□ 2130

Code words are like prochoice, prolife, liberal, conservative, Democrat and Republican. So what the bishop did in his pastoral letter was he mentioned the word ''prolife'' and because of that, Barry Lynn filed a complaint against him to challenge the tax status of the diocese in Colorado Springs. This is just one small example of many things that are happening.

In Kansas, I spoke to a minister today and he knows that there is a group in Kansas that is watching what he is saying in his church. Well, let me say to my friends in the House, whether you be Democrat or Republican, this can happen to your church as well. What is happening in this country, there is an element that is trying to monitor the speech and the sermons in the churches and the synagogues and the mosques of this great Nation today.

Let me read very briefly and then I will close, Mr. Speaker. The Main Stream Coalition headed by Caroline McKnight in Kansas is sending letters to more than 400 churches in the area reminding them of the IRS rule that we are trying to change to return to freedom of speech that we had in this country prior to 1954, which forbids tax exempt groups, including religious organizations, from participating in political campaigns for or against a candidate.

Coalition volunteers will also visit churches and report any major violation to the IRS. This reminds me of what I thought might have happened in the late 1930s in Germany when the Jewish people went to their synagogue, where they had somebody watching who went in.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress, we are here to protect the first amendment rights of all the American people. That includes our preachers, our priests and our rabbis and the clerics in this country. I hope if we are going to honor those men and women who have given their lives for this country, who have died for freedom since the beginning of America through today and the days following today, then we must do our job to make sure that there is freedom of speech in our churches and synagogues and mosques in this country.

I close tonight, Mr. Speaker, by asking the good Lord to please bless our men and women in our uniform and their families. I close by asking the good Lord to bless America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HENSARLING). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

SMART SECURITY AND ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, during the 2000 Presidential campaign, George W. Bush pledged to renew the assault weapons ban that President Clinton signed into law in 1994. This is a courageous decision by a candidate who claimed he was not your typical conservative.

Four years have passed and Candidate Bush's pledge has gone unfulfilled by President Bush. It is amazing what the politics of a reelection campaign will do to one's former pledges.

The assault weapons ban will expire on September 13 unless President Bush renews the ban before that very point. First, Congress would need to approve this decision, however. With recess approaching, that leaves only 3 legislative days in September before military assault weapons designed to kill large numbers of people are once again available on America's streets.

Of course, President Bush and the White House are well aware of this deadline. So why are they not acting? Actually, the answer is simple. The answer is the National Rifle Association has conditioned its support for George W. Bush on his strong opposition to gun control measures. The NRA has issued a not-so-subtle threat to withhold its vast resources from the President's reelection campaign unless he agrees not to renew the assault weapons ban.

The problem, besides the fact that President Bush has once again failed to live up to one of his campaign promises, is that this is an issue of extreme importance to our national security.

Al Qaeda training manuals recovered in Afghanistan specifically urge terrorists to exploit America's ''lax gun laws'' to acquire and train with assault weapons. For many terrorists around the world, America is known as the great gun bazaar.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know about you, but I find this highly disturbing. If President Bush truly wanted to be smart about keeping America safe from terrorism, as he says he does, he would work to immediately renew the assault weapons ban. Renewing the ban is absolutely necessary to protect Americans from terrorism. Renewing the ban would keep deadly weaponry out of the hands of terrorists.

These guns serve only one purpose, to take lives. In fact, the 2003 National Hunting Survey by Field and Stream Magazine confirmed that most gun owners do not consider assault weapons suitable guns for hunting in the first place. The ban clearly works.

In 1995, the first year the assault weapons ban went into effect, the assault weapons represented nearly 4 percent of all guns recovered from crimes. By 2000, assault weapons represented a little more than 1 percent of weapons used in crimes.

Mr. Speaker, clearly the time has come for a national security strategy that protects Americans from assault weapons, not one that protects the President's favorite campaign donor from losing revenue.

That is why I have introduced H. Con. Res. 392, legislation to create a SMART security platform for the 21st century. SMART stands for sensible, multilateral, American response to terrorism.

In crafting this legislation, my staff and I received the support of the wonderful organizations, Physicians For Social Responsibility, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, and Women's Action for New Directions. Without these groups, the legislation would not have happened in the way it did.

SMART security is stronger on national security than President Bush claims to be. SMART security will stop the sale of weapons to oppressive regimes and regimes involved in human rights abuses.

SMART security will pursue enhanced inspection regimes and regional security arrangements to ensure that state sponsors of terrorism do not get a hold of more light weaponry or even deadlier chemical or biological weapons.

It is time America got smart about its national security. I urge all of my colleagues to cosponsor this vitally important resolution, H. Con. Res. 392 because SMART security is tough, is pragmatic, is patriotic, and it will keep America safe.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PENCE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CHIAPAS MISSION FOR SIGHT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you this evening in recognition of the extraordinary work and tireless efforts of Dr. Tracey Lewis, Dr. Judith Simon and the Chiapas Mission for Sight.

Dr. Tracey Lewis, in particular, is a constituent in my district, a dear friend as well as an exemplary individual, and she has chosen to lend her expertise and talent towards a very noble cause. I urge my fellow colleagues to take a moment to acknowledge the invaluable service that the Chiapas Mission for Sight has offered to countless individuals in one particular developing region of the world.

