

INTRODUCTION OF H. CON. RES. 163
CALLING FOR THE FULL INVESTIGATION OF THE BOMBING OF THE JEWISH CULTURAL CENTER IN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 27, 1999

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, today is the Tisha B'Av, 5759 by the Hebrew calendar, the most important day of mourning in the Jewish year. It is the anniversary of the most tragic events in Jewish history, for it was on the this day, in 3338 that the first temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians, and in 3828 that the second temple was destroyed by the Romans.

Although this day is primarily meant to commemorate the destruction of the Temple, it is appropriate to consider on this day the many other tragedies of the Jewish people, many of which occurred on this day, the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, Betar, the last fortress to hold out against the Romans during the Bar Kochba revolt, fell, and so many others.

But the tragedies of Jewish history are not all so ancient. This past Sunday marked the 5th anniversary of the bombing of the Jewish Cultural Center in Buenos Aires, Argentina. On July 18, 1994, the Jewish Cultural Center in Buenos Aires, Argentina was destroyed by a terrorist bomb. Eighty-six people were killed. Over 300 people were wounded. The Argentina Mutual Aid Association's archive of community records, which dated back to 1894, was destroyed.

While this bomb destroyed the building, and the records, and the lives of so many—Jews and non-Jews alike—it has not dampened the spirit of the Jewish population of Argentina, which at 250,000 is second only to the United States in this hemisphere.

What is dispiriting is that today, five years after that tragic bombing, we still have not brought the terrorists to justice. Though we have recently seen the arrest of more suspects, there is still no resolution, no closure for the families that still grieve for their loved ones.

That is why I am choosing today, Tisha B'Av, the ninth of Av, to introduce a concurrent resolution calling upon the Argentine Government to fully support and devote all resources necessary to the efforts of Judge Juan Jose Galeano and to fully investigate, apprehend, and prosecute those responsible for the bombing; requesting that the Argentine security forces and the judiciary of Argentina not impede this independent investigation; and requesting that Argentine President Carlos Menem appoint an independent committee to investigate and report on the integrity and competence of Argentina's system of justice.

I invite my colleagues to cosponsor this resolution.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBERT L. EHRlich, JR.

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 27, 1999

Mr. EHRlich. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, July 26, 1999, I missed several votes because my

wife Kendel and our new baby boy were released from the hospital. Specifically, I missed the following two rollcall votes: 335 (Hoeffel amendment to H.R. 1074); and 336 (passage on H.R. 1974). If I had been present I would have voted "no" on rollcall No. 335 and "aye" on rollcall No. 336.

Likewise, I would have voted "aye" on Mr. MCINTOSH's en bloc amendments to H.R. 1074; S. 604; H.R. 2565; H. Res. 172; H.R. 457; S. 1260; S. 1259; and S. 1258, all of which were agreed to by voice vote.

FLAG CITY USA

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 27, 1999

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, in the vast Second Congressional District of Oregon lies a city named Redmond, also known as "Flag City USA." Redmond is called "Flag City USA," because currently it proudly displays 687 flags that have been flown over our Nation's Capitol. I would like to commend the citizens of Redmond for this great project that shows a strong sense of community spirit and patriotism.

The first display of flags was on July 4, 1991, the day that our nation officially welcomed home all veterans from Desert Storm and prior wars. The initial display was the concept of Mr. Mac McShannon. With the help of City Councilman Randy Povey, it became a reality. The flags displayed included 180 flags that had once draped the caskets of fallen veterans, which were made available by American Legion Post 44.

When Mr. McShannon and Mr. Povey learned that the flags from the previous year would not be available to display in the future, The Downtown Redmond Flag Committee was born. A representative of almost every civil organization of Redmond met with the American Legion, and a mission statement was developed and it reads as follows:

It is the feeling of this committee that flags should be flown on our city streets during appropriate holidays and other special occasions. Therefore, the acquisition, display, and perpetual care of the flags are now points we must address. Since this should be a community endeavor, we would like all area organizations, clubs, businesses and interested individuals to join us in a plan to perpetuate Americanism, the display of our flag and the Redmond Community Spirit.

True to their mission, community spirit is exactly what the city has shown. Since the first formal meeting on September 20, 1991, until today, the Flag Committee has obtained 687 flags, all of which have been flown over our Nation's Capitol and their final goal is 1,000 flags. Many local businesses have donated supplies, while local community organizations like Rotary, Kiwanis, Moose, Elks, Smokey-RVFD, Boy Scouts, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Chamber of Commerce and the City Council have kept the program going with their support.

On Saturday, July 31, the City of Redmond will receive their 700th flag, a tremendous milestone on their way to the final goal of 1,000. I am happy that I will be a part of Redmond's celebration in achieving this milestone.

Patriotism has rarely been more apparent than when you drive down the main streets of Redmond on one of the special occasions when the 700 flags are flown. Each time I see this display, a strong sense of pride in my country and those who have served to protect our freedom is renewed. I know of no other city in the United States that comes close to matching Redmond's efforts to honor our flag and American pride. I am proud to say that I represent "Flag City USA" in the United States Congress.

PRIVATE ACTIVITY BONDS

HON. JOHN J. LaFALCE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 27, 1999

Mr. LaFALCE. Mr. Speaker, today, I am announcing my intention to co-sponsor H.R. 864, the "State and Local Investment Opportunity Act of 1999." This legislation would accelerate the increase in the private activity bond cap so that it would take effect at the beginning of next year, and index that cap in subsequent years for inflation.

I take this step in recognition of the value of expanding low interest rate financing for projects which include affordable housing, single family mortgages, student loans, environmental cleanup, and manufacturing job creation, and in recognition that politically, at least for the present, this may be the only way to accomplish these desired results.

However, I also feel compelled to express my reservations about expanding this and other tax-oriented mechanisms without a more extensive Congressional review of the merits of using the tax code for these purposes. Specifically, the issues of efficiency and accountability need to be addressed much more fully.

Every dollar of foregone tax revenue impacts the federal surplus or deficit in the exact same way as does an increased dollar of spending. Yet, the combination of tight discretionary spending caps and the popularity of tax cuts seems to have convinced lawmakers that the easiest route to increase resources for important priorities is through a tax credit or tax expenditure.

The serious drawback to this approach is that it is a very inefficient and costly way to achieve the desired purpose. For every dollar of foregone federal revenue, only a portion of that amount goes for the benefit of the project. A significant portion goes to the benefit of the taxpayer or entity through which the tax benefit is funneled. For example, a 1988 GAO report concluded that for every dollar of revenue foregone by the federal government through the issuance of mortgage revenue bonds, only between 12 and 45 cents of such subsidy are received by the homeowner.

A more direct, and clearly more efficient, less costly approach, would be to provide the benefit directly in the form of spending. Of course, this approach can easily be demagogued as "tax and spend liberalism." Yet, direct program spending and tax expenditures are essentially indistinguishable—except that the tax expenditure is almost always less efficient, and therefore much more costly.

A second issue is that of accountability. The principle that the governmental unit that spends tax dollars should be the same entity