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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of Georgia).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 13, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DOUG COLLINS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

SEQUESTRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, the President spoke to us last night and he talked to us about avoiding the sequester. I was at a political event being interviewed and a gentleman, Mr. POMPEO from Kansas, was with us as well, and he spoke before I did. He talked about the sequester and he said:

> It's going to be a home run. We're doing what the American people ask the United States House of Representatives to do in 2010 when I came here.

He then said, in referring to the sequester:

> I think the American people . . . will have tremendous respect for what its House of Representatives led and what its Federal Government was able to accomplish.

A profound disagreement. I think the gentleman from Kansas is profoundly wrong. The sequester will have an extraordinarily negative effect on this country, on its people, on its economy, and on its national security, and I might say on the confidence that the world at large has in the United States' ability to pursue rational policy.

In the State of the Union address last night, Mr. Speaker, with regard to deficits, the President said this:

> None of us will get 100 percent of what we want. But the alternative will cost us jobs, hurt our economy, and visit hardship on millions of hardworking Americans.

He went on to say:

> The greatest Nation on Earth cannot keep conducting its business by drifting from one manufactured crisis to the next.

Every 30 days, every 60 days, every 90 days, a manufactured crisis, evidence of a dysfunctional and willful Congress.

He went on to say:

> Let's agree right here, right now, to keep the people's Government open, pay our bills on time, and always uphold the full faith and credit of the United States of America.

That seems to be reasonable policy.

We now have two and a half weeks before the sequester takes effect, with devastating consequences for our economy and national security, yet the gentleman from Kansas welcomes that policy. In fact, the Republican leadership of this House has not put a single bill on the floor in this Congress that would have any impact on avoiding the sequester.

We now find ourselves facing yet another manufactured crisis. Instead of preventing it, as I've said, Republicans appear to be willing and enthusiastically welcoming the sequester.

Mr. Speaker, every American ought to take note of that enthusiasm for an irrational policy, referred to as irrational by its own leader, Mr. CANTOR, who said it was not the way we ought to do business. He's right, but he's brought nothing to the floor to avoid it.

The sequester, though, was meant to be so undesirable an outcome that it would force us to agree on a better approach. It married the worst consequences for both parties when it came to spending cuts: indiscriminate cuts to the defense budget alongside cuts to critical domestic programs.

In politics, often the key to compromise is crafting a package that contains something, some provision that everyone can love, although everyone will not love every provision. Here, Congress took the opposite approach and included something everyone could despise.

A faction of the majority, which is not a majority of this House by itself, has become so zealous in its drive to pursue a spending-only approach that it has embraced the sequester's Draconian cuts. Mr. POMPEO's quote this morning affirms that assertion.

They've used their clout within the majority to hold Congress hostage from one manufactured crisis to the next, and they nearly brought us to the edge of default for a second time last year. There have been several reports in a number of news outlets that Speaker BOEHNER promised their faction that the topline for appropriations would not exceed the level it would be after sequestration cuts, already adopting the premise that sequestration has gone into effect.

It was further reported that while the sequester levels would be kept, the cuts would be rearranged in order to protect defense spending at the further detriment to domestic parties, like NIH, cancer research, heart research, prostate cancer research, diabetes research, all the other maladies that—Dr. BERA is sitting here shaking his

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head—afflict us in this country and around the world.

By injecting additional partisanship in this way, Republicans would be taking a further step away from compromise. We need compromise. Each of us in this body understands we represent a certain segment of society, but not everybody agrees with everything we believe. Therefore, if we are to act on behalf of the country in a responsible, effective fashion, it's necessary to compromise.

Mr. Speaker, the sequester is real and is rapidly approaching. It is not a rational approach to deficit reduction. Even Republican Leader CANTOR, as I said, admitted on ''Meet the Press'' on Sunday about the sequester, and I quote the Republican leader:

> I don't want to live with the sequester.

Let me repeat that.

> I do not want to live with the sequester. I want reductions in spending that make sense.

These indiscriminate reductions don't make sense. That's what Mr. POMPEO was welcoming: indiscriminate cuts that do not make sense. We need serious action in Congress to deal with the sequester, and that action cannot wait. But there's been nothing on the floor in this Congress to deal with that sequester—nothing. Not a single piece of legislation has been brought forth by the majority.

I used to be the majority leader, Mr. Speaker, and I had the power to bring legislation forward, and I would do it. I'm no longer the majority leader. The majority leader, notwithstanding this quote that these indiscriminate reductions don't make sense, has not brought an alternative to this floor.

Democrats are ready to make tough choices, and we're ready to work with Republicans to do what is necessary to solve this problem of our deficits in a balanced way. We must reduce spending, but we also need to raise revenues. Every bipartisan commission, everyone has said the only way you're going to solve the arithmetic is to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to yield back the balance of my time so that my colleagues have an opportunity to say their piece, but I lament the fact that we're going home next week. We ought to be here working to avoid what the majority leader says are indiscriminate cuts that are not the way to do business. Yet, we rush headlong to do that.

□ 1010

I hope the Senate acts. I hope the Senate passes a bill that will be rational, will get us out of this conundrum of a sequester that nobody should want, and that when it does, Majority Leader CANTOR and Speaker BOEHNER will bring it to the floor and let us vote. And if you don't like it, vote against it. But let the American people know where we stand.

Let us avoid the sequester. Let us get ourselves on a fiscally balanced path, but let us do so responsibly.

NATIONAL CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as cochair of the bipartisan House Career and Technical Education Caucus in order to recognize February as National Career and Technical Education Month. Career and technical education programs continue to evolve in order to ensure that workers are prepared to hold jobs in high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand career fields like engineering, information technology, health care, and advanced manufacturing for the 21st century.

During this time of record-high unemployment, career and technical education programs provide a lifeline for the underemployed who look to begin new careers alongside young adults just starting out of high school in the rapidly evolving job market.

Career and technical education, while historically undervalued, helps tackle critical workforce shortages and provides an opportunity for America to remain globally competitive while also engaging students in practical, real-world applications of academics coupled with hands-on work experience.

Now, as we move toward fiscal year 2014, I join with a bipartisan group of my colleagues in not only recognizing the importance of maintaining these Federal investments for our country's future but also in saying thank you to the countless men and women who make these programs possible—the faculty, the teachers and the instructors within our career and technical education schools throughout this great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Career and Technical Education Month, I encourage my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to join me and my good friend, Representative LANGEVIN from Rhode Island, the cochair of the House Career and Technical Education Caucus, as we continue our work together of the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus.

The goals of this caucus are to provide promising futures for individuals who are seeking opportunities for work within this great Nation, and for employers, many of whom are in situations, despite record high unemployment for the longest sustained time since the Great Depression, of having great-paying jobs that are sitting open and available where they can't find a qualified, trained workforce and, quite frankly, for America, whose competitiveness into the future will depend on how well we make these investments.

THE SEQUESTER AND AN OLIVE BRANCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. We had a historic occasion last evening, but I rise to comment on a number of issues. I first want to acknowledge and pay tribute to a Texan who was buried yesterday in a tragic incident, Chris Kyle, a Navy SEAL who had served this country, loved this country, and came back to his family and children and took as his cause to help serve troubled veterans. As he was doing so, along with his friend, Chad, one of those troubled veterans shot both him and his friend.

