

# Congressional Record

April 28, 1993

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—*Extensions of Remarks*

E1071



United States  
of America

TRIBUTE TO CLEMENT SOFFER  
FOR RECEIVING THE DISTIN-  
GUISHED INTERNATIONAL SERV-  
ICE AWARD FROM YESHIVA UNI-  
VERSITY

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 28, 1993

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the outstanding achievements of Mr. Clement Soffer, this year's recipient of the Distinguished International Award which will be bestowed by Yeshiva University on the 18th of May. The award will be presented at Yeshiva University's annual dinner, hosted by the Sephardic Council of Overseers.

Yeshiva University president, Dr. Norman Lamm, will present this prestigious honor to Mr. Soffer, in recognition of his invaluable help to secure the exit of 2,600 Jews from Syria. Mr. Soffer is vice president of the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews. His valiant and selfless efforts should truly be commended and fulfill one of the most important mitzvot in the Torah, *pidyon sh'v'im*, the redemption of captives.

In addition, Mr. Soffer performed an invaluable role in saving numerous Jewish cemeteries from being desecrated. His active efforts to halt the destruction of these cemeteries display the undying love and respect he has for his ancestors. The memorial cemeteries are located in Cairo, Egypt; Pinsk, Belarus; Faro, Portugal; Hamburg, Germany; and Cohin, India.

Mr. Soffer's overwhelming devotion to and love of his community are displayed in the myriad responsibilities he has undertaken. He is intimately involved in many facets of Sephardic life. He is a founding member of the Sephardic Council of Overseers, and serves

on the board of the American Sephardic Federation, the executive board of International Sephardic Education Foundation, and is president of Chabad Congregation of Port Washington, NY. Mr. Soffer also serves on the board of Or-Yosef Yeshiva and the executive board of Tzedakah Umarpe.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to acknowledge two other special award recipients at the Yeshiva University dinner. Rabbi Norman Lamm will present the Distinguished Humanitarian Award to Mr. Elie Tahari, and the Advancement of Higher Education for Sephardim Award will be conferred on Mrs. Nina Weiner. All three honorees have been an inspiration to the council, and have dedicated their lives to serving the Sephardic people and *kial Yisroel*.

Honorary chairman of the dinner is the Haham, Dr. Solomon Gaon, director of the university's Jacob E. Safra Institute of Sephardic Studies. Honorary cochairpersons are Dr. Joseph Ades; Anna Elyachar; Ebrahim Eshaghian; Leon Levy; Aghajan Nassimi; the Safra family; Jay Schottenstein; and Ronald P. Stanton. The chief rabbi of the Syrian Sephardic community, Rabbi Jacob S. Kassin, is rabbinic chairman of the dinner.

The Sephardic Council, which was established in 1991, is a leadership body of prominent Sephardim that supports the broad spectrum of Sephardic academic, cultural, and service programs at Yeshiva University. The council's remarkable work to raise money to provide scholarship assistance to many of its more than 300 Sephardic students is exemplary. The wonderful mitzvot performed by the council would not have been possible if it were not for people such as Clement Soffer.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Soffer is an extraordinary person, and serves as an impeccable role model. I would like to applaud the noble efforts of Clement Soffer and the entire Sephardic Council.

JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN  
CONNECTICUT

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April 30, 1993

Mr. Clement Soffer  
President  
Jou Jou Designs  
525 7th Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10018

Dear Clem:

Please accept my heartfelt congratulations on the marvelous honor being bestowed upon you by the Sephardic Council of Overseers of Yeshiva University. Through your many and varied activities on behalf of the Jewish people throughout the world, you have truly earned the Distinguished International Service Award.

I am particularly proud to have been associated with you in many of the activities which Yeshiva University is recognizing on this occasion. As vice president of the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews, you have worked tirelessly to gain the freedom of the Jews remaining trapped in Syria. Through your valiant efforts and those of the council over the past four years, we have now seen over 2,600 of the 4,000 Jews of Syria gain their freedom; some of whom already are students in Yeshiva University's Sephardic studies program.

