

violations we imposed on the Japanese Americans during World War II as we shunned them from society as a result of their ethnicity.

Mr. Speaker, despite all the hardship and adversity that Asian Americans have faced during their time in the United States, the persistence and resilience of Asian Americans have allowed them to flourish into the leading minority group they are today.

I encourage my colleagues to learn from the history of Asian Americans in the United States, so that we may avoid the civil rights violations and discriminatory practices that hurt ethnic communities in the name of national security.

I would also like to encourage the future generations of Asian Americans to follow in the footsteps of their ancestors. Persist in your dreams of a fair America, persist in your desires for an equal America, and persist in your fight for an America that is as dedicated and tolerant of you as your ancestors have been with us.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the resolution offered by my friend from Virginia, Mr. DAVIS.

I represent approximately 85,000 Asian Pacific Islander Americans in my Congressional district in New York City.

I am proud to represent the most diverse Congressional District in the country. From the strong Korean community in Elmhurst to the Philippine community of Woodside to Indian American in Jackson Heights to Bangladesh Americans in Parkchester, this district reflects the diversity of the continent of Asia and is a true testament of the American melting pot experience.

Thousands of Asian Americans and South Asians have left their lives behind in their homeland, just as my grandparents did, to make a better life for themselves in New York City. They have succeeded from the shops of 74th Street to the presence of Asians at all levels of law, medicine and commerce in our city. They have also become true stakeholders in our political system.

From the election of Jimmy Meng and John Liu to the New York State Assembly and City Council respectively to Uma Sen Gupta's election as the first Indian American district leader, Asian and South Asians are a vibrant part of not only the culture and economic fabric of our City but the political fabric as well.

Asian Pacific American Heritage month began on June 30, 1977 when the first 10 days of May 1978 were declared Asian Pacific American Heritage week.

Today, there are over 12 million Asian Pacific Islander Americans living in the United States. By the year 2050, there will be an estimated 33.4 million U.S. residents who will identify themselves as Asian alone, which will comprise 8 percent of the total population. This is a projected 213 percent increase of Asian Pacific Islander Americans between 2000 and 2050.

I am proud to represent Asian American and celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage with all my constituents and colleagues.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, this month our nation pays tribute to the contributions of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, including immigrants, refugees, and natives. More than 13 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, representing a diverse community of backgrounds,

cultures, and experiences, make their homes in the United States. Their unique contributions enhance the moral fabric and character of our great country.

The Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community is a fast-growing minority group in the United States. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are making valuable contributions to every aspect of American life—from business to education to science to the arts. For example, there are now more than 900,000 AAPI-owned small businesses across the country.

As we celebrate the significant progress made by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, it is right for us to honor the memory of great leaders of the AAPI community who have passed away recently, and by far one of the greatest was our own Congressman Bob Matsui, who despite imprisonment in an internment camp during World War II, never lost faith in our country, and went on to become a national champion for all of America's seniors. We miss Bob dearly, but the voters of California have blessed us by sending his wife, the Gentlelady from California, Ms. DORIS MATSUI, to carry on his wonderful legacy in this body.

In memory of Bob Matsui and other great figures in the history of our nation, it is only fitting that this year's theme for Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is "Liberty and Freedom for All." In my own district, we have our share of emerging leaders from the Asian community, including my friend Shing-Fu Hsueh, the mayor of West Windsor, who is a model public figure. Like Bob Matsui, Shing-Fu Hsueh is a believer in the American ideal, that anyone—regardless of religion, race, or gender—can realize their dreams for themselves and their children. Unfortunately, the faith of every member of New Jersey's Asian community in that American ideal has been sorely tested recently.

You see, on the very eve of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, two talk show hosts—whose program airs on one of the largest stations in New Jersey—made a most obnoxious, insulting, and despicable series of anti-Asian statements.

Last month, these shock jocks verbally demeaned Mr. Jun Choi, a Korean-American running for mayor of Edison, New Jersey, mockingly asking their listeners "Would you really vote for someone named Jun Choi?" They then preceded to say that "Americans" should govern our towns, counties, and country—as if Jun Choi, Shing-Fu Hsueh, and the thousands of other hard-working, tax-paying, and participating people of Asian heritage are not real Americans.