What a tragedy. I think it is important to note the thousands who mourned him and the procession that took him to his burial ground yesterday and to say thank you for not only serving this Nation, but coming home to care about those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

That leads me to bring up this whole question of sequester. In my own city of Houston, I was able to, some 4 years ago, establish the first post-traumatic stress disorder center in a hospital that was not a veterans hospital. The Riverside General Hospital for a period of years continued serving our post-traumatic stress disorder veterans in a small, attentive setting where they could sit with others who were troubled as well. I've become a champion of the needs and the purpose of post-traumatic stress disorder medical services and beg and cry to the Department of Veterans Affairs and to the Pentagon from where this grant came. We cannot abandon our soldiers who have served us well. And I would hope that the grant for this hospital will be continued because Texas has been known to have the largest number of returning Iraq and Afghanistan troops.

Mr. Speaker, that speaks loudly to the question of sequester. I'm delighted that the President last evening could not have offered more olive branches on economic reform and tax reform. His idea is that we can do this budget together, not a sequester and not a self-inflicted wound, which is what we did to ourselves, but, more importantly, to talk about innovation and growth. This is something that I've spoken about over and over again as a member formerly of the Science Committee and now Homeland Security.

Where is America's genius? Right outside the beltway. Why are we dividing ourselves along Democrats and Republicans, refusing to put revenue alongside of cuts? Mr. Speaker, we're at the bone, almost, and sequester that is across-the-board cuts will literally destroy us and put us in a recession. All the talking heads that are suggesting that the President was not bipartisan and how there was nothing that they heard, well, Mr. Speaker, may I ask them to take some cotton out of their ears. Because in actuality, the President extended his hand of friendship.

We want to get down to work. We can pass comprehensive immigration reform. We can pass in tribute and recognition of Sandy Hook, Hadiya, and

Aurora and our Congresswoman, our former colleague, Congresswoman Giffords, and Virginia Tech and many places, and Lone Star College in my district and the tragedy at the University of Maryland that just occurred in the last 24 hours. People are mourning. We have to stop gun violence. So I don't want to hear the fact that the President is divisive. The President is leading, and he has led well.

The American people are listening. When are our friends on the other side of the aisle going to listen? And when are the American people going to raise up beyond the maze of television commentary and see that your voices can be heard? If you raise up literally in the houses of worship and civic clubs and say that Congress must do its job for our soldiers who are coming home and for those children who are the future and for the opportunity for growth, you bring down the debt by growing the economy and innovating.

Congratulations, Mr. President, for the research and manufacturing centers—15. Let's do more of them. I hope that we can get summer youth jobs, a program of private and public cooperation. When does a youth take up a gun? They take it up when they don't have a summer job and when they don't have an opportunity. So I want to challenge this body to be the kind of Lincolnesque attitude, as yesterday was the official birthday of President Lincoln, February 12. And although it was a tragic time in our history, I can assure you that it showed the greatest promise of America when people could come together and do something great. I stand here as a freed slave because this Congress came together. Are we going to be able to do it today to free America?

THE DEBT CEILING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, last month we passed a bill that suspends the debt ceiling until May. I voted for that bill because I didn't want to plunge the credit rating of this country or have the economy plunge into another recession. But that vote was just a short-term fix in what has been a series of short-term fixes. And short-term fixes no longer cut it when it comes to running the world's biggest economy.

Instead of thoughtful, long-term planning, we have contented ourselves with political sideshows. We've budgeted with continuing resolutions and held endless partisan committee hearings aimed at dismantling so-called job-killing legislation like the Clean Air Act. We voted 33 times to repeal all or part of the President's health care plan, and we attempted to balance the Federal Government's budget by zeroing out Planned Parenthood. That's not careful planning. That's tired political dogma.

□ 1020

In a famous speech about the Vietnam war, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, ''We are confronted by the fierce urgency of now.''

We again find ourselves in a conflict that threatens the political fabric of our Nation, the integrity of our institutions. We face a mountain of debt. We lack a comprehensive approach to climate change, energy, transportation, Medicare, Social Security, defense spending, immigration reform, gun violence, and even our postal system.

We need to find that urgency to get started on creating a sensible energy policy that confronts climate change and reduces our reliance on foreign oil.

We need that urgency to formulate a transportation plan so that States can address their crumbling infrastructure and local businesses can get back to work.

We need that urgency of now to reconfigure our security policy, making sensible cuts and fashioning a force that prepares us for conflicts of the future and not the past.

We need the urgency of now to make sensible changes to Social Security and Medicare to ensure the vitality of these programs for generations to come.

That urgency of now will reward us with more than a sensible energy policy, good roads, a smarter defense department, and sustainable social welfare system. We will be rewarded with a stable economy and reduced market volatility.

We cannot wait to act. We are borrowing 42 cents for every dollar we spend. We have to take sensible steps to begin reducing our debt without stepping on a fragile economic recovery. We have to take steps that are big, bold, and bipartisan. That's why I signed onto the Cooper-LaTourette bipartisan budget agreement that would have saved $4 trillion over 10 years, and that's why my office authored a comprehensive plan to reinvent government and save taxpayers $2 trillion over the next 10 years.

No, government is not perfect. But I believe we need to reinvent government, not eliminate it. Or, as Grover Norquist says, make ''it small enough to drown in the bathtub.''

Government is important. The heroes of 9/11 were government workers. Government teaches our kids; it protects us, keeps us safe, helps keep our air clean, and protects the less fortunate.

The Tea Party has this wrong. The objective should not be to destroy government through reactive draconian cuts; rather, we should collectively rethink and renew this institution that touches all of our lives.

I recognize that not everyone I serve with would agree on how to cut defense and adjust social programs to make them sustainable over time. That's the whole point. You have to compromise. Sadly, that's not in vogue these days. My colleague from Chicago, Congressman BOBBY RUSH, said it best when he observed, ''In Congress, the view of compromise is that the other guy gives in.''

It simply can't be that way. Until we end the bickering, political preening, and brinksmanship, the deadlock that has paralyzed our political process will continue.

As Lincoln said, ''It is not can any of us imagine better, but can we do better?''

And those words are true today. We have to abandon the dogmas of yesterday to fulfill the promise of tomorrow.

''We cannot escape history,'' he said. ''We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves.''

Despite this immense challenge that confronts us, I believe we will prevail. If we can summon that urgency of now, if we can end the bitter partisanship and poor planning; we can solve our Nation's problems and make a brighter day for ourselves and generations to come.

FUTURE OF THE FMLA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (GEORGE MILLER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I read with interest Majority Leader CANTOR's speech last week on the majority's latest relaunch of the House GOP's attempt to identify with the middle class.

Leader CANTOR said that the House will pursue an agenda of health, happiness, and prosperity for more Americans and their families. He went on to identify a very important problem for millions of Americans: how to balance work and family.

Unfortunately, that was the end of the relaunch. Because to address this problem, the majority leader proposed an old scheme that actually takes away workers' rights to overtime pay in exchange for employer-controlled comp time. This scheme has been bouncing around the Big Business wish list for decades. It's a twofer for Big Business: workers get less predictable schedules, and they earn less pay.

Leader CANTOR's prescription for what ails working families is to administer more poison. It's to give a working parent less control over her life and less money in her pocket. This plan does not give workers flexibility. This plan is about giving corporations another way to pay workers less.

That's how you help working families? I don't think so.

If the Republican majority party wants to seriously talk about healthy, prosperous, and happy American families, then they should help to create real opportunities to help families to be healthy, prosperous, and happy.

