

yesterday. The militant Islamic organization Hamas that has brazenly taken responsibility for this sinister act and demands that Israel free Palestinian prisoners must be dealt with appropriately as any other terrorist organization would be.

The agony and carnage that is now becoming an almost familiar scene on our television screens is a frightening reminder of the fragile peace that remains following the Oslo accord. The scenes of hell with bodies, blood, and horror strewn about in the old Mahane Yehud market in western Jerusalem surely wears on the souls of the Israeli people. The pictures of sobbing mothers and grief stricken children are once again trying to be used to shatter the forces of peace in the Middle East. Many Israelis in their anguish may even want to link the bombings with the peace process.

True tragedy like this strikes at the heart of the politics of peace that we have tried to forge since former President Jimmy Carter brought the parties to the table at Camp David. We Americans are separated from the terror and horror that has become a way of life in Israel. It is difficult to comprehend what Houstonians would feel like had this happened there.

But, somehow the shreds of peace need to be put back together. The peace process cannot evaporate in the blood of terrorist attacks. We cannot let these forces of evil gain the upper hand. We must keep the faith that the forces of good and the forces for peace can be revived. While the attention of the moment is focused on evil and death, peace and security needs to fill the void created by this nightmare.

I agree with President Clinton that, "There is no excuse and there must be no tolerance for this kind of inhumanity. The slaughter was aimed directly at innocent Israelis. And make no mistake, it was aimed at the majority of Israelis, Palestinians, and Arabs who want a lasting and just peace." The Clinton administration has certainly done a very credible job of trying to break the gridlock of the peace process.

In order to find security which is the underpinning of peace in the area, there has to be sustained cooperation by the Palestinians. There can be no revolving door policy when it comes to the capture and detainment of terrorists. Trust must be regained on both sides. To prevent the peace talks from collapsing we must begin to help to rebuild the trust that was exploded in the outdoor marketplace yesterday.

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH IN PORTAGE, PENNSYLVANIA

HON. JOHN P. MURTHA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 1997

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take this opportunity before the House to pay tribute to an historic church community in the 12th Congressional District of Pennsylvania.

There were only 15 houses in the village of Portage, PA, when the Reverend Mr. Samuel Croft of Wilmore, MD, arrived to begin his missionary work in 1872. On August 21 of that year, 125 years ago next month, Luther's

Monumental Lutheran Church was chartered with 10 members. Two months later, on October 20, a small frame building, 28'-45', was dedicated. It now stands as the oldest church in Portage, PA.

In 1892, under the direction of the Reverend Mr. B.B. Collins, the congregation sought and was granted admission into the Allegheny Evangelical Lutheran Synod. One of the conditions for admittance to the synod was the forming of a parish relationship with another church nearby, St. Luke Lutheran Church in Lilly, PA. These two churches today are known as the Lilly Portage Lutheran Parish.

In 1916, the Reverend Mr. B.R. Sheeder and the congregation had the frame building moved to its present site where a narthex and larger sanctuary was built and the entire building was bricked. Stained glass windows were installed. The original building now contains the nursery-primary Sunday school rooms. The original roof beams can be seen in the loft.

Luther's Monumental Lutheran Church became the First Evangelical Lutheran Church and is now known as the First Lutheran Church of Portage, PA. The longest pastorate, of 23 years, was served by the Reverend Mr. George I. Uhler (1925-48).

Serving as the church's pianist, choir director, and organist for over 50 years, Ms. Viola Hess is fondly remembered for her lifelong dedication. She passed away in the church while doing the work she loved.

Notably, the Reverend Ms. Karen Stiles was the first female pastor to serve the church, from 1987-89, followed by the Reverend Ms. Rochelle Melander.

Currently, under the Reverend Mr. Steven Claycomb, the church registry lists over 300 members and is continuing to grow. The membership is active in both the religious and the civic secular activities of the area. An array of church artifacts is displayed at the Portage Station Museum and will later be returned for display at the church.

Portage is located less than 20 miles from Johnstown, legendary for its tragic floods. The First Lutheran Church of Portage has endured through the horrible flood of 1889 in which over 2,000 lives were lost; since then it has helped to see its community through many types of hardship—from the hardscrabble days of the Industrial Revolution, when the area's miners and steelworkers endured long work hours, low pay, and abysmal working conditions, to the Great Depression. It has held its community together through the Nation's wars and seen it through more modern harshness—the decline of the steel industry that brought lasting economic hard times and crippling unemployment. It also saw another devastating flood, in 1977. Through it all, the First Lutheran Church has been a source of support and sustenance, spiritually and otherwise, to generations.

On Sunday, August 31, 1997, a dinner and mass of celebration commemorating the church's 125th anniversary will be held.

I'd like to congratulate the First Lutheran Church of Portage, its pastor and his congregation as they celebrate a 125 year tradition of serving God and their community. May the church grow and prosper for another 125 years.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 1997

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill, H.R. 2160:

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Chairman, today I rise in support of the Wynn amendment to increase funding for equal opportunity complaint resolution in the Department of Agriculture. With over 1,400 discrimination cases pending, the USDA's Office of Civil Rights is underfunded, understaffed, and unable to fulfill its purpose. This amendment would transfer \$1,500,000 in revenue to the program for administrative and staffing assistance, and would enable the Department to fulfill its goal of eliminating racism within.

For years, the USDA has been discriminating against minority farmers. While the Secretary of Agriculture has acknowledged the problem and created the Civil Rights Program, it seems like little has been done. There are continued delays in investigations of discrimination complaints, inadequate minority representation in the Office of General Counsel, and an ongoing tension between the Office of General Counsel and the Office of Civil Rights. The number of discrimination complaints has more than tripled since 1991. It is time to put a halt to this disturbing statistic.

The Wynn amendment would provide money for additional staff to help combat the backlog of discrimination cases. The amendment simply caps the Market Assistance Program funding level and transfers its additional allocation for fiscal year 1998 to the Civil Rights Program. It is a small price to pay for such an important oversight.

In addition, we must continue to keep pressure on the Secretary of Agriculture to ensure that this funding is put to good use and that the problem is attacked immediately. He must put his money where his mouth is.

I urge my colleagues to support the Wynn amendment.

TRIBUTE TO ERIC K. FEDERING

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 1997

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, today marks the last day of House service for Eric Federing as the Democratic director of communications for the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Eric began his service to the House 10 years ago this week. In 1987, his first position was as press secretary and speechwriter to our former colleague, Norm Mineta. When Norm became chairman of the Public Works and Transportation Committee in 1993, he moved Eric to the committee to open and modernize its information services to better serve all of our colleagues and the news