

Our men and women in uniform have sacrificed for our security, and their families bear a burden each and every day. The students at Heritage Elementary have made it their mission to give all they can to Operation Stork Support, a program that presents gift baskets to expectant mothers in the Fort Campbell community. These moms-to-be are separated from their loved ones by war, but we can help lessen their burden and show them how much we care. The Heritage Elementary students have raised \$740 in pennies—that's 74,000 pennies—for Operation Stork Support. I thank them for their contribution, their concern, and not least, their love for our military families.

UNDERSTANDING ISLAM AND DEFENDING FREEDOM—LIFT THE DE FACTO GAG ORDER ON NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATE SHIRIN EBADI

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 7, 2004

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, it was religious freedom that brought the Pilgrims to America's shores. In our beloved Constitution and Bill of Rights, we affirm our steadfast commitment to freedom of expression and freedom of the press as pillars of our democracy. Consequently, it pains and embarrasses me, as an American that the executive branch of our government continues to betray our democratic values and preclude Ms. Shirin Ebadi, the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, and other distinguished Muslims from publishing their views for all Americans to read.

Ms. Shirin Ebadi is the first Iranian and the first Muslim woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. She is a distinguished lawyer, scholar, and teacher. President Bush has praised her tireless work as a champion of democracy and human rights. She represents Reformed Islam, and argues for an interpretation of Islamic law which promotes international respect for universal human rights. She is devoted to religious freedom, even to the extent of risking her own life, for example, to defend the rights of other faiths inside Iran. In short, she personifies precisely the type of Islamic voice of faith and scholarship with whom our nation should be in dialogue.

Why then is our government, through self-defeating U.S. Treasury Department Regulations, imposing a gag order on Ms. Ebadi? Why are Americans who attempt to help Ms. Ebadi publish her writings now being threatened with severe fines and lengthy prison sentences?

The current over-reaching Treasury Department regulations are demonstrably short-sighted, counterproductive, and unrepresentative of American ideals. That is why I have written to President Bush urging him to reverse to reverse this policy and demonstrate anew America's commitment to freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the free flow of ideas. I ask unanimous consent that my self-explanatory letter be reprinted in its entirety at the conclusion of my statement. The intent of the regulations, I presume, is to prevent giving beneficial trade revenue to governments that support terrorism, but preventing the publication of ideas is a clumsy, foolish way to try to protect Americans.

Ms. Ebadi's views are the antithesis of those of Osama bin Laden. She is in the same tradition as Solzhenitzen, Sakharov, Sharansky, Walesa, and Havel—all of whom risked their lives to condemn Soviet repression, thus helping give hope to their oppressed countrymen and women and end the Cold War. America should extend Ms. Ebadi and others like her the same support. That would be in keeping with the democratic values and ideals of the American people that have been championed by Democratic and Republican Presidents alike since from the founding of our republic until recent years.

Instead, unbeknownst to many Americans, the Bush Administration continues to enforce unreasonable regulations that silence Ms. Ebadi's voice in America just as effectively as if the Iranian mullahs imprisoned and silenced her, as they have on numerous occasions in the past.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,

November 24, 2004.

Hon. GEORGE W. BUSH,

President of the United States, The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I am writing to urge you to take immediate corrective action to defend America's commitment to freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the free flow of ideas. Specifically, I ask you to overturn existing trade-related regulations of the U.S. Treasury Department and substitute new regulations that will allow Ms. Shirin Ebadi from Iran to be heard and published as widely as possible in the U.S. and abroad. More generally, the regulations should be changed to allow public speech and communications around the world.

Ms. Ebadi, a distinguished Muslim jurist, lawyer, scholar, and teacher, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003. You have praised her tireless work as a champion of democracy and human rights. She represents Reformed Islam, and argues for an interpretation of Islamic law which promotes international respect for universal human rights. She is devoted to religious freedom, even to the extent of risking her own life, for example, to defend the rights of the Ba'hai community in Iran. In short, she personifies precisely the type of Islamic voice of faith and scholarship with whom our nation should be in dialogue.

Yet, Ms. Ebadi is now prohibited by U.S. Treasury Department regulations from writing and working with American editors to publish her memoirs in the U.S. These regulations are counterproductive for multiple reasons:

They silence Islamic proponents of freedom, democratic reform, tolerance, and universal human rights.

They prohibit Americans from contracting or collaborating with Ms. Ebadi and authors from other restricted countries to create or revise new books for Americans to read, or pay them in advance.

They prohibit American editors, publishers, and agents from working professionally on new or existing books with Ms. Ebadi and other distinguished authors in restricted countries.

Under threat of severe fines and lengthy prison sentences, they prohibit American publishers, editors, and agents from marketing or promoting Ms. Ebadi's writing and those of other pro-democracy authors from restricted countries in the Islamic world and elsewhere.

The practical consequence of these regulations is that American publishers simply cannot do business with Ms. Ebadi and other authors like her and cannot publish their books. Furthermore, Americans who want to

receive more information and learn more about society and culture in Iran, Sudan, and Cuba are limited now to reading what has already been written in such restricted countries. These regulations of the U.S. Government silence Ms. Ebadi's voice in America just as effectively as if the Iranian mullahs imprisoned and silenced her, as they have on numerous occasions in the past.

This policy and the underlying Treasury Department regulations are demonstrably shortsighted, counterproductive, and unrepresentative of American ideals. They urgently need to be replaced by less restrictive and proscriptive regulations that are reflective of American values and democratic traditions and that are consistent with the spirit and letter of the laws enacted by Congress in 1988 and further clarified in 1992 to ensure the free flow of information and ideas in international trade. The revised regulations clearly should enable Americans to contract, pay in advance, and work freely with Ms. Ebadi on revisions of her existing work and the creation of additional writings and to market and promote her writings without constraints.

Mr. President, you have the authority and power to rectify this betrayal of America's commitment to freedom of speech, press and religion. It is also noteworthy that the bipartisan 9/11 Commission has warned that if the U.S. does not act aggressively to define itself in the Islamic world (including the encouragement of more open societies), the Islamic extremists will gladly do the job for us. Accordingly, the 9/11 Commissioners recommend, in relation to the war on terrorism, that the U.S. Government use non-military means in addition to force to define anew what we stand for, and to lead by example in promoting freedom, democracy, and respect for universal human rights.

I can think of no clearer or easier example for America to set than for you to take whatever action is necessary, as a matter of urgency, to enable Ms. Ebadi to publish her writings in America.

Sincerely yours,

RUSH HOLT,
Member of Congress.

DIRECTING CLERK OF THE HOUSE TO MAKE TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS IN ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 4818

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 6, 2004

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday's vote on H. Con. Res. 528 is about much more than just eliminating a provision that Republicans sneaked into the Omnibus Appropriations bill. While that provision would have eroded existing privacy protections of American taxpayers, today's vote also highlights the growing abuse of legislative power and abuse of the public trust by the Republican leadership. It is also about priorities and meeting our nation's needs.

I opposed the massive spending bill when it was considered on the House floor on November 20, 2004, because I was certain that, without carefully examining it, I might be voting for inappropriate, irresponsible, or even embarrassing provisions. Sure enough, that is the case. The provision the Republicans inserted into the spending bill which would allow Members and staff on Congressional committees to