Here's one serious way to help working families: give workers real flexibility on the job and the ability to take advantage of paid time off.

Last week was the 20th anniversary of the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Back in 1993, this law was a big step forward for America. It guarantees workers job-protected leave when they need time off for family or health reasons, for a newborn child, to take care of a sick child or spouse. It's been used more than 100 million times over the last 20 years. Workers got to take off time to care for a newborn or sick spouse or to get an operation without fear of losing their job.

With the Family and Medical Leave Act, our country made it a priority to give workers the ability to balance the demands of work and family. It made the healthy development of babies, healthy families, and healthy workplaces a priority. It was a remarkable accomplishment at the time, but it was intended to be a first step, not the last.

Today, only half of all workers can take advantage of the Family and Medical Leave Act. The rest are ineligible because of their part-time status or who their employer is. Half of all workers don't have job protections to take time off to welcome a new baby to the family. They can't take time off to help an elderly parent without fear of losing their job.

Here's another serious idea to help working families: Extend the family and medical leave protection to all workers. And furthermore, let's guarantee paid leave under the law. The Federal Family and Medical Leave Act only guarantees unpaid job-protected leave. Too many families simply cannot afford to miss a day or two of work. That's why Congress should finally deliver on the paid leave that our Nation's workers deserve.

I recently heard from Matari Jones from San Antonio, Texas. While she said that the family and medical leave was a godsend when her children were born, taking unpaid time off to care for her newborns to heal from a complicated delivery was a significant financial struggle. Unfortunately, Matari was not alone. A working woman—or any worker, for that matter—shouldn't have to choose between family members they love or the paycheck they need.

California, the District of Columbia, Connecticut, Washington State, and New Jersey have taken steps for paid family and medical leave and sick leave. The policy is good for families, and it is good for business.

The least-paid workers in our society are also least likely to be able to afford a day off when they are sick. Many of those workers are behind the lunch counter or taking care of our older family members.

If Leader CANTOR and this House are truly serious about helping working families, then let's deliver on the full promise of workplace leave policies that properly value our Nation's families. Extend family and medical leave benefits to all workers, and look for ways to guarantee workers' access to paid family and medical leave and to sick leave.

There are other steps Congress should take to ensure that workers can share the prosperity that they're helping to create. Let's make sure that women are paid based upon their worth by passing the Paycheck Fairness Act. Let's raise the minimum wage that will boost the economy by putting money into the pockets of millions of working people.

So I would say to my friend from Virginia, the majority leader, if he is serious about helping working families, then join with us and let's enact policies that put these families first in both the workplace and in their homes.

PRESERVING 6-DAY POSTAL SERVICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, the Postmaster General's announcement this past week that he intends to eliminate Saturday mail delivery is of great concern to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

Beyond the fact that such a move completely disregards congressional intent, it also sets the Postal Service on a downward spiral that will undercut any opportunity to revitalize it and put it in a more sound financial footing for future generations. Whether it's the financial documents for a small business, a prescription refill for an elderly resident, or a birthday card for a loved one, Saturday mail delivery is important to every person in every community in America.

The United States Postal Service is an American institution dating back to the founding of our Nation when it was enshrined in article I of the Constitution, and Saturday delivery has been part of that tradition for the past 150 years. The men and women who don the blue uniform of the USPS are visible in every street in every community.

□ 1030

As a recent Washington Post story recounted, mail carriers have been known to report crimes, detect gas leaks and check on the elderly. Many serve the same routes for years, taking note of the comings and goings in their neighborhoods and offering an extra set of watchful eyes. They are, in many ways, the first responders in many of these communities.

Eliminating Saturday mail service would result in the layoffs of more than 50,000 letter carriers. Job losses in the public sector have already been a drag on our economy for the past 2 years, and this only exacerbates that problem. The supposed savings would clearly be offset if these unemployed middle class workers would then need Federal assistance to make ends meet.

Upon closer inspection, the economic case for eliminating Saturday delivery is specious at best. The Postmaster General claims it will save $2 billion, but that does not include the lost revenue or the broader economic ripple effect. A confidential report commissioned by the Postmaster General just last year showed that a 7.7 percent decline in mail volume, such as going from 6 to 5 days would trigger, would actually result in a $5.2 billion loss in revenue. It's little wonder that he deep-sixed his own study.

Within the broader economy, 8.4 million jobs are supported by the private and public mailing industries. That represents 6 percent of all American jobs. For every job in the Postal Service, there are 10 in the private sector, and three out of four of those jobs are dependent on existing delivery infrastructure by the Postal Service, including 6-day mail. Last year, the combined industries supported $1.3 trillion in sales revenue, or 8.6 percent of our entire economy.

While first-class mail volume has been trending downward for the past decade, the Postal Service is not maximizing those lines of business that are showing growth, such as package delivery. Growth in online retail sales, spurred by Cyber Monday, for example, pushed USPS package delivery revenue up by 4.7 percent, or $154 million, in the first quarter of this year alone. The Postal Service has not been able to capitalize on those opportunities largely because Congress, itself, stifled innovation with the 2006 legislation that it passed. Unlike its international counterparts, the Postal Service is prohibited by law from co-locating with such comparable businesses as banks and coffee shops, which actually offer a lot of revenue in the European postal services. We even restrict how the Postal Service can competitively market its low-priced services.

Of course, the most egregious burden imposed on the Postal Service by Congress is the outrageous pre-funding requirement for future retiree health benefits. Under current law, it must pre-fund 75 years at 100 percent of those benefits in a 10-year window. No other entity on the planet has such an onerous requirement but the Postal Service, and we did it—Congress did it—in 2006. In fact, $11.1 billion of the $15 billion-plus loss last year for the Postal Service is directly attributable to that burden.

That brings us back to the audacity of last week's announcement by the Postmaster General. The Postal Service has routinely testified before Congress, requesting the authority to go from six to five, but congressional intent on the preservation of 6-day mail delivery has been clear for 30 years. Even the Presidential budget request recognizes the need for Congress proactively to grant such authority. It cannot be grabbed unilaterally. The Postmaster General acknowledged he was on shaky ground—and indeed he is—in making this announcement. I, along with Representative GRAVES, have asked him to provide what, if any, legal justification he relied on to make this momentous decision, and we've asked the Attorney General and the

Postal Regulatory Commission for their opinions on the Postmaster General's statutory authority for this ill-advised action.

Mr. Speaker, Representative GRAVES and I have introduced a bipartisan resolution urging the Postal Service to preserve 6-day delivery. We would welcome our colleagues in joining us to highlight congressional intent that Saturday service is vital to our neighborhoods and small businesses and to the vitality of our communities. I urge my colleagues to take a closer look.

THE DRONES ARE COMING, PAGE II

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the domestic use of drones is on the way. There will be more eyes in the sky looking over America.

According to the FAA, by 2015, it will allow the use of drones nationwide, and by 2030, 30,000 drones will be cruising American skies—looking, observing, filming, and hovering over America. They will come whether we like it or not. We will not know where they are or what they're looking at or what their purpose is, whether it's permitted or not permitted, whether it's lawful or unlawful, and we really won't know who is flying those drones.

Sometimes drones are good. We can thank drones for helping us track terrorists overseas and for helping us catch outlaws on the border. Legitimate uses by government and private citizens do occur, but a nosy neighbor or a Big Brother government does not have the right to look into a window without legitimate cause or, in the case of government, probable cause.