At the same time, I salute you on your outstanding efforts to preserve ancient Jewish cemeteries throughout the world. Through your efforts, the final resting places of the Jewish people in Cairo, Egypt; Faro, Portugal; Pinsk, Belarus; Hamburg, Germany; and Cochin, India, have been saved and preserved. For these extraordinary efforts of love for the Jewish people, you, likewise, are most deserving of this award.

Yeshiva University's Sephardic studies program, which you and the Sephardic Council have fostered in such an outstanding manner, has ensured that the next generation and future generations to come will be able to immerse themselves in the scholarship and the culture of the Sephardic traditions. The support given to this program by deeply committed Sephardic Jews such as yourself is worthy of our gratitude.

I would like to recognize, as well, the other honorees at the dinner, Nina Weiner and Elie Tahari. Their great accomplishments and outstanding activities on behalf of their Jewish brothers and sisters are a genuine tribute to their Sephardic heritage as well.

JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN  
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Finally, please convey my best wishes and congratulations to all the assembled dignitaries, especially to Dr. Norman Lamn and the leadership of this superb university.

Sincerely yours



Joseph I. Lieberman

CHARLES E. SCHUMER  
10TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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Congress of the United States  
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April 29, 1993

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Dinner Chairmen  
Sephardic Council of Overseers  
Yeshiva University  
New York, New York

Dear Friends:

I am delighted to wish you my congratulations on the occasion of the 1993 Annual Dinner of the Sephardic Council of Overseers of Yeshiva University. The programs of Sephardic education and culture that you have developed at Yeshiva University play a critical role in ensuring that Sephardic tradition continues to flourish in this country. Your good work is responsible for the development of the next generation of Sephardic leaders and is worthy of all our praise and support.

I am particularly honored to take this opportunity to salute the outstanding deeds of a unique individual, Clement Soffer. Clem, who I am proud to call a close friend, has long devoted his efforts to Jewish communities in distress throughout the world. As many of you may be aware, his efforts as Vice-President of the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews have been instrumental in securing the successful exit of 2,600 hundred Jews from Syria. Clem has also played a leading role in working to protect cemeteries that have been threatened with desecration countries as far flung as Egypt, Portugal, Belarus, Germany and India. He certainly is a deserving recipient of your Distinguished International Service Award. Chazak U'Baruch!

I would also like to offer my congratulations to my dear friend Nina Weiner, and Elie Tahari, tonight's awardees for their meritorious achievements. Their commitment is an inspiration to us all.

Again, my best wishes to all the friends and supporters of Yeshiva University's Sephardic Programs gathered this evening.

Sincerely,

  
CHARLES E. SCHUMER  
Member of Congress

**CONGRESSMAN DICK ZIMMER**

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May 4, 1993

Mr. Clement Soffer  
President  
Jou Jou Designs  
525 7th Avenue  
New York, NY 10018

Dear Clem:

Please accept my warmest congratulations for being awarded the distinguished International Service Award. I appreciate your invitation to join you on May 18th when you receive your award from the Sephardic Council of Overseers of Yeshiva University. Unfortunately, due to legislative business in the House, I will not be able to attend.

The result of your work as Vice-President of the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews speaks for itself. With help from you, and the many dedicated people who work with you at the Council, more than 2,600 Syrian Jews have settled in America. These individuals can now enjoy religious freedom for the first time. I know that you won't rest until the Jews that remain in Syria against their will are able to leave.

In addition, your longstanding commitment to the preservation of Jewish cemeteries around the world has been instrumental in saving many from destruction. Your hard work has saved Jewish cemeteries in Belarus, Portugal, Germany, India and your native Egypt. Given your work to help Jews around the world and to preserve our international Jewish heritage, you have more than earned the award with which you will be honored.

Please extend my personal congratulations and best wishes to the other honorees at the dinner, Mr. Elie Tahari and Ms. Nina Weiner. Also convey my appreciation to the leadership of Yeshiva University. I look forward to working with you and Yeshiva in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dick Zimmer".

Dick Zimmer  
Member of Congress

FRANK R. LAUTENBERG  
NEW JERSEY

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AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
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May 18, 1993

Mr. Clement Soffer  
Vice-President  
Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews

Dear Clement:

Congratulations on receiving the Distinguished International Award from Yeshiva University.