I could cite even more examples from this outrageous broadcast but I refuse to demean this House by repeating some of the other language that these two radio racists used. I'm extremely disappointed that the management of the radio station in question, 101.5 FM,

has not issued a written public apology to Jun Choi and the entire Asian community. In my judgment it is the absolute minimum they should do, and I also believe the station management should pledge never again to allow such racist rants to be aired on their station.

Mr. Speaker, as the Asian Pacific American community continues to contribute to our society and grow in influence—politically, economically, and culturally—I am pleased to say that Americans like Jun Choi, Shing-Fu Hsueh, and DORIS MATSUI are indeed taking leading roles in our self-governing country.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 280, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### RECOGNIZING 57TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE OF STATE OF ISRAEL

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 149) recognizing the 57th anniversary of the independence of the State of Israel, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 149

Whereas in May 1948, the State of Israel was established as a sovereign and independent nation;

Whereas the United States was one of the first nations to recognize Israel, only 11 minutes after its creation;

Whereas Israel has provided the opportunity for Jews from all over the world to re-establish their ancient homeland;

Whereas Israel is home to many religious sites which are sacred to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam;

Whereas Israel provided a refuge to Jews who survived the horrors of the Holocaust and the evils committed by the Nazis which were unprecedented in human history;

Whereas the people of Israel have established a unique, pluralistic democracy which includes the freedoms cherished by the people of the United States, including freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of the press, and government by the consent of the governed;

Whereas Israel continues to serve as a shining model of democratic values by regularly holding free and fair elections, promoting the free exchange of ideas, and vigorously exercising in its Parliament, the Knesset, a democratic government that is fully representative of its citizens;

Whereas Israel has bravely defended itself from attacks repeatedly since independence;

Whereas the Government of Israel has successfully worked with the neighboring Governments of Egypt and Jordan to establish peaceful, bilateral relations;

Whereas, despite the deaths of over one thousand innocent Israelis at the hands of murderous, suicide bombers and other terrorists during the past 4 years, the people of Israel continue to seek peace with their Palestinian neighbors;

Whereas the United States and Israel enjoy a strategic partnership based on shared mutual democratic values, friendship, and respect;

Whereas the people of the United States share affinity with the people of Israel and view Israel as a strong and trusted ally; and

Whereas Israel has made significant global contributions in the fields of science, medicine, and technology: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—*

(1) recognizes the independence of the State of Israel as a significant event in providing refuge and a national homeland for the Jewish people;

(2) praises the efforts of President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to create the conditions for peace in the Middle East;

(3) commends the bipartisan commitment of all United States administrations and United States Congresses since 1948 to stand by Israel and work for its security and well-being; and

(4) extends warm congratulations and best wishes to the people of Israel as they celebrate the 57th anniversary of Israel's independence.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 149, the concurrent resolution now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H. Con. Res. 149 marks the 57th anniversary of the State of Israel. Since its birth in 1948, Israel has stood out as a symbol of morality and courage. It has struggled constantly to maintain its independence, surmounting military attacks from hostile neighbors and prolonged terrorist campaigns.

Even while at war, Israel's democracy and its vibrant diverse and free society have stayed strong. Its doors have remained open to victims of persecution and intolerance around the world. It is the nature of the Israeli nation and the character of the Israeli people that have helped form an unbreakable bond between our nations and our people, and we are proud to call Israel our friend and ally.

The United States and Israel have a long history of friendship and cooperation. In 1948, the United States was one

of the first nations to recognize Israel, doing so only 11 minutes after its creation. From that point onward, the relationship between our Nation and Israel has continued to grow.

As the first and only true democracy in the Middle East, Israel is a remarkable example to its neighbors. Israel has an active free press that constantly holds up a mirror to the government and its policies. It holds regular, free, and fair elections and has a transparent independent judiciary. Israel is home to a remarkably diverse and multiethnic society that includes Jews of Middle Eastern descent, Arabs, Druze, and immigrant communities from Russia, Ethiopia, India and, indeed, all parts of the world. Israel exemplifies religious tolerance and respect.

The Israeli people have demonstrated over and over again their commitment to peace and to security in the face of terrorist threats. Israel has worked with the neighboring countries of Egypt and Jordan to establish peaceful bilateral relations and has seen those bonds flourish and strengthen through initiatives such as the Qualified Industrial Zones which have brought prosperity and development to all of the participants involved.

Israel has also continued seeking peace with its Palestinian neighbors, despite the relentless onslaught of suicide bombers that brought the deaths of over 1,000 innocent Israelis over the last 4 years.