Mr. Speaker, drones are easy to find. I learned from a simple Google search that you can buy a drone on eBay or at your local Radio Shack. It's very easy. And as technology changes, Congress has the responsibility to be proactive and to protect the Fourth Amendment right of all citizens. The Fourth Amendment states:

> The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated.

It doesn't take a constitutional law professor to see why legislation is needed to protect the rights of the American people. The right of a reasonable expectation of privacy is a constitutional right. Any form of snooping or spying, surveillance or eavesdropping goes against the rights that are outlined in the Constitution.

Today, I will reintroduce the Preserving American Privacy Act because it's time for Congress to be proactive in protecting the rights of civilians from the private use and government use of drones. This legislation balances individual constitutional rights with legitimate government activity and the private use of drones. We don't have time to wait until 2030 when there are 30,000 drones in the sky.

This bill sets clear guidelines, protects individual privacy and informs peace officers so they will know what they can do and what they cannot do under the law. Nobody should be able to use drones for whatever purpose they want. This bill will make it clear for what purpose law enforcement and citizens and businesses can use drones.

There will be limits on the government use of drones so that the surveillance of individuals or their property is only permitted or conducted when there is a warrant. This applies to State, Federal, and local jurisdictions, but there are exceptions. Law enforcement could use a drone for fire and rescue, to monitor droughts and to assess flood damage or to chase a fleeing criminal. And of course, the exceptions, called exigent circumstances, which are already in our law, will apply.

This bill includes a clear statement so that it does not prevent the use of drones for border security. The bill also sets guidelines for the private use of drones.

The bottom line of the bill is simple: nobody should be spying on another unless they have the legal authority to do so. The decision should not be left up to unelected bureaucrats to decide the use of drones, so Congress has the obligation to set guidelines, to secure the right of privacy and to protect citizens from unlawful drone searches. Just because the government has the technology to look into somebody's yard doesn't give it the constitutional right to do so.

And that's just the way it is.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SEQUESTRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. BERA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BERA of California. Mr. Speaker, in a few short weeks, we face automatic across-the-board spending cuts. If allowed, they could not only stall our economic recovery; these cuts will immediately threaten the future of our children and grandchildren. If we allow sequestration to take place, we threaten to kick 70,000 of our children off of the Head Start program. If we allow sequestration to take place, 10,000 American teachers will lose their jobs. We threaten the very future of our children and grandchildren. This is irresponsible.

In the spirit of their future, the children from Mrs. Gibson's third-grade class at Foulks Ranch Elementary School in Elk Grove, California, wanted me to deliver a message to Congress. They are five simple tips: They want Congress to be responsible. They want Congress to be respectful. They want Congress to be kind. They want Congress to be accountable. Mr. Speaker, the third-graders from Mrs. Gibson's class want Congress to make good choices.

Allowing sequestration to take place is a bad choice. If the third-graders can figure it out, I certainly hope we in Congress can as well. Let's do what they advise. Let's be responsible and let's make good choices.

□ 1040

PUERTO RICO MEDICARE PART B EQUITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, today I'm introducing a modified version of bipartisan legislation I introduced last Congress. The bill would amend a provision in Federal law that applies only to Puerto Rico and that has harmed thousands of Medicare beneficiaries on the island. My legislation would eliminate this problem for future beneficiaries and provide appropriate financial relief to current beneficiaries who have been adversely affected. Senator SCHUMER is introducing a companion bill, and I want to thank him for his support on this issue.

Most individuals become eligible to enroll in Medicare part A, which covers inpatient hospital care, when they turn 65. In every State and territory except Puerto Rico, individuals enrolled in part A are automatically enrolled in part B, which covers doctors' services and outpatient hospital care and requires the payment of a monthly premium. Individuals can opt out of part B if they don't want it. In Puerto Rico, by contrast, individuals enrolled in part A are not automatically enrolled in part B but, rather, must opt in to receive this coverage.

The problem with the opt-in requirement is that the law requires individuals to elect part B coverage within a 7-month initial enrollment period or to pay a penalty to the Federal Government. The penalty is substantial—a 10 percent increase in the monthly part B premium for every year of delayed enrollment. It is also permanent, lasting as long as the individual has part B, which can be decades.

Over the years, the responsible Federal agencies have done a poor job informing beneficiaries in Puerto Rico about the opt-in requirement and the consequences of late enrollment. Therefore, many of my constituents fail to realize they lack Part B until they get sick and need to visit a doctor, by which point significant time may have elapsed. To illustrate the repercussions, consider the standard Medicare Part B monthly premium of $105. An individual who enrolls 2 years late must pay a 20 percent surcharge—an additional $21 per month. Over 1 year, that is $252. Over 20 years, it is $5,000.

The combination of the opt-in requirement and inadequate beneficiary education in Puerto Rico has led to consequences that are both severe and

predictable. Puerto Rico has the lowest part B participation rate in the country—81 percent compared to the national average of 92 percent. There are least 130,000 island residents enrolled in part A but not part B. Without this coverage, beneficiaries have limited access to doctors' services and outpatient hospital care. If these individuals do eventually enroll in part B, as most will, the 7-month window will have closed and they will be required to pay a lifetime penalty.

Moreover, there are at least 53,000 seniors or disabled individuals in Puerto Rico who are already paying a lifetime penalty for enrolling late in part B. Each year, in fact, island residents pay a total of over $7 million in late fees. This is profoundly unfair. Through no fault of their own, my constituents are required to forfeit money to the Federal Government they should be using to meet their basic needs and support their families.

On the administrative front, I have worked hard with Senator SCHUMER to ensure that the relevant Federal agencies improve the educational materials provided to Puerto Rico beneficiaries, and I am pleased they have taken positive steps in response to our demands. But the only true solution to this problem is legislative.

My bill would do three things:

First, it would amend Federal law so that, going forward, beneficiaries in Puerto Rico are treated like their counterparts in every other jurisdiction, automatically enrolled in part B with the option to opt out of coverage;

Second, to ease the burden on those who enrolled late in part B, usually with no understanding of the consequences of that choice, the bill would reduce the monthly penalty they are required to pay by 85 percent;

Finally, to address those beneficiaries who are enrolled in part A but not B and who will pay a late penalty whenever they do enroll, the bill would authorize a special period during which those individuals could enroll in part B and pay a monthly surcharge that is 85 percent less than the penalty they would be subject to under current law.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in both the House and the Senate to enact this much-needed bill into law.

I should also mention that I was impressed with the State of the Union delivered by President Obama last evening, and I particularly support his call for democracy in America. But I remind, respectfully, both the President and all Americans that Puerto Rico has a status that is undemocratic. There are 3.7 million American citizens living in Puerto Rico who lack the most basic voting rights in a democracy. They cannot vote for the President, and they do not have voting representation in Congress. They have rejected this status, and the least that this Congress should do is give Puerto Rico the choice of joining the Union as a State or be treated as a sovereign nation.

IT'S TIME TO GET TO WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, today is February 13, but it feels like Groundhog Day. Here we are, back again, facing the prospect of devastating cuts from sequestration.

Families in Oregon don't understand why Members of Congress can't seem to set aside their differences and get things done; and, frankly, neither do I. We don't want to see these devastating cuts go into effect. We don't want to see a government shutdown. We don't want to tell the children that they have to have even more students in their already-crowded classrooms or explain to senior citizens that the Meals on Wheels they rely on might not be delivered. We don't want to see cuts to food safety or air traffic control or maritime and border security.

