



Minnesota's 4th District E-Report!

Congresswoman Betty McCollum

"Serving Minnesota's Families"



DECEMBER 12, 2003

Hot News!

Arab-American Deserves Apology from President

Today, Rep. Betty McCollum sent a letter calling for an apology from President Bush after an Arab-American hotel employee, Mohamad Pharoan, was asked to leave his job at a Bush fundraiser in Baltimore on December 5, 2003.

Mr. Pharoan arrived to work last Friday morning expecting to help serve lunch to 550 people at a banquet for President Bush's reelection campaign. Instead, he was given a few minutes to change clothes and was escorted off the premises with no explanation after a manager asked him one question: "Is your name Mohamad?"

Mr. Pharoan, an American citizen and seven-year employee at the Hyatt Regency at the Inner Harbor in Baltimore, found himself standing on the street just minutes later.

"This is appalling. Mr. Pharoan was held in high-regard by his coworkers and management, where he was considered a model employee," McCollum said.

The Secret Service has accepted responsibility for sending Mr. Pharoan home, but stopped short of apologizing for the incident. McCollum says this is unacceptable and she and her colleagues continue to demand an apology from the president.

"Mr. Pharoan's treatment was a violation of his civil liberties and he deserves an apology from the President for the unacceptable manner in which he was treated," McCollum said of the incident.

Earlier this week, McCollum joined dean of the House, Rep. John Dingell (D-MI), longtime civil rights activist John Lewis (D-GA) and Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee John Conyers (D-MI) in circulating a letter to their House colleagues to alert them of the issue.

"As President of the United States, the American people look to you for such leadership and guidance. It is disappointing when this leadership cannot be found," McCollum said in a letter to President Bush today.

After marrying a U.S. citizen in 1993, 58 year-old Pharoan, became a naturalized citizen in 1996.



This week, Rep. Betty McCollum was joined by Dr. David Walsh (right) of the National Institute on the Media and the Family to announce the **Eighth Annual Video and Computer Game Report Card**. This years mixed findings indicate that while positive steps are being made on improving ratings and retailer enforcement, the impact on youth of increasingly violent games is a growing concern.

McCollum called one of this season's hottest sellers - "Manhunt" - "a grotesque and disturbingly brutal game using cold-blooded murder as entertainment." She continued, "Video games are incredibly powerful. They can be positive and educational, or in too many cases, damaging. We all share in the responsibility to limit the most violent or sexually explicit games from children."

McCollum and Walsh urged parents, retailers and the video game industry to work together to ensure young people are using age appropriate games.

The Week Ahead

On **Tuesday December 16, 2003**, Rep. Betty McCollum will honor Ramsey County as they will receive a grant in the amount of \$499,290 from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. The grant is for Ramsey County's Substance Abuse program that seeks to improve the integration of chemical health services within the criminal justice system.

Contact Congresswoman Betty McCollum . . . www.house.gov/mccollum/contact.html

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