakland community in celebrating her accomplishments. On behalf of the 9th Congressional District, I salute and thank Arabella Martinez for the truly invaluable contributions and she has made to our community, and for the example she leaves for future generations to follow.

REINTRODUCTION OF LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT HATE CRIMES PREVENTION ACT

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2005

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the bipartisan Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2005, along with Representatives FRANK, ROSS-LEHTINEN and SHAYS. In past Congresses, this legislation has been cosponsored by almost 200 members and we expect similar support this session.

Bias crimes are disturbingly prevalent and pose a significant threat to the full participation of all Americans in our democratic society. For the year 2003, the most recently available data, the FBI compiled reports from law enforcement agencies across the country identifying 7,489 criminal incidents that were motivated by an offender's irrational antagonism toward some personal attribute associated with the victim. Law enforcement agencies have identified 9,100 victims arising from 8,715 separate criminal offenses. Racially motivated bias again accounted for more than half (51.4 percent) of all incidents. Religious bias accounted for 1,343 incidents (17.9 percent) and sexual orientation bias each accounted for 1,239 (16.6 percent) of all reported hate crimes, followed by ethnicity/national origin bias with 13.7 percent and disability bias with 0.4 percent of all incidents. While every state reported at least a small number of incidents, it is important to note that reporting by law enforcement is voluntary and it is widely believed that hate crimes are seriously under-reported.

Despite the pervasiveness of the problem, current law limits federal jurisdiction over hate crimes to incidents against protected classes that occur only during the exercise of federally protected activities, such as voting. Further, the statutes do not permit federal involvement in a range of cases where crimes are motivated by bias against the victim's perceived sexual orientation, gender, disability or gender identity. This loophole is particularly significant given the fact that four States have no hate crime laws on the books, and another 21 States have extremely weak hate crimes laws.

This legislation will make it easier for federal authorities to prosecute bias crimes, in the same way that the Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996 helped federal prosecutors combat church arson: by loosening the unduly rigid jurisdictional requirements under federal law. While ostensibly identical to past versions, this Congress the bill is more explicitly inclusive of the transgender community. In addition, we have included a provision mirroring the Washington State hate crimes statute that is designed to protect the 1st Amendment rights of the accused, without burdening the prosecution of those alleged offenses.

State and local authorities currently prosecute the overwhelming majority of hate crimes and will continue to do so under this legislation, with the enhanced support of the federal government. Through an Intergovernmental Assistance Program created by this legislation, the Justice Department will provide technical, forensic or prosecutorial assistance to State and local law enforcement officials in

cases of bias crime. The legislation also authorizes the Attorney General to make grants to State and local law enforcement agencies that have incurred extraordinary expenses associated with the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes. Finally, under our bill, the Attorney General or other high ranking Justice Department officials must approve all prosecutions undertaken pursuant to this law, ensuring federal restraint, and further ensuring that the States will continue to take the lead.

Behind each of the crimes statistics cited above lies an individual or community targeted for violence for no other reason than race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, disability or gender identity. People like Waqar Hasan of Dallas, who lost his life in a post-911 backlash hate crime. His murderer admitted that he wanted to send a message to the local Arab population and beyond. These discrete communities have learned the hard way that a failure to address the problem of bias crime can cause a seemingly isolated incident to fester into wide spread tension that can damage the social fabric of the wider community.

The Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2005 is a constructive and measured response to a problem that continues to plague our Nation. These are crimes that shock and shame our national conscience and they should be subject to comprehensive federal law enforcement assistance and prosecution.

IN RECOGNITION OF NORMA AND BERNIE KOSTER

HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2005

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pleasure to honor Norma and Bernie Koster, who will be jointly honored with the Torch of Liberty Award by the New Jersey Region of the Anti-Defamation League at the League's Bergen County Awards Reception on June 1, 2005. They are being recognized for their distinguished service on behalf of the ADL's vital mission of combating bigotry and anti-Semitism, their support for humanitarian values, dedication to nurturing their community, and working to secure its future.

Norma Wellington Koster began a career of activism as a B'Nai B'rith girl and a leader in her synagogue youth group. She subsequently became a staff producer for a local television station in the greater New York metropolitan region, where she volunteered for 19 hours on the "Rheumatism and Arthritis Association Telethon." Because of her success on that production, she was named the producer of "The World of Heart" for the American Heart Association and of two telethons for "The City of Hope", where she instituted and volunteered for their newly formed Young Leadership Division.

Norma Koster has also been deeply involved in numerous Jewish causes and charitable organizations. She founded the Single Parent Seminar at the Jewish Community Center on the Palisades, where she is now an active member of the Cultural Arts, Art, Senior, and Alzheimer's Committees and currently serves as the Tree of Life Chairperson. A Member of the Board of Trustees of the United Jewish Appeal, she is a former co-chair