We're in the home stretch, racing towards yet another deadline, but instead of sitting at the bargaining table, we're headed out for recess.

In Oregon alone, sequestration would kick more than 900 kids out of Head Start programs that make a difference in their school readiness. It would trigger a 9 percent cut in Federal funding to Oregon's public university system, slashing student aid and ongoing research and development. Law enforcement agencies throughout the country would lose the equivalent of 1,000 Federal agents, 1,300 prison officers, and more than 5,000 Border Patrol personnel. Small businesses across the Nation would lose more than $540 million in loan guarantees.

Despite the talk of uncertainty, our economy really is poised to take off, but it can't do that if Congress decides to take off from work. It's sad but true: The biggest obstacle to economic growth tomorrow is congressional foot-dragging today.

We've been governing by crisis for too long. It's time to rally around common sense. It's time to take a seat at the bargaining table. And most of all, it's time to get back to work.

No sequestration deal, no recess.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Career and Technical Education Month. I'm proud to be joined by Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, who I know spoke earlier this morning. Mr. THOMPSON is my good friend and fellow cochair of the bipartisan Congressional Career and Technical Education Caucus.

CTE is an investment in the future of our economy, our workforce, and our country. From skills training in high schools to community colleges and professional programs, CTE plays a critical role for workers of every age. And I'm so proud that President Obama called for more support for CTE in his State of the Union message last evening.

The most important step I believe we can take this year to support CTE is to fully reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act. Currently, the Perkins Act is authorized at a level set in 2010, which doesn't reflect the reality of a modern economy where more workers are looking at high-skilled fields.

More and more employers need highly skilled workers. I hear too often from Rhode Island employers with job openings that they can't fill because they can't find the workers with the right skills to fill the jobs that they do have available. Meanwhile, our unemployment rate remains unacceptably high.

Closing the skills gap is one important step we can take to ensure that workers can fit and fill the needs of expanding industries, both today and in the future. After all, how can we expect to help individuals start a company or businesses expand their company or to relocate jobs from overseas if we don't have the workers with the right skills to do the jobs that would be and are available?

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to a continuing partnership with my good friend, G.T. THOMPSON from Pennsylvania, in the 113th Congress, and I strongly urge my colleagues to join the Career and Technical Education Caucus and to support the full reauthorization of the Perkins Act.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 50 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Archbishop Emeritus John Quinn, Diocese of San Francisco, San Francisco, California, offered the following prayer:

Lord, we give deep-felt thanks for the great providential blessing that makes us citizens of the United States of America.

The men and women of this House, in their service to our country, daily confront seemingly intractable public issues, a burden at times overwhelming; but You work even in the dark places of human history.

Teach us this day not to fear the darkness but to put our hand in Yours and resolutely seek the light.

You reveal Yourself as the Father of us all. We ask You to bring us together in civic harmony and in the common task of making real in our time the ideals and the dreams that make us America.

As we turn now to the work of this day, we ask for more than human wisdom, and pray that Your blessing, moving across our continent, will keep us one nation under God with liberty and justice for all.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING ARCHBISHOP EMERITUS JOHN QUINN

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to welcome Archbishop John Quinn to the House of Representatives and to thank him for offering the opening prayer today.

Archbishop Quinn is one of the preeminent spiritual leaders and theologians of our Nation. His church service spans over four decades, beginning with his ordination in Rome in 1953. He has served as a pastor, as an educator, as Provost of the University of San Diego College for Men, as Auxiliary Bishop of San Diego, as Bishop of Oklahoma City and Tulsa, as the first Archbishop of Oklahoma City; and in 1977, he was named the sixth Archbishop of San Francisco.

His fellow bishops elected him President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1977, where he led with great distinction for a 3-year term. In December 1995, after 18 years of ''tending his flock'' of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, he resigned and was given a visiting fellowship at Campion Hall, Oxford.

My colleagues, our country has been blessed by the great patriotism, wisdom, scholarship, deep spirituality, and inspirational leadership of this humble and holy man.

Thank you, Archbishop Quinn, for gracing the House of Representatives with your prayer and your presence and for strengthening our country with a faith that calls each of us to be instruments of peace and justice.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FOXX). The Chair will entertain 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

AMERICA'S FIRST PRIORITY—A BUDGET

(Mr. MCCARTHY of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Madam Speaker, last night, I had hoped to hear from the President that he would challenge both Houses to pass the first priority—a budget. The House has done it. The Senate has not for the last 3 years.

In this House, we talk a lot about the sluggish economy and our continual debt. We talk in trillions, so let's take the zeros away and talk in household income. If we were a household, we would, roughly, bring in $24,500 a year, but we would spend $35,500. That means we'd have to add $11,000 to the credit card each year, but when we'd look to the credit card, it would already have $160,000 on it.

We have to get the House in order. The Senate has refused to pass a budget in 3 years. The time is now to move America forward.

REBUILDING AMERICAN INFRASTRUCTURE

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Last night, President Obama argued that rebuilding American infrastructure is crucial to job creation, and with 70,000 structurally deficient bridges, it is long overdue.

Today, the United States Chamber of Commerce is holding a summit on infrastructure investment. According to the U.S. Chamber, our broken infrastructure costs $78 billion annually in lost time and fuel, and we will experience $336 billion in lost growth over the next 5 years. Our decaying infrastructure is a significant drag on the economy. Freight rail bottlenecks cost us $200 billion a year—air traffic delays $33 billion a year. Our inadequate ports will lose up to $270 billion in exports by 2020, costing 738,000 jobs.

Lots of people around here spend a lot of time whining about China. China invests 9 percent of its economy in infrastructure. We invest less than 3 percent. Stop whining about China and do something about it. President Obama and the U.S. Chamber agree that it's time to nation-build right here at home, right here in America, and Congress should listen.

CONGRATULATIONS TO GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA

(Mr. COLLINS of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate my hometown—the city of Gainesville, Georgia—for its leadership in creating and sustaining jobs despite the economic challenges facing our Nation. A new Milken Institute study ranked Gainesville as the best-performing small city in Georgia last year.

The study found that 24 new and expanded industries created 1,200 jobs, retained 742 existing jobs, and generated $164 million in capital investment for Gainesville and Hall County in 2012. This performance puts Gainesville in the top 10 small cities for job growth in the U.S.

I am proud that Gainesville continues to be a leader in economic development. Gainesville was ranked sixth in job growth nationwide from 2010 to 2011 and was ranked second in job growth from 2011 to 2012. From food and auto services to manufacturing and retail, more businesses are calling Gainesville home, which means more job opportunities for Georgians. I commend the leadership of Gainesville and Hall County for creating an environment where businesses can thrive, and I look forward to their continued success.

I hope that other cities across the Nation, as well as Congress, will look to Gainesville as an example of how job creation can be achieved even in a difficult economic climate.

SEQUESTRATION

(Ms. CHU asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. CHU. Last night, President Obama challenged all of us to come together to improve our country's fiscal health today and for generations to come.

Automatic budget cuts, or sequestration, was never intended to be good fiscal policy. It was never intended to be policy—period. If these cuts take place, the American people will actually be harmed by the Representatives who were sent here to serve them. This is unacceptable. In just 2 weeks, if we don't act, across-the-board cuts will deeply hurt every aspect of our lives—schools, health programs, law enforcement, research and development. Under sequestration, all of these will be decimated.