You have truly extended yourself to rescue the Syrian Jews. Your persistent and effective advocacy, your tireless devotion to the cause, and your willingness to do everything in your power to help these beleaguered people has resulted in the successful exit of 2600 Jews from Syria to date. C. S. Lewis has said, "He who saves a single life has saved the entire world". Clement, by these lights, you have saved the world several times over.

Further, your outstanding work to save Jewish cemeteries all over the world from desecration and destruction should also be commended. As you yourself have observed, doing something on behalf of the dead is one of the greatest mitvahs a Jew can do because he or she does it without any expectation of thanks.

Mazel tov on this outstanding honor. It is truly well-deserved, and could not be awarded to a more committed person.

Sincerely,



djr

REPLY TO:

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DANIEL K. INOUYE  
HAWAII

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May 18, 1993

The Sephardic Council of Overseers  
of Yeshiva University  
1993 Annual Dinner and  
Awards Ceremony  
New York Hilton  
New York, New York

Dear Friends:

It is a pleasure to extend my greetings to all attending the 1993 Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony sponsored by the Sephardic Council of Overseers of Yeshiva University. I regret that I am unable to be with you for this special occasion at the New York Hilton, but please know that you have my best wishes for a memorable and successful event.

I am especially pleased to join the multitude in extending my commendation to those we honor tonight for their efforts to safeguard and improve the human condition. Among the guests of honor is a friend of mine, Mr. Clement Soffer. He, like the others, represents the best of human nature. The honorees commit their time, resources and energy to enhancing the lives of others, often at great sacrifice or hardship. They gave their all, without the promise of a favor in return.

Tonight, we are fortunate to return in the same generous fashion the support, friendship and comfort the honorees have accorded to others over the years. For all they have done, they deserve our support, admiration and respect.

Aloha and Shalom,



DANIEL K. INOUYE  
United States Senator

DKI:ngc



STATE OF NEW YORK  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER  
ALBANY 12224

MARIO M. CUOMO  
GOVERNOR

April 28, 1993

Dear Friends:

I would like to extend greetings to all those who are gathered for the 1993 Annual Dinner of the Sephardic Council of Overseers of Yeshiva University.

I have been informed that among the prominent honorees at this year's dinner you will be honoring Mr. Clement Soffer. Mr. Soffer is well known for his efforts on behalf of world Jewry. He is receiving a most deserving award for his tireless efforts in advocating the release of 2600 Jews from Syria to date.

Mr. Soffer has also been involved in a major effort to stop the desecration of Jewish cemeteries worldwide. As an important leader in the Sephardic Jewish community, Clement Soffer has lent himself to many important causes. May he be blessed and continue his noble work for many years to come.

Best wishes for an enjoyable evening.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mario M. Cuomo".

Mr. Herbert C. Dobrinsky  
Yeshiva University  
500 West 185th Street  
New York, New York 10033





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May 18, 1993

Dear Friends:

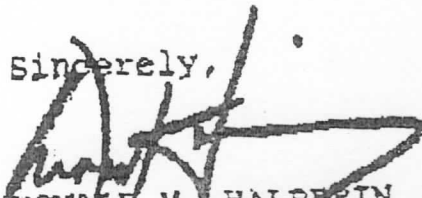
It is indeed a great honor to contribute this message of congratulations to the members of Yeshiva University's Sephardic Council of Overseers on your annual dinner. As a state senator, I take great pride in acknowledging the accomplishments of the people and institutions that make ours a dynamic community.

Since its inception in 1991, the Council has supported the multitude of Sephardic academic, cultural and service programs at Y.U. and has provided scholarships to many of its more than 300 Sephardic students.

Our honorees this evening, Clement Soffer recipient of the Distinguished International Service Award, Elie Tahari recipient of the Distinguished Humanitarian Award and Nina Weiner recipient of the Award for Advancement of Higher Education for Sephardim, have each demonstrated, through years of hard work, their unending dedication to the betterment of Sephardic education and spiritual life. In their respective synagogues and communities, they have been a source of inspiration to us all. I wish them luck in future endeavors.

May you all enjoy this happy celebration.

Sincerely,

  
DONALD M. HALPERIN  
Member of the Senate

DMH:mh