

COMMEMORATING THE 1972 NATIONAL BLACK POLITICAL CONVENTION'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 26, 1997

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to commend the 1972 National Black Political Convention's 25th Anniversary celebration. This event will take place tomorrow, September 27, 1997, at the Genesis Convention Center in Gary, IN.

With great vision and dedication, the citizens of Gary, IN successfully hosted the First Black Political Convention 25 years ago. In 1972, 10,000 African-Americans trailblazed their way to Gary to bring together mainstream political leaders, labor officials, and ordinary people to forge a landmark and milestone in our country's struggle for economic justice and fair share of political power.

In 1972, there were 300 African-Americans elected to public office, nationwide; today, there are 7,000 in Federal, State, and local office. In 1972, there were 12 Members of Congress, and in 1997 there are 40 African-Americans in the U.S. Congress. The issues facing African-Americans today are different now than in 1972. The conference this weekend signals the shift from marches to the political arena, to using the political arena as the most effective avenue of opportunity.

In 1972, the convention agenda focused on political and economic empowerment, human development, international policy, communications, rural development, environmental protection, and self-determination. Twenty-five years later, some of the original organizers, including then Gary Mayor Richard Hatcher, are bringing together many of the same players for an anniversary celebration. U.S. Representative MAXINE WATERS of California, chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, will speak at the Genesis Center tomorrow evening. Many social conditions continue to place African-Americans at a disadvantage in finding employment and adequate housing. As a result, the public is being asked to join in the celebration for a weekend of solidarity and discussion, which will focus on striving to eliminate the burdens plaguing African-Americans.

A host of the Nation's most respected academic and political activists, including Dick Gregory, Dr. Ron Walters, Ron Daniels, U.S. Representative DANNY K. DAVIS, and Dr. Ron Karenga, have confirmed their attendance. I am proud to be a part of this celebration and would also like to commend the efforts of the members of the Gary Committee to Commemorate the 1972 National Black Political Convention: Richard Gordon Hatcher, James Holland, Dozier T. Allen, Morris Carter, Judy Cherry, Carolyn McCrady, and a host of other participants working to make this anniversary celebration a success. As the U.S. Representative of Indiana's First Congressional District, I am proud to represent the place of my birth, Gary, IN. I look forward to continuing to work with my African-American colleagues in making this country a better place for all people.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commemorating the 25 year anniversary of the 1972 Black

Political Convention and to encourage public participation in carrying out their vision into the future.

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDICIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN W. OLVER

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 25, 1997

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2267) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes:

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to the Hefley amendment which would reduce funding for the economic development agency [EDA] by \$90 million.

The EDA plays a vital role in providing support to communities in high economic distress. An anecdote from my district illustrates how the EDA can work for all of our cities and towns. A large community in western Massachusetts just experienced sizable defense industry layoffs. Modest economic development money can inject economic life into communities facing similar hardships. EDA grants fund utilities construction to create industrial parks, provide capital for small business loans, fund regional economic planning for small communities to coordinate job creation efforts, and turn former military bases into centers for new businesses.

EDA funds help to build infrastructure, attract private investment, and create jobs. This is the kind of help that every district needs.

I urge my colleagues to preserve EDA funding and reject the Hefley amendment.

HONORING RABBI BERTRAM KORN

HON. JON D. FOX

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 26, 1997

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a man who, in his all-too-brief 60 years of life, accomplished more than most could in three lifetimes. Rabbi Bertram W. Korn was a man of deep faith, a devoted family man, a heroic military officer, and a community leader in the 13th Congressional District of Pennsylvania.

Rabbi Korn served Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel in Elkins Park, PA, as its senior rabbi from 1949 until his death in 1979. During that period, Keneseth Israel grew to become the largest synagogue in the Delaware Valley and a keystone of the religious community of Montgomery County, PA. He was the first senior rabbi to be educated, Bar Mitzvahed, and confirmed at the synagogue he led for so many years.

Mr. Speaker, Rabbi Korn was a dynamic and energetic leader who was known for his charismatic leadership and a catalyst for progressive change. He was entirely devoted to

his congregation and would be there for them at important events throughout their lives. While his title comes from the Hebrew rabbi, meaning "my master," Bertram Korn spent his life in service to the congregation of Keneseth Israel.

Rabbi Korn was a trailblazer, patriot, and military leader. Since World War II, he faithfully served the U.S. Navy becoming the first Jewish admiral in the Naval chaplaincy. He was a scholar, historian, and humanitarian with numerous books and writings to his credit.

Now, the congregation he loved and served so conscientiously will honor him by dedicating its sanctuary to Rabbi Korn's memory at Shabbat services this evening. Mr. Speaker, in Judaism, the sanctuary is the spiritual center of our synagogue and it is fitting that Keneseth Israel is dedicating their sanctuary to Rabbi Korn because for them, he was their spiritual center for many years and his memory and influence still lingers. The sanctuary is where our families gather for prayer and where we keep the Torah, which contains the entire body of Jewish religious law and learning including sacred literature and oral tradition. Rabbi Korn exemplified what is best about the family and the power of prayer for generations of our people.

Leading tonight's ceremonies will be Keneseth Israel's new senior rabbi, Bradley Bleefeld as well as Rabbi Aaron Landes of Beth Shalom Congregation. Rabbi Landes was both a rabbinical and Navy colleague of Rabbi Korn and will be the featured speaker and will be followed by Charles Pollack, head of the Bertram Korn Memorial Committee.

At the end of the service there will be two dedications. The first is a dedication of a mezuzah commissioned by the Korn family including his sister, Jean, and his two children, Bertram Jr., and Judy. A mezuzah is a copy of the Hebrew text of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 1:13-21 in a container marked with the word Shaddai, the name of God. Rabbi Korn's son, Bertram W. Korn Jr., is the executive editor of the Jewish Exponent newspaper in Philadelphia. The second dedication will be the dedication of the sanctuary.

In association with this celebration, Temple Judea Museum of Keneseth Israel is opening a display of artifacts honoring Rabbi Korn to coincide with the dedications. In the entire 150-year history of the synagogue, there have only been seven rabbis. Of all of them, Rabbi Korn, is noted for having 13 or 14 of his students go onto rabbinical college.

E. Harris Baum, current president of Keneseth Israel, said that part of this celebration is designed to introduce a new generation of young Jews to the legacy of a great rabbi and to rekindle interest in his intellectual work and all that he gave to Reform Judaism. Mr. Baum said the message he received from Rabbi Korn was that each individual in the world has a responsibility to the other—not just Jews, but to all human beings.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, we honored Mother Teresa of Calcutta for similar reasons. Both of these individuals recognized that human kindness and our obligation to care for each other should not be limited by national origins or differences in religious practice. Compassion for each other is something that can bring the world's religious together just as Rabbi Korn's humanity pulled the families of his synagogue