In our fragile economy, our Nation cannot afford to wait, so I call on our colleagues from the other side of the aisle to rise to the challenge. We cannot keep on going from one manufactured crisis to the next. Work with us to stop sequestration before it's too late.

□ 1210

STOP DEVASTATING SEQUESTER

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, President Obama had a chance last night to lay out a plan for smart, strategic savings to replace his devastating sequester. We were all watching; we were all listening. We want to work together on this. But instead of laying out a vision for how government can avoid his sequester—his sequester—by living within its means, the President decided to make the impractical case for passing the buck onto taxpayers through even more taxes.

House Republicans have known all along the President's sequester was a terrible plan. We gave the Supercommittee a chance to do the right thing, and when they didn't, we led.

Twice since last summer we have passed legislation that would preserve savings while completely removing the threat sequester poses to American jobs and national security. The President didn't join the conversation until recently.

March 1 is coming. Will he or won't he put forth a credible plan to stop the damage of his sequester? Republicans have responded. He and our friends on the other side of the aisle have not.

OPPOSING SEQUESTRATION

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the huge education cuts that are in the sequester. Massive sequestration is an inefficient way to make spending decisions that affect millions of Americans. However, this is what we agreed to, and the House majority has not had an open and frank debate on how this Chamber can reduce our national deficit while helping our students and hardworking educational professionals succeed.

On education alone, sequestration will reduce funding for the Department of Education and Head Start by an estimated $4.8 billion. Department of Education funding will return to pre-2003 levels, impacting between 8.9 million and 9.4 million students. Potential job losses in the education field are projected to be between 74,600 and 80,500. These cuts will come as schools and colleges enroll more students and the cost of services increases.

I call on Members on both sides of the aisle to join me in finding a better way to reduce our deficit while protecting our children, students, and educational professionals.

STRENGTHENING THE MIDDLE CLASS

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Madam Speaker, last night President Obama outlined a bold vision for his second term in office and spoke about the number one issue facing our country: jobs. The President understands that if we want to get our country back on the right track, we have to invest in those areas that are essential to growing our economy and strengthening the middle class.

With families all across America, and particularly in my home State of Rhode Island facing tremendous challenges, it's critical that our friends on the other side of the aisle put aside partisan gamesmanship and start working together on the commonsense goals that President Obama outlined: reinvigorating manufacturing; investing in our infrastructure; making education a priority; and developing new sources of clean energy, as well as a long-term strategy to deal with our debt.

It's true that Republicans and Democrats have a choice. We can either work to find common ground and move our country forward as a whole, or we can continue the partisan fighting that has created gridlock in Washington.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to find common ground and real solutions so we can put our country back to work and address the serious challenges facing our Nation.

REPEAL AND REPLACE DANGEROUS SEQUESTER

(Mr. CARTWRIGHT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Madam Speaker, we have before us this question of allowing indiscriminate and harmful cuts to our armed services and other vital national governmental works.

I agree we must address the debt and the deficit, but it's not a new problem, and we have fixed it before. Right now, our national debt stands at about 105 percent of GDP, gross domestic product. In 1946, it was close to 122 percent, and we fixed it—not by austerity, not by slash and burn; we fixed it by investing in America. We built our national highway system. We made our armed services the envy of the world. We even rebuilt Europe and Japan. We went to the Moon, for heaven's sake.

By the 1960s, our economic growth was so great that it was impossible for anyone to complain about the Roosevelt debt with a straight face. That's what we need to do now. We need to believe in ourselves. We need to invest in the great engines of our economic recovery, our infrastructure, and our middle class.

So, Mr. Speaker, I urge the Members, be bullish on America and repeal and replace this dangerous sequester.

AMERICANS NEED REAL SOLUTIONS

(Mr. KILDEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, last night at his State of the Union address, President Obama outlined a real job creation plan to grow our economy and strengthen America's middle class. However, sequestration is just 15 days away, threatening to stall our economic recovery.

Sequestration would be devastating for many programs and services that my constituents and all Americans rely on: Head Start; the Women, Infants and Children—WIC—nutrition plan; medical research funding; Indian Health Service; police officers; and food inspectors. Funding for all these crucial areas would be decimated.

Sequestration would also make our country less safe by implementing reckless, across-the-board defense cuts. We've already reduced the deficit by $2.5 trillion, mostly through spending cuts. There's no question we can eliminate additional wasteful spending. However, we should be strategic in finding ways to reduce our deficit. With sequestration looming, Madam Speaker, Americans need real solutions, not another eleventh hour cliffhanger.

DEVASTATING SEQUESTRATION CUTS

(Ms. GABBARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GABBARD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about the devastating sequestration cuts that are set to take effect unless we, Congress, act by March 1. If these arbitrary across-the-board cuts are allowed to occur, our military, our national security, and our communities will suffer.

Hawaii is one of the top 10 States that will take the biggest hit. We've already seen these anticipated cuts playing out at the Pearl Harbor shipyard, where 133 apprentices will not be hired and 30 temporary workers will lose their jobs. This is affecting real people, their families, as well as our military's readiness.

Times are tough and we must all share in the sacrifice, but we cannot do so at the expense of our military readiness or on the backs of our middle class families, seniors, and children.

SEQUESTRATION MEANS STUPID

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, sequestration. You know, it's inside-the-Beltway talk. What does it mean? It means stupid, across-the-board budget cuts.

Take a program of tremendous public import—whether it's a defense program, public safety program, student financial aid—and cut it 10 percent. Take a turkey, something we don't need anymore, something stupid, obsolete—registering kids for a draft that doesn't exist and will never exist—cut it 10 percent.

So instead of doing targeted cuts and getting rid of programs that we don't need anymore, that don't work anymore, and looking at reasonable revenues, we're going to cut everything 10 percent. It's going to have a real impact.

I was told yesterday by the Office of Management and Budget the first measurable impact is in my district, a 10 percent sequestration of payments to counties in my State from the Interior Department, which means in Douglas County, Oregon, the last 10 road deputies are gone. In another county, which is down to one road deputy, the last road deputy is gone. We're talking about counties the size of States here with no rural law enforcement. That's because of the stupid sequestration.

□ 1220

SEQUESTER IS NOT THE ANSWER

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I join with my colleagues to say that sequester is not the answer. When I begin to look at my district and I see high school students and middle school students and elementary school students, I say sequester is not the answer.

Yes, we can look reasonably at how we improve reducing the debt, but not on the backs of seniors, not eliminating the social network.

And then, with respect to our children, do we tell them we close the doors on summer jobs, we close the doors on the best teachers, innovative teaching, science labs? Absolutely not.

So I join with the President to say that it's an inflicted wound we gave. Let's be better. Let's be adults.

And, finally, Madam Speaker, let's do our job on gun safety. Let's ensure universal background checks. Let's have registration of those guns that are owned by gun owners like we register a car. And let's make sure that, as my legislation introduced, that we secure the guns in our homes so that children or those who are disturbed cannot access your guns because you left them around.

I am not interested in coming into your home and taking your guns, but you have a responsibility to be able to secure them. That law was passed in the State of Texas, a State that prizes its guns.

Let's be a group, a Congress that can work together. We can do this.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

FEDERAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE NONPROFIT FAIRNESS ACT OF 2013

Mr. BARLETTA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 592) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to clarify that houses of worship are eligible for certain disaster relief and emergency assistance on terms equal to other eligible private nonprofit facilities, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 592

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Hurricane Sandy inflicted catastrophic damage in the Northeastern United States.