Even while facing militant threats from its neighbors, Israel has flourished and has given the world great gifts through its literature and art and through its medical, technological, and scientific advances. The bond between our nations and our people has never been stronger.

Accordingly, I wish to extend my best wishes and congratulations to the people of the State of Israel on their 57th Independence Day and strongly urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First of all, let me say what an honor and privilege it is to introduce this resolution today with our great chairwoman of our Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia, my good friend and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN). We have worked together so well and so closely on the Middle East and other things that it is an honor to do this with her again this afternoon.

I also want to commend my colleague, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), for introducing this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. Fifty-seven years ago, the State of Israel was established as a sovereign and independent state. Rising from the ashes of the Holocaust, Israel represented not only a refuge for

Jews of Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere, but the fulfillment of the age-old dream of the Jewish people for a homeland of their own once again after so many thousands of years.

As you may know, Mr. Speaker, the United States was one of the first nations to recognize Israel only 11 minutes after its creation. The home to many religious sites of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, Israel provides fair and open access for people of all faiths to visit holy places. The people of Israel have established a unique pluralistic democracy. In fact, it is the only true democracy in the Middle East. This includes the rights and liberties cherished by the people of the United States, including freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of the press, and government by the consent of the governed.

Today, Israel continues to serve as a shining model of democratic values by regularly holding free and fair elections, promoting the free exchange of ideas, and vigorously exercising through its parliament, the Knesset, a democratic government that is fully representative of its citizens. Indeed, Israel and the United States have shared traditions and shared values, and democracy is certainly one of them.

Unfortunately, ever since its independence, Israel has repeatedly, time and time again, been forced to defend itself from attacks. Yet even in the face of this adversity, the government of Israel has successfully worked with the neighboring governments of Egypt and Jordan to establish peaceful bilateral relations.

During the summer of 2000, President Clinton tried to broker a permanent end to the conflict, where the Israelis signed and agreed to a very generous and deep concession. Yet Yasar Arafat rejected the deal, walked out and sparked his terror war. Despite the deaths of over 1,000 innocent Israelis at the hands of murderous suicide bombers and other terrorists since then, the people of Israel continue to seek peace with their Palestinian neighbors.

Regardless, the United States and Israel enjoy a strategic partnership based on shared democratic principles, friendship, and respect. President Bush has said this many, many times. And, indeed, all Presidents of the United States have worked closely with Israel.

Our people share a true affinity of values and view each other as strong and trusted allies. As an American of Jewish heritage myself, I am proud to speak in favor of H. Con. Res. 149, which recognizes the independence of the State of Israel as a significant event in providing refuge and a national homeland for the Jewish people.

The resolution also praises American and Israeli efforts to create the conditions for peace in the Middle East, commends the bipartisan commitment of all United States administrations and United States Congresses since 1948 to stand by Israel and work for its security and well-being, and extends

warm congratulations and best wishes to the people of Israel as they celebrate their 57th anniversary of Israel's independence.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who is now visiting the United States, and wish him a safe and productive visit. In fact, the APAC conference, which has been going on these past few days in Washington, as we speak, is a reminder of the work that needs to be done to continue to solidify and strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), the author and the lead sponsor of this concurrent resolution.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for yielding me this time, and for her leadership on this issue and her leadership on the Committee on International Relations. It is particularly an honor for me to follow my good friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL). It is wonderful we can be here together as Members of the House Israel Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting House Concurrent Resolution 149, which recognizes the 57th anniversary of the independence of the State of Israel. Since its establishment, Israel has served as a trusted home and safe haven for Jews all over the world. After World War II, Israel welcomed Jews who survived the horrors of the Holocaust.

Mr. Speaker, I have visited firsthand to see the country continue to embrace Jews who are eager to reestablish in their ancient homeland. By regularly holding free and fair elections, promoting the exchange of ideas, and vigorously exercising in its parliament, Israel is a shining model of democracy.

The evolution of this great Nation is a true testament to the power of democracy and the resiliency of the people of Israel. Throughout the past 57 years, the relationship between Israel and the United States has continued to strengthen. Israel is a trusted ally of the United States, and our two countries now enjoy a strategic partnership based on shared mutual democratic values, friendship, and respect.