The Chiapas Mission for Sight aims to provide primary eye care and surgery to the native Indian living in Ocotepec, Chiapas, Mexico. Thus far, they have completed three successful missions, and as a direct result, hundreds of individuals in dire need of eye care and treatment have received proper medical attention. Originally a branch of the Chiapas Project of Newton, New Jersey, and funded in part by the Rotary Club of Newton, this year the ophthalmology group has grown and formed its own mission dedicated solely to vision care.

The group's focus is providing medical service to the population of Ocotepec and the surrounding villages, which exceeds 1 million people. Of this population, many suffer from blinding cataracts, which is a problem inherent to Ocotepec and its surrounding villages, because of the exposure to significant sunlight and very poor nutrition. The nearest town, Tuxtla, Gutierrez, is a 4-hour drive, and sadly, the natives of the village earn less in 1 year than what it would cost to travel to Tuxtla to undergo cataract surgery.

Oftentimes short-staffed, with donated medical and surgical supplies, the volunteers work around the clock to provide the natives the medical attention they so desperately need. Lack of funding has not deterred Tracey Lewis or the organization what it can to accomplish its goals. In fact, every doctor and most of the volunteers cover their own expenses, making their mission all the more charitable. On the last mission, the group examined over 400 patients with significant eye disease, and due to limitations in staffing, surgery was triaged and performed only on those fully blind in both eyes.

Currently, the Chiapas Mission is seeking volunteers who will be trained to perform vision screening and assist in the operating room. These volunteers will travel with the group and serve as assistants to the doctors.

In this remote region, plagued by poor hygiene and lack of proper medical and dental care, Tracey Lewis has quickly realized that a little does go a very long way. Inspired to take on this cause by her 9-year-old son, Tracey has demonstrated a remarkable ability to not only take on such a Herculean challenge, but to enthuse so many volunteers to do the same.

Today, as we discuss health disparities within the United States, it is imperative that we are also aware of the stark disparities between our country and regions around the world. In this age of scientific discovery and medical advancements, it is unfortunate that those in developing countries are not able to reap the benefits of modern medicine.

As we in Congress hear about these numerous volunteers that travel to remote villages and devote themselves to the restoration of vision to the blind people living there, let us rededicate ourselves to ensuring that every man, woman and child all around the world, including the United States, not go another day without proper primary care and adequate medical assistance.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I commend the Chiapas Mission for Sight as it provides a shining example of the impact individuals can make through self-sacrifice and goodwill. Assisting those living in poor conditions with critical medical treatment truly demonstrates what can be done through benevolence and hard work.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WORLD AIDS CONFERENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, last week I had the opportunity to attend the 15th International AIDS conference in Bangkok, Thailand, my third conference since I have been in this body. As the only Member of Congress to attend this incredibly important event, I want to take a few minutes this evening to brief my colleagues and the American public about my experience.

Each time I have returned from one of these conferences, I am quite frankly filled with great hope but also a very profound realization of just how much it is that we have left to do.

Having spent a few days last week among the international leaders on the global pandemic, I can tell you that the international community is very, very disappointed by the rate of progress, to put it mildly, about the United States' failure to deliver on projected funding and programs. In fact, that point was unfortunately reinforced by Secretary Tommy Thompson's decision to allow a delegation of only about 50 people from his Department of Health and Human Services to attend the World AIDS Conference this year, down from about 236, 2 years ago, when we held the conference in Barcelona, Spain.

It is shameful that they have prevented many of our very best and brightest scientists at the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes of Health from gaining new insights from their colleagues in the international community. It is also tragic that this administration's unilateralist and ideological tendencies have now spread to the fight against HIV/AIDS. It is morally wrong to allow right-wing ideology to trump science when it comes to the administration's HIV/AIDS prevention policies.

Their policies set aside 33 percent of all funding for abstinence-only programs which deny access to lifesaving education and technology, including condoms. Simply put, this is irresponsible. It is unethical and it is inhumane.

I believe it is unethical because their AIDS treatment policies are really focused more on protecting patents and big pharmaceutical companies rather than the urgent need to get fixed-dose combinations into the hands of those who need them, 98 percent, 98 percent of whom lack access to treatment. The emphasis should be on saving lives.

It is disingenuous that the administration has proposed cutting our support for the Global Fund by over 60 percent this coming fiscal year, proposing a measly contribution of $200 million rather than the $1.2 billion that is needed. We need to encourage the sharing of information by our scientists and researchers.

We need to do a lot better with coordinating our bilateral programs with national governments, the NGO community, and our field missions.

□ 2145

We need to simplify our antiretroviral treatment programs by purchasing fixed dose combinations, drugs that are already available; and we must standardize our treatment programs according to the wishes of each individual country.

We have to fund the fund.

Although I applaud the gentleman from Arizona (Chairman KOLBE) and the gentlewoman from New York's (Ranking Member LOWEY) efforts in doubling the administration's request for funding for the Global Fund by providing $400 million, I was disappointed last week when a point of order was raised with regard to an amendment which I offered which actually killed an amendment that would have raised our contributions to $1.2 billion this year, which is what we need to get started.

The fund is the very best way to get the money out into the hands of the NGO community immediately. It takes a multilateral approach, and it has the