

February 15, 2000

ON PRESENTING CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO JOHN CARDINAL O'CONNOR

Statement of HON. RON PAUL OF TEXAS

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Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 3557. At the same time, I rise in total support of, and with complete respect for, the work of Cardinal O'Connor. Cardinal O'Connor is a true hero as he labors tirelessly on behalf of the most needy and vulnerable in our society; promotes racial and religious harmony; advocates the best education for all children regardless of race, religion, or financial status; ministers to the poor, sick, and disabled; all the while standing up for that which he believes even in the face of hostility. I must, however, oppose the Gold Medal for Cardinal O'Connor because appropriating \$30,000 of taxpayer money is neither constitutional nor, in the spirit of Cardinal O'Connor who dedicates his life to voluntary and charitable work, particularly humanitarian. Because of my continuing and uncompromising opposition to appropriations not authorized within the enumerated powers of the Constitution, several of my colleagues felt compelled to personally challenge me as to whether, on this issue, I would maintain my resolve and commitment to the Constitution--a Constitution, which only last year, each Member of Congress, swore to uphold. In each of these instances, I offered to do a little more than uphold my constitutional oath. In fact, as a means of demonstrating my personal regard and enthusiasm for the work of Cardinal O'Connor, I invited each of these colleagues to match my private, personal contribution of \$100 which, if accepted by the 435 Members of the House of Representatives, would more than satisfy the \$30,000 cost necessary to mint and award a gold medal to the well-deserving Cardinal O'Connor. To me, it seemed a particularly

good opportunity to demonstrate one's genuine convictions by spending one's own money rather than that of the taxpayers who remain free to contribute, at their own discretion, to the work of Cardinal O'Connor as they have consistently done in the past. For the record, not a single Representative who solicited my support for spending taxpayer's money, was willing to contribute their own money to demonstrate the courage of their so-called convictions and generosity. It is, of course, very easy to be generous with other people's money.