Additionally, I am grateful my home State of South Carolina and my hometown of Charleston were the home of the largest Jewish population in North America at the time of the American Revolution. Its provincial constitution was the first to recognize Judaism to be coequal to Christianity. The first Jew to be elected to public office in North America was in South Carolina. And the first Jewish fatality in the cause of liberty during the American Revolution was a patriot from South Carolina.

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The bonds of Israel and South Carolina are strong.

Today's resolution also commends President George W. Bush of the United States and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for continuing to work for peace in the Middle East. Despite the deaths of over 1,000 Israelis at the hands of murderous terrorists, the people of Israel continue to seek peace with their Palestinian neighbors. Their perseverance and strong spirit will ensure a bright future for their nation and the Middle East.

As we recognize the 57th anniversary of independence, please join me in extending warm congratulations and best wishes to the people of Israel.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will not forget September 11.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to join with my colleagues in congratulating the people of Israel on the 57th anniversary of the independence of the State of Israel. Relationships between Israel and the United States remain strong, based on each country's expressed commitment to democracy, human rights and self-determination for all people.

This past year has been a momentous one for the people of Israel. Israel won its first Olympic gold medal this past summer. Israel won its first Nobel Prize this past year, and the Israeli economy continues to recover.

Israel as a nation continues to thrive. Its people remain strong and optimistic about the future. The negotiated end to violence and Prime Minister Sharon's proposed disengagement plan to dismantle Jewish communities in Gaza and parts of the West Bank move the peace process into a new and uncharted era.

Now the attention of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples turn to the outcome of talks between Israeli Prime Minister Sharon and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas as to what will come in the wake of the withdrawal from Gaza.

As we wish the Israeli people mazel tov on the anniversary of their independence, we stand ready to assist in every way in moving the peace process forward toward a permanent end to the violence and toward peace and mutual prosperity for Israel and her closest neighbor, Palestine.

On Sunday of this past week, I had an opportunity to participate with a number of my constituents in a Solidarity Day demonstration in our community. Again, I simply want to congratulate them for their continued steadfastness. I am proud and pleased to support this legislation.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the citizens of Israel and the entire Jewish community on this 57th anniversary of the State of Israel's founding, also known as Yom Ha'atzmaut.

For 57 years, the Israeli people have faced persistent challenges and threats, and they have prevailed—and will continue to prevail and flourish—because of their unshakable courage and faith in Israel's democratic future.

Israel is today the only true democracy in the Middle East, and the foundation of her government is similar to our own—freedom of religion, freedom of speech, respect for basic human rights and respect for the rule of law. The American-Israel partnership is unbreakable. We are both nations of immigrants. We are safe havens for the oppressed. We are partners for peace. And we are united in fighting terrorism.

I am pleased that once again this summer I will have the opportunity to lead a delegation of Democratic Members of Congress to Israel. Two years ago, I had the honor of leading the largest Congressional delegation in Israel's history to the Jewish state. And, I believe it is imperative that our newer Members see Israel's security challenges first-hand and gain a better appreciation of her importance to America's national security interests.

I urge my colleagues to support this important Resolution.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it was Theodore Herzl that said, "im tirtzu ein zo agadah" (EEm teer-su, ain so aga DAH); if you will it, it is no dream. Today we are here to celebrate his dream and recognize the 57th anniversary of the independence of the State of Israel.

On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was established as a sovereign and independent nation and the United States was one of the first nations to recognize Israel, a mere 11 minutes after its creation.

Israel has provided a unique opportunity for Jews from all over the world to reestablish their ancient homeland. In addition, it is a home to many religious sites which are sacred to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and attracts visitors every year.

Israel provided a refuge to Jews who survived the horrors of the Holocaust and the evils committed by the Nazis which were unprecedented in human history. The people of Israel have established a unique, pluralistic democracy which includes the freedoms cherished by the people of the United States, including freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of the press, and government by the consent of the governed.

Israel continues to serve as a shining model of democratic values by regularly holding free and fair elections, promoting the free exchange of ideas, and vigorously exercising in its Parliament, the Knesset, a democratic government that is fully representative of its citizens. Israel continues to bravely defend itself from attacks repeatedly since independence, such horrors that have become a daily reality for the people who live there.

I want to applaud the Government of Israel for successfully working with the neighboring Governments of Egypt and Jordan to establish peaceful, bilateral relations. I have had the privilege of visiting Israel, and hearing first-hand how the government is taking great strides to ensure peace for generations.

