

URGING THE EUROPEAN UNION TO ADD HEZBOLLAH TO THE EU'S LIST OF TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 14, 2005

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 101, a resolution urging the European Union to add Hezbollah to the European Union's list of terrorist organizations.

Over the past two decades, Hezbollah has been synonymous with terror, suicide bombings and kidnappings. This Iran-backed, Lebanese-based terrorist group serves as an umbrella organization of radical Islamic Shiite groups and entities. Hezbollah, which the U.S. government estimates consists of several thousand militants, has balked at recent U.N. Security Council resolutions requiring it to disarm. This terrorist group is responsible for nearly 200 attacks since 1982 that have killed more than 800 people. Its political rhetoric includes calls for the destruction of the State of Israel. Most recently, both Israeli and Palestinian officials noted an alarming increase in Hezbollah support for terrorism in the Palestinian territories. The organization enjoys funding of \$10 million to \$20 million monthly from Iran, a country that continues to seek a nuclear weapon.

U.S. intelligence has shown that Hezbollah cells operate in Europe, Africa, South America, and North America. Hezbollah's reported involvement in the 1983 suicide bombing attack that killed 241 United States Marines in Beirut and other acts of atrocities begs its inclusion to the European Union's list of terrorist organizations.

Mr. Speaker, a critical part of the war on terror is identifying terrorist threats and the organizations and people who carry out acts of atrocity. I am encouraged by the European Union Parliament's passing of a resolution urging the European Union leadership and the member governments to list Hezbollah as a terrorist entity. I applaud this step and hope that it leads to the inclusion of Hezbollah on the European Union's list of terrorist organizations.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE RYAN GUILLEN

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Representative Ryan Guillen for his commitment to building a better future for South Texas.

Ryan Guillen is a native of Starr County, with deep roots in the Texas business community. Before entering public service, he worked as a commodities trader, a rancher, a teacher, and an independent small businessman. This experience helped to shape his priorities: in

the legislature, he acted to help teachers, firefighters and policemen with low interest loans, authored a bill to lower taxes for the disabled and elderly, and passed legislation to reform government in his county.

Representative Guillen was elected to the Texas House in November, 2002, and quickly distinguished himself. He was named Freshman Legislator of the Year by the Freshman Democratic Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives, and passed more bills than any other member of the first-term Democratic class. He is the only Democrat appointed to the Legislative Council Board, a powerful committee which oversees the internal operations of the Texas Legislature.

He has been especially committed to the issue of education. He fought to restore cuts to teacher insurance, authored a bill to increase school district funding in Texas by \$1.2 billion dollars, and worked to protect the rights of all Texas children to an equal, high quality education.

Mr. Speaker, Representative Guillen has distinguished himself as a passionate and effective legislator, and he has a bright future ahead of him. I am proud to have the chance to recognize his work.

CONGRATULATING THE ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL INDIANS ON THEIR INDIANA CLASS 3A GIRLS STATE BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. CHRIS CHOCOLA

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2005

Mr. CHOCOLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the South Bend St. Joseph's High School Indians on their Indiana High School Athletic Association Girls Basketball Class 3A state championship.

For the second time in three years, the St. Joe Indians' girls basketball team found themselves at the Conesco Fieldhouse in Indianapolis, Indiana for the state championship game. As the final game horn sounded on Saturday March 5, 2005, the Indians won by a score of 70-57 defeating Corydon Central High School.

Over 9,000 fans witnessed a 24-10 run in the fourth quarter allowing the Indians to bring home St. Joseph County's first state championship in girls basketball. This victory capped off a 25-1 record for the season.

I would like to acknowledge Head Coach Mike Megyese and Assistant Coaches Lou Megyese, Dan Applegate, Clem Litka and Brad Dunlap on an extraordinary season.

As their many fans know, this team has been led by an outstanding group of seniors who have taken St. Joseph's to an incredible 83-18 record during their four years.

On behalf of the citizens of Indiana's Second Congressional District, I would like to congratulate South Bend's newest champions including seniors Aimee Litka, Corey Jo Keim, Katie St. Clair, Erin Newsom; juniors Melissa Lechlitner, Ashley Miller, Becky Newsom; sophomores Sydney Smallbone, Kristen Dockery; and freshmen DeBorah Wilson and Cary Wernitz.

Student Managers Sarah Pendl, Katie Dunlap, Christie Nurkowski, Courtney Szymanski, Gary Paczesny and Erin Rempala

also deserve a special congratulation for their contributions to the team.

Mr. Speaker, I know that everyone in St. Joseph County including the Diocese of Fort Wayne—South Bend Superintendent Michelle Hittie, the St. Joseph High School staff including Principal Daniel Swygart, Athletic Director Frank Pomarico, Assistant Athletic Director Kristi Beechy, and all of the St. Joseph Indians' parents and fans are extremely proud of the accomplishment these young women have achieved.

Again, I would like to congratulate the Indians of St. Joseph High School on winning the county's first ever girls state basketball championship.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND REHABILITATION ACT OF 2005

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2005

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to introduce the Civic Participation and Rehabilitation Act of 2005, legislation that will provide persons who have been released from incarceration the right to vote in Federal elections.

With just two states, Maine and Vermont, placing no restrictions on the voting rights of offenders or ex-offenders, the United States may have the most restrictive disenfranchisement policy in the world. Such prohibitions on the right to vote undermine both the voting system and the fundamental rights of ex-offenders. This legislation will serve to clarify and expand voting rights, as well as assist former felons with their reintegration into our democracy.

This past November it was estimated that approximately 2.3 percent of the voting age population, about 5 million people, were prohibited from voting because of state felon disenfranchisement laws. While it is undeniable that this group of disqualified voters was large enough to influence the outcome of close elections, partisan concerns obscure the fact that our varied, state-by-state approaches to ex-offender voting rights leads to confusion and disenfranchisement of legitimate voters under these existing laws. In the past two election cycles, flawed voter purges have deprived legitimate voters of their rights. Moreover, in Ohio, an erroneous interpretation of state law by the Secretary of State deprived thousands of ex-felons of even the right to register. Only federal law can conclusively resolve the ambiguities in this area plaguing our voting system.

In addition to tainting this country's fundamental principle of the right to vote, denying voting rights to ex-offenders denies them of the opportunity to fully participate and contribute to their society. Disenfranchisement laws isolate and alienate ex-offenders, and serve as one more obstacle in their attempt to successfully reintegrate into society. Restricting voting rights, a critical tool of self-empowerment, can only lead to higher rates of recidivism, community apathy, and other social ills. We fail not just ex-offenders by denying them the right to vote, but the rest of a society that has struggled throughout its history to be legitimate and inclusive. Just like poll taxes and literacy tests prevented an entire class of