(2) Houses of worship across the Northeast's many faiths and denominations were among the private nonprofit facilities that sustained damage.

(3) Churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, and other houses of worship throughout communities in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and elsewhere play an essential role in the daily lives of the communities.

(4) The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) public assistance program provides financial grants for the repair of various types of private nonprofit facilities.

(5) Among the types of nonprofits to which FEMA provides such grants are those in which citizens gather and engage in a variety of educational, enrichment, and social activities. These activities are essential to community building and occur in houses of worship.

(6) Under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.), FEMA's disaster relief program is a general government program under which assistance is provided in the wake of a natural disaster using criteria that are neutral with regard to religion.

(7) Congress has previously enacted legislation providing financial assistance to religious nonprofit institutions, including houses of worship, on terms equal to other eligible nonprofit institutions.

(8) Such legislation is consistent with recent precedents of the Supreme Court of the United States and legal opinions issued by the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice.

SEC. 3. INCLUSION OF HOUSES OF WORSHIP AS PRIVATE NONPROFIT FACILITIES ELIGIBLE FOR DISASTER RELIEF.

(a) DEFINITION OF PRIVATE NONPROFIT FACILITY.—Section 102(10)(B) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122(10)(B)) is amended to read as follows:

''(B) ADDITIONAL FACILITIES.—In addition to the facilities described in subparagraph (A), the term 'private nonprofit facility' includes any private nonprofit facility that provides essential services of a governmental nature to the general public (including museums, zoos, performing arts facilities, community arts centers, community centers, including houses of worship exempt from taxation under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, libraries, homeless shelters, senior citizen centers, rehabilitation facilities, shelter workshops, and facilities that provide health and safety services of a governmental nature), as defined by the President.''.

(b) REPAIR, RESTORATION, AND REPLACEMENT OF DAMAGED FACILITIES.—Section 406(a)(3) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5172(a)(3)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(C) HOUSES OF WORSHIP.—A church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or other house of worship, and a private nonprofit facility operated by a religious organization, shall be eligible for contributions under paragraph (1)(B), without regard to the religious character of the facility or the primary religious use of the facility.''.

(c) APPLICABILITY.—This section and the amendments made by this section shall apply to the provision of assistance in response to a major disaster or emergency declared on or after October 28, 2012.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BARLETTA. Madam 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.R. 592.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

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

First, I want to acknowledge the work of the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for his leadership on this bipartisan legislation.

Currently, the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, also known as the Stafford Act, provides for assistance to nonprofit organizations to rebuild damaged facilities following a declared disaster.

Like other nonprofit organizations, religious-based organizations have seen significant damage to their facilities from disasters. Just last year, for example, we saw facilities owned by both religious and nonreligious organizations alike damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Sandy.

The administration is interpreting current law to allow some religious nonprofits to receive reconstruction assistance, while others do not. For example, parochial schools and religious hospitals receive funds, while a soup kitchen or a shelter may not, depending on how often it is used for purely religious purposes.

H.R. 592 clarifies that facilities owned by religious-based organizations qualify for certain types of disaster assistance.

Again, let me thank the gentleman from New Jersey for his efforts on behalf of his constituents to rebuild the storm-ravaged areas of his State.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of H.R. 592, the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013. This bill designates houses of worship as eligible private nonprofit organizations to receive Federal Emergency Management Agency funds to repair or rebuild after a disaster strikes.

When most people think of disaster damage, they think of the physical damage that is often shown on television, that is, of downed trees, flooded streets and homes, snow piled high, et cetera.

But for disaster survivors, the impact is often also emotionally traumatic. In some cases, survivors have lost loved ones or all of their worldly possessions. In these trying times, survivors often look to houses of worship for spiritual instruction, guidance, and counseling. The services provided by houses of worship are critical to survivors' full healing and recovery after a disaster.

During and after disasters, houses of worship are there at a time when the emotional toll inflicted by a disaster is at its worst. While some may have concerns about providing any type of Federal assistance to houses of worship, some types of Federal assistance should be, and are, provided on a neutral basis.

Funding provided to a broad class of entities for secular purposes such as government-funded and -sponsored police and firefighting assistance and protection and recovery from terrorist activities are such examples.

Likewise, disaster assistance has been provided to religious institutions in the past. In 1995, after the Oklahoma City bombing, Congress approved funds for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that specifically allowed for the repair and reconstruction of houses of worship damaged by the bombing.

In addition, under FEMA's current policy, funds are provided to repair or rebuild religiously affiliated private nonprofit organizations such as schools, nursing homes, food shelters, and daycare centers.

Assisting with recovery from a disaster does not promote or establish religion. There is no intrinsically religious purpose in providing disaster assistance. This provision simply recognizes that houses of worship are one aspect of community recovery.

This bill helps ensure that our communities fully recover physically, emotionally, and mentally after a disaster. I urge my colleagues to join in supporting this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BARLETTA. Madam Speaker, I wish to yield 7 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), who is the sponsor of this bill.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I thank my good friend, the chair, for yielding. I thank him for his support and for Mr. RAHALL. And I want to thank Gracie Meng for her cosponsorship and leadership on this important bill, and all the cosponsors, and to ERIC CANTOR and the leadership for scheduling it for a vote today. This is extremely important and very timely.

Madam Speaker, Superstorm Sandy inflicted unprecedented damage on communities in the Northeast, including my district in New Jersey. Congress and the President have responded by providing $60 billion in emergency and recovery aid.

Today's debate and vote, however, isn't at all about whether or how much funding Congress appropriates to mitigate the impact of Sandy. We've had that vote.

Rather, it's about those who are being unfairly left out and left behind. It's about those who help feed, comfort, clothe, and shelter tens of thousands of victims now being told they are ineligible for a FEMA grant.

It's unconscionable that foundational pillars of our communities damaged by Sandy—synagogues, churches, mosques, temples and other houses of worship—have been categorically denied access to these otherwise generally available relief funds.

Current FEMA policy is patently unfair, unjustified, and discriminatory and may even suggest hostility to religion. FEMA has a policy in place to aid nonprofit facilities damaged in the storm, but the agency has excluded houses of worship from their support. That is wrong, and it's time Congress ensures fundamental fairness for these essential private nonprofits.

The bipartisan Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act will ensure that houses of worship are eligible for Federal funds administered by FEMA.

Madam Speaker, it's worth noting here that FEMA's discriminatory policy of exclusion is not prescribed by any law. Nothing in the Stafford Act or any other law, including the Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, precludes funds to repair and to replace and to restore houses of worship.

Indeed, the congressional precedent favors enacting H.R. 592, as there are several pertinent examples of public funding being allocated to houses of worship. For example, FEMA grants were explicitly authorized by Congress back in 1995 and provided to the churches damaged by the Oklahoma City terrorist attack, as my friend from West Virginia pointed out.

□ 1230

The Homeland Security Department and UASI provides funding to houses of worship for security upgrades. The Interior Department provides funding to grants for historically significant properties, including active churches and active synagogues. And the SBA provides low interest loans—no hint at all by anyone that there's an Establishment Clause issue.

It's important to note that a controlling Justice Department Office of Legal Counsel memorandum explains in detail the legal principles that make H.R. 592 constitutional. In a 2002 written opinion, the Office of Legal Counsel concluded it was constitutional for Congress to provide disaster relief and reconstruction funds to a religious Jewish school, along with all sorts of other organizations, following a devastating earthquake. The same principles apply to protect religious organizations following a devastating hurricane.