The United States and Israel enjoy a strategic partnership based on shared mutual democratic values, friendship, and respect. The people of the United States share affinity with the people of Israel and view Israel as a

strong and trusted ally. I hope this friendship continues to grow and blossom for decades to come, as Israel settles itself in a firm place on our global map.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 149 which celebrates the 57th anniversary of the independent and democratic State of Israel. Today we remember and pay tribute to the creation of the State of Israel. The United States took only eleven minutes after Israel had been declared a state to officially welcome her into the community of nations. For the last 47 years the United States and Israel built a unique and strong and special relationship.

The creation of the State of Israel was a bold step in May of 1948. The first Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, once said that, "courage is a special kind of knowledge: the knowledge of how to fear what ought to be feared and how not to fear what ought not to be feared." It is from such courage that Israel was formed and it is that that continues to maintain Israel as a vibrant and strong democracy today. We can all learn examples from the struggles that the citizens of Israel have endured and the grief they have overcome to remain a democratic outpost in the Middle East.

Yet, much work remains unfinished. We all remain troubled by the continued violence in the Middle East and we all continue to pray for a peaceful end to the years of violence and terror. The United States and our citizens learned all too well about the effects of terrorism on an early morning in September of 2001. In that one day, the nations of the world rallied to our side, offered aid, and pledged to assist us in any way possible. Yet, sadly, events like that September morning have been frequent occurrences in Israel. This fact can be easily be lost as the continued violence and terror is pushed off the front pages of our news papers and out of the nightly news on TV. That is why it is important now, more than ever, to remember and support our strongest and oldest ally in the Middle East.

I am proud to join with my colleagues today to reiterate our continued strong support of Israel, its right to defend itself and its people from terrorism, and to focus on the special relationship that exists between our two nations. I have had the pleasure to travel to Israel on a number of occasions, and these visits have only reinforced my strong conviction that the United States needs to remain a strong partner of Israel and remain actively engaged in negotiating a peaceful and equitable agreement between the parties to this conflict.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support this resolution in celebrating the 47 years of Israel's existence as a beacon of democracy and hope in the Middle East. I also celebrate today the daily courage exhibited by the citizens of Israel and want to express my personal commitment to Israel at this important milestone in its history. I look forward to future anniversaries, and to the day when Israel and her citizens can live in peace without the need for courage against fear.

Mr. VISCLOSKEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 149, a measure recognizing the 57th anniversary of the independence of the State of Israel. It is my honor to recognize this anniversary which marks the restoration of Jewish independence with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

I commend the Israeli people for their remarkable achievements in building a new

state and a pluralistic and democratic society in the Middle East in the face of terrorism and hostility. On this occasion, I extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to the state of Israel and her people for a peaceful, prosperous, and successful future.

Independence Day is a celebration of the renewal of the Jewish state in the Land of Israel, the birthplace of the Jewish people. In this land, the Jewish people began to develop its distinctive religion and culture some 4,000 years ago, and here it has preserved an unbroken physical presence, for centuries as a sovereign state, at other times under foreign control.

On this 57th Anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel, we recognize that the Israeli people have created one of the leading nations in the fields of science, technology, medicine, and agriculture. The people of Israel have established a vibrant and functioning pluralistic and democratic political system that guarantees the freedoms of speech and press, and free, fair, and open elections with respect for the rule of law. With a strong democracy in a troubled part of the world, Israel has absorbed millions of new immigrants from all over the world. Some of these immigrants arrived without a single possession, but Israel welcomed them by providing housing, education, social security, and health care.

I rise also to condemn the rising tide of anti-Semitism around the globe and to demonstrate the United States' lasting bond of friendship and cooperation with Israel, which has existed for the past 57 years.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in recognizing and paying tribute to the state of Israel as she celebrates her 57th Independence Day and again extend my warmest wishes for a peaceful and prosperous future. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Con. Res. 149.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 149, honoring the 57th anniversary of Israel's independence and thank the gentleman from South Carolina for introducing this resolution. From the ashes of the Holocaust, Israel rose to become a shining example of democracy and liberty in a neighborhood otherwise dominated by totalitarian and dictatorial regimes.

The United States and Israel have had a special relationship since modern Israel's founding in 1948. The U.S. was the first country to recognize Israel, only 11 minutes after it was officially created. Since then, the two countries have developed a rock-solid friendship based on shared values and the fundamental principles of freedom and equality.

