Again I offer my congratulations to the Cambria City Mission and its interdenominational board of directors representing many churches in the Johnstown area.

CLEVELAND GREAT BOOKS BEGINS 60TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 14, 2005

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform you that the Cleveland Great Books group will begin its 60th consecutive year this fall of 2005 in gathering to discuss the classics in literature.

People have been reading great books for many centuries. The technique of asking questions and probing for an understanding of the problems they deal with was used by Socrates in ancient Athens, Greece.

In modern times, it is thought that the formation of discussion groups for the purpose of discussing the Great Books was started after the First World War by John Erksine. In 1927, Mortimer Adler helped launch 15 adult education courses in New York City to discuss the Great Books. In 1930, Robert Hutchins and Mr. Adler introduced Great Books seminars into the undergraduate curriculum at the University of Chicago. Soon, across the United States ordinary laymen with a love for literature began to form and lead Great Books seminars in their local communities. Such a group formed here in Greater Cleveland.

This group first met on October 8, 1946 at the East Cleveland Public Library. That first opening session involved a discussion of the Declaration of Independence. It was chosen by the original leader Frank P. Whitney. Today, Betty Gaetjens is the sole remaining member from that first night.

In 1972, the group moved their discussions to the present-day location of the Cleveland Heights Noble Road Library. However, the practice of meeting twice monthly for nine months would remain the same; during the same summer recess, members would read a book to be discussed at the first meeting in the fall.

When the members gather on September 20, 2005 to discuss Homer's ''The Odyssey,'' it will mark the beginning of the 60th continuous year of this Great Books discussion group. The current members of this group are: Pam Bryson, Kathleen Colacarro, Fred Damankos, David Fogarty, Betty Gaetjens, Ray Habian, Sally Hanley, Maureen Hollander, Linda Jones, Charles Lally, Ed Lampman, Frank Lavallo, William Malloy, Anne Meissner, Jane Melbourne, Howard Montgomery, Renee Paolino, Matthew Paolo, Jackie Perkovic, Lois Rowland, Milena Salehar, Nick Smith, Lisa Sturgis and Harvey Weiss.

As they begin their 60th year, members look forward to exchanging ideas with all the enthusiasm of that first night in October of 1946. They will converse freely, think with greater clarity and perception, and come away with a more profound insight which they did not have before.

CONYERS AMENDMENT TO H.R. 3132 IS BAD PUBLIC POLICY

HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 14, 2005

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, today, I voted against the H.R. 3132, The Children's Safety Act of 2005. As a cosponsor and ardent supporter of most of the important provisions in this bill, I reluctantly voted against it. Most legislation of any substance contains both good and bad provisions. As a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, I continually use my best judgment to determine whether the good provisions outweigh the bad provisions of a bill. I could not, in good conscience, vote in favor of a bill in which the ''bad'' of creating hate crimes law, outweighed the ''good'' of strengthening protections for our children.

The Conyers Amendment added so-called ''hate crimes legislation'' which is bad public policy. This provision has no place in a bill that was designed to address violence, sexual abuse and other exploitation of children. I believe that every crime is a hate crime, and therefore, no individual or group of individuals deserves special treatment under the law. I am also concerned that ''hate crimes'' legislation such as the Conyers Amendment, may lead to the creation of ''thought crimes'' in the not too distant future.

My plea to the members of the Other Body is for them to not include the Conyers Amendment in their version of the Child Protection Act. I also urge for the House Conferees to strip the Conyers Amendment from the final bill.

IN OPPOSITION TO THE CONYERS AMENDMENT TO H.R. 3132

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 14, 2005

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, the House passed an amended version of H.R. 3132, The Children's Safety Act of 2005. The bill as sent to the floor by the Judiciary Committee represented a tough crackdown on pedophilia and other sex offenses. The bill modifies the national sex offender registration program, expands the use of DNA to identify and prosecute sex offenders, increases penalties for sexual offenses against America's children, and makes other much-needed modifications and expansions of federal law relating to child safety.

Before the bill passed, however, an amendment by Rep. JOHN CONYERS (D-MI) was added, drastically altering this bill. I voted against the Conyers amendment, and its passage forced me to vote against final passage of the bill.

The Conyers amendment creates a Federal offense for hate crimes. I believe that the proponents of hate crimes legislation have good and honorable intentions. They would like to see less bigotry and more good will in American society. While I share that goal, I believe Congress should decline the invitation to enact hate crimes legislation for both constitutional and practical reasons.

The U.S. Constitution created a federal government of limited powers. Most of the federal government's ''delegated powers'' are set forth in Article I, Section 8. The Tenth Amendment was added to make it clear that the powers not delegated to the federal government ''are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.''

Crime is serious problem, but under the U.S. Constitution it is a matter to be handled by state and local government. In recent years, Congress has federalized the crimes of gun possession within a school zone, carjacking, and wife beating. All of that and more has been rationalized under the Commerce Clause. The Commerce Clause is not a blank check for Congress to enact whatever legislation it deems to be ''good and proper for America.'' The Conyers Amendment is simply beyond the powers that are delegated to Congress. Today, the House exacerbated the errors of past Congresses by federalizing more criminal offenses

Not to mention the fact that the Conyers language isn't going to prevent anything. Any thug that is already inclined to hurt another human being is not going to lay down the gun or knife because of some new law passed by Congress; they've already made a conscious decision to disregard basic homicide statutes. The notion that any federal hate crime law will prevent brutal killings is preposterous.

For the proponents of hate crime laws, the dilemma is this: if some groups (women, gays, vegans, runners, whatever) are left out of the ''hate crime'' definition, they will resent the selective depreciation of their victimization. On the other hand, if all victim groups are included, the hate crime category will be no different than ''ordinary'' criminal law.

Federalizing hate crime law will not increase tolerance in our society or reduce intergroup conflict. I believe hate crime laws may well have the opposite effect. The men and women who will be administering the hate crime laws (e.g. police, prosecutors) will likely encounter a never-ending series of complaints with respect to their official decisions. When a U.S. Attorney declines to prosecute a certain offense as a hate crime, some will complain that he is favoring the groups to which the accused belongs (e.g. Hispanic males). And when a U.S. Attorney does prosecute an offense as a hate crime, some will complain that the decision was based upon politics and that the government is favoring the groups to which the victim belongs (e.g. Asian Americans).

Perhaps the most dangerous element of federalized hate crime law is its approach to the notion of thought crimes. But once hate crime laws are on the books, the law enforcement apparatus will be delving into the accused's life and thoughts in order to show that he or she was motivated by bigotry. What kind of books and magazines were found in the home? What internet sites were bookmarked in the computer? Friends and coworkers will be interviewed to discern the accused's politics and worldview. The point here is that such chilling examples of state intrusion are avoidable because, as noted above, hate crime laws are unnecessary in the first place.

But above all else, I cannot comprehend why anyone would believe that the Conyers hate crimes language makes our children any safer from sexual predators. Would it have prevented John Couey from assaulting and