A strong U.S.-Israel relationship is in the best interest of both countries. Israel stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the U.S. in countering the greatest threats to American interests in the region. When terrorists strike U.S. targets in the region or elsewhere in the world, Israel does not duck for cover but stands by the U.S. Additionally, no other country in the region supports the American position at the United Nations as consistently as Israel.

Israel's 57th anniversary is a great day for not only Israel but for freedom loving people all around the world.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to speak in strong support of the resolution today honoring the 57th anniversary of the Independence of the State Israel.

I congratulate the people of the State of Israel and the greater Jewish community on the 57th anniversary of their Independence.

The creation of the Jewish State in 1948 was met with the immediate support and recognition from the United States, and our country has continued to consider Israel our closest friend and strongest ally.

As Israel continues to fight against terrorist groups, it is more important than ever the United States continues to show our solidarity and provide whatever aid and support both economic and moral, to our friend Israel.

Israel, as the only truly democratic nation in the Middle East should be lauded for 57 years of democracy.

Israel continues to show the world that this small state who has been surrounded by aggressive states for most of its existence is here to stay. I believe the survival of the Jewish state is paramount and the United States must continue to encourage Israel's sustained efforts to defend the freedoms and rights it has secured its citizens.

Since its Independence, Israel has endured the unstable and troubling conditions in the Middle East that have sparked several wars and incited much violence.

Yet the Israeli people remain united and strong and continue to stand up for their nation. That is why I re-affirm the right of the Israeli people to always protect themselves and their state from the forces of terrorism, no matter where it may exist.

Israel is a modern success story, the only Democracy in the Middle East, the only Middle Eastern country where Arabs have the right to vote for their elected officials and their political leaders.

Her detractors and those who hide their anti-Semitism behind anti-Zionism must not denigrate the success of Israel. I am proud to be one of Israel's strongest friends in Congress and to wish Israel a hearty Mazel Tov on 57 years of Independence.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I commend our colleague from South Carolina, JOE WILSON, for his effort in introducing this is resolution and I am delighted to join him extending the heartfelt congratulations of the Congress and the American people to the Israeli people in recognition of the 57th anniversary of their independence, which they celebrated this month.

Mr. Speaker, Israel is a tiny island of refuge in the midst of a roiling sea of hostile neighbors. Although relentlessly under attack since their nation's birth, the Israeli people have succeeded in creating the only democracy in the Middle East, and one of the most prosperous, technologically advanced, and reliably just societies on earth.

In the 57 years of its independence, Israel has absorbed millions of Jewish immigrants from all around the world, including over a million immigrants from the former Soviet Union in just the past 15 years. This is a remarkable and unprecedented achievement for a country whose population was only 600,000 in 1948. Israel has given immigrants the opportunity to live lives of dignity and equality in a free society—people who otherwise would have lived, at best, as second- or third-class citizens in the countries they left behind.

An indication of the vibrancy and vitality of Israeli democracy, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that Israel celebrates its anniversary this year as it prepares to resettle civilian settlements and

disengage its military forces from Gaza and parts of the West Bank. This was Prime Minister Sharon's incredibly bold and courageous initiative. It will not be easy to implement, given the determined opposition of a minority of Israelis. But anyone who knows Ariel Sharon has little doubt that the disengagement will happen, just as the Prime Minister intends.

The disengagement from Gaza entails not only political risks for Prime Minister Sharon but also security risks for Israel. It is in our national interest to assist Israel to reduce those risks. The United States stood by Israel when it took courageous steps for peace with Egypt and Jordan, and we will continue to stand by Israel as it undertakes risks in order to make progress toward peace with the Palestinians. The United States is also committed to helping Israel deal with the emerging threats of radical regimes and terrorist organizations in the Middle East.

We must not forget, Mr. Speaker, that progress toward peace has come at a great cost. For the past four and half years, innocent civilians have been murdered by terrorists aiming to destroy the state, and Israelis have been killed only because they were Israelis. By supporting Israel in its struggle for peace, we honor the victims' memory and help to promote better future, both for Israelis and Palestinians and the region.

The establishment of the State of Israel has been a great boon not only for those who live there, but it is of great importance for our nation as well. We treasure Israel as our most loyal ally in the Middle East and as the embodiment of democratic values we cherish. It is no wonder that the United States has played a critical role in supporting Israel's security in a bipartisan fashion. It is a record about which we are justifiably proud and a standard to which we will aspire for years to come.

In recognizing Israeli independence, we reiterate our commitment to ensure the safety and security of the State of Israel for the sake of the Israeli people and for the sake of the American people. The historic ties and friendship between our two democratic states have been a source of great pride for both our nations, and we are committed to maintaining and reinforcing them. As the Israeli people continue to draw inspiration in their struggle for peace and security from their friends and supporters in the United States, the Israeli people should know that Israel has no greater friend and no stronger supporter than the people of the United States of America.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 149, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF SISTER DOROTHY STANG

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 89) honoring the life of Sister Dorothy Stang.

The Clerk read as follows:

##### H. CON. RES. 89

Whereas Sister of Notre Dame de Namur Dorothy Stang, moved to the Amazon 22 years ago to help poor farmers build independent futures for their families, and was murdered on Saturday, February 12, 2005, at the age of 73, in Anapu, Para, a section of Brazil's Amazon rain forest;

Whereas, a citizen of Brazil and the United States, Sister Dorothy worked with the Pastoral Land Commission, an organization of the Catholic Church that fights for the rights of rural workers and peasants, and defends land reforms in Brazil;

Whereas her death came less than a week after meeting with the human rights officials of Brazil about threats to local farmers from some loggers and landowners;

Whereas, after receiving several death threats, Sister Dorothy recently commented, "I don't want to flee, nor do I want to abandon the battle of these farmers who live without any protection in the forest. They have the sacrosanct right to aspire to a better life on land where they can live and work with dignity while respecting the environment.";

Whereas Sister Dorothy was born in Dayton, Ohio, entered the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur community in 1948, and professed final vows in 1956;

Whereas, from 1951 to 1966, Sister Dorothy taught elementary classes at St. Victor School in Calumet City, Illinois, St. Alexander School in Villa Park, Illinois, and Most Holy Trinity School in Phoenix, Arizona, and began her ministry in Brazil in 1966, in Coroata in the state of Maranhao;

Whereas, last June, Sister Dorothy was named "Woman of the Year" by the state of Para for her work in the Amazon region, in December 2004, she received the Humanitarian of the Year award from the Brazilian Bar Association for her work helping the local rural workers, and earlier this year, she received an "Honorary Citizenship of the State" award from the state of Para; and

Whereas Sister Dorothy lived her life according to the mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame: making known God's goodness and love of the poor through a Gospel way of life, community, and prayer, while continuing a strong educational tradition and taking a stand with the poor people especially women and children, in the most abandoned places, and committing her one and only life to work with others to create justice and peace for all: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),* That the Congress hereby honors the life and work of Sister Dorothy Stang.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the concurrent resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) and his cosponsors for bringing this important resolution to the floor. I also wish to commend the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE) and our ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), for expediting the consideration of this resolution in our Committee on International Relations.

Sister Dorothy worked in Brazil to directly help the people who are most in need, rural workers and peasants. She showed great personal courage by continuing on in her work with the Pastoral Land Commission despite death threats.

Brazil and the world were shocked when Sister Dorothy was murdered on February 12, 2005. She was 73 years of age. It is fitting and proper that the United States Congress should recognize the extraordinary example that Sister Dorothy set for her countrymen here in the United States and in her adoptive country of Brazil.

Today, we stand together to remember Sister Dorothy's extraordinary life. Perhaps an even more eloquent and lasting testament to Sister Dorothy's memory is the fact that Americans of faith are working every day for their fellow man in the remotest corners of the world. Many are to be found across our own hemisphere. Throughout their good works, they also honor Sister Dorothy's sacrifice.

Mr. Speaker, I am certain my colleagues will join me in strong support of this concurrent resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. I want to congratulate the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) for his leadership in commemorating the life and work of Sister Dorothy Stang.

Mr. Speaker, Sister Dorothy Stang stood firmly on the side of the weak and disposed in the Brazilian rainforest for over 40 years. Her willingness to defend the indigenous people ultimately led to her untimely and tragic death.

Dorothy Stang entered the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur community in 1948, and professed final vows in 1956. In 1966, she began her very important ministry in Brazil.

Sister Dorothy immediately encountered injustices which made her a life-long crusader for the rights of indigenous minorities and a voice for the