As the Office of Legal Counsel memo concluded:

> Provisions of disaster assistance to religious organizations cannot be materially distinguished from aid programs that are constitutional under longstanding Supreme Court precedent, establishing that religious institutions are fully entitled to receive generally available government benefits and services, such as fire and police protection.

The Supreme Court handed down its first modern Establishment Clause decision in the Everson v. Board of Education decision, which involved a program in my own home State of New Jersey. In that case, the Court held that religious institutions are entitled to receive ''general government services'' made available on the basis of neutral criteria. The Court held that the Establishment Clause does not bar, in that case, students attending religious schools from receiving generally available school busing services provided by the government.

As Nathan Diament, Executive Director of Public Policy for the Union of Orthodox Jewish Organizations of America, notes in his excellent legal analysis, which I will include in the RECORD:

> Disaster relief is analogous to aid that qualifies as general government services approved by the Court in Everson.

Madam Speaker, the bill before us today simply makes clear and clarifies that Federal disaster relief includes religious entities, along with every other sort of entity.

As the Court later stated in Widmar v. Vincent:

> The provision of benefits to so broad a spectrum of groups is an important index of secular, that is, constitutional effect.

As it stated more recently in Texas Monthly v. Bullock:

> Insofar as that subsidy is conferred upon a wide array of nonsectarian groups as well as religious group organizations in pursuit of some legitimate secular end, the fact that religious groups benefit incidentally does not deprive the subsidy of the secular purpose and primary effect mandated by the Establishment Clause.

Significantly, Madam Speaker, when three churches in Detroit received taxpayer-funded grants to repair and spruce up their buildings prior to the 2006 Super Bowl, American Atheists sued the City of Detroit and lost.

In a sweeping decision offered by Judge Sutton, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, unanimously held that the direct assistance to the churches did not violate the Establishment Clause. Judge Sutton said, and I quote, in pertinent part:

> Detroit sought to fix up its downtown, not to establish a religion. And as will generally be the case when a governmental program allocates generally available benefits on a neutral basis and without a hidden agenda, this program does not have the impermissible effect of advancing religion in general or any one faith in particular. By endorsing all qualifying applicants, the program has endorsed none of them, the Court went on to say, and accordingly it has not run afoul of the Federal and State religious clauses . . . In the Establishment Clause context, that means evenhanded neutral laws generally, though not invariably, will be upheld. So long as the government benefit is neutral and generally applicable on its face, it presumptively will satisfy the Establishment Clause.

H.R. 592 exhibits no government preference for or against religion, or any particular religion, since it merely permits houses of worship to receive the same type of generally available assistance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BARLETTA. I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Again, this legislation permits houses of worship to receive the same type of generally available assistance in picking up the pieces after stunning devastation that many other similarly situated nonprofits receive. Thus, the bill not only passes the test of constitutionality, it passes the test of basic decency.

Indeed, to do otherwise would be to single out churches for adverse treatment, which is in itself constitutionally suspect.

The Supreme Court held, Madam Speaker, in Lukumi Babalu Aye v. City of Hialeah, that ''at a minimum, the protections of the Free Exercise Clause pertain if the law at issue discriminates against some or all religious beliefs.''

And in Employment Division v. Smith, the Court held that under the Free Exercise Clause, the State may not ''impose special disabilities on the basis of religious views or religious status.''

To continue to single houses of worship out for discrimination does not express government neutrality; it expresses government hostility. And there's no place for government hostility toward religion under our Constitution.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from West Virginia has 17½ minutes remaining.

Mr. RAHALL. Thank you.

I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

(Mr. NADLER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I reluctantly rise in opposition to this bill. The purpose of this bill is laudable. Unfortunately, there are real constitutional problems.

This bill would provide direct cash grants to rebuild houses of worship. Direct government funding of churches, synagogues, and mosques has always been held to be unconstitutional, and the decisions of the Supreme Court establishing that principle remain good law to this day. While some recent decisions have raised questions of these prior decisions' validity, they remain binding precedent. Most legal authorities would hold this bill to be constitutional, although some would disagree.

At the very least, given the serious constitutional questions raised by this legislation, I am deeply troubled that it has received no committee consideration and is being rushed to the floor just a few days after being introduced under a procedure that allows only 40 minutes of debate and no amendments. One would think that we were naming a post office rather than passing legislation with significant constitutional implications that could alter the relationship between government and religion.

While I have serious reservations about this bill and the way it is being considered, I wanted to commend the sponsors, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and my colleagues from New York, Ms. MENG and Mr. KING, who have been outstanding champions of the people hard hit by Hurricane Sandy.

So what is the concern?

Let's start with the basics. This bill would direct Federal taxpayer dollars to the reconstruction of houses of worship. The idea that taxpayer money can be used to build a religious sanctuary or an altar has consistently been held unconstitutional.

This is entirely different from government working with religious institutions to deliver social services. FEMA money, under the law this bill would amend, is already available to those institutions.

FEMA Disaster Assistance Policy 9521.1 states:

> Just because a community center is operated by a religious institution does not automatically make it ineligible. In addition to worship services, many religious institutions conduct a variety of activities that benefit the community. Many of these activities are similar or identical to those performed by secular institutions and local governments.

The law now permits funding to religious institutions that provide those services to the general public, on an equal basis with secular institutions doing the same work. Although the title of this bill suggests otherwise, there is no unequal treatment of religious institutions.

So what we are really talking about is whether we should be in the business of using taxpayer money to build and rebuild houses of worship and rebuild sanctuaries and altars that are not available for use to the general public.

I think, at the very least, we need to exercise caution. I know that people have been circulating letters making extravagant claims about the current state of the law, but what is clear is that the Supreme Court has never overruled its prior decisions specifically prohibiting this kind of use of public money.

□ 1240

In Tilton v. Richardson, the Court held that a 20-year ban on using publicly financed college facilities for religious or other purposes was not sufficient. The Court made the ban permanent, saying:

> If, at the end of 20 years, the building is, for example, converted into a chapel or otherwise used to promote religious interests, the original Federal grant will in part have the effect of advancing religion.

And that, of course, is not permissible.

Similarly, in Committee for Public Education v. Nyquist, the Court struck down a State program of ''maintenance and repair grants'' for the upkeep of religious elementary and secondary schools. The Court said:

> If the State may not erect buildings in which religious activities are to take place, it may not maintain such buildings or renovate them when they fall into disrepair.

Some proponents have pointed to the Court's ruling in Mitchell v. Helms. The question in that case was whether publicly financed educational materials could be lent to religious schools. The controlling opinion, written by Justice O'Connor, made it clear that it was not sufficient that the publicly furnished materials be provided on a nondiscriminatory basis; they must never be diverted to religious activities. That is clearly not the case here.

The majority has made a big issue of respecting the Constitution. We read the Constitution at the beginning of each Congress, and we are required to provide a statement of constitutional authority when we introduce a bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. RAHALL. I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

Mr. NADLER. But all of that means very little if, when faced with a genuinely significant constitutional question, the House gives it the bum's rush. This bill should be subject to hearings in the Judiciary Committee, with input from constitutional scholars, and due consideration of these significant constitutional issues, before we take such a radical step.

At the very least, for those who support this bill, I would think that they would want to get it right, to ensure that it is not done in a way that would make it susceptible to successful legal challenge. I urge my colleagues to put the brakes on this legislation until we can review it with the care it deserves.

Because I believe this bill to be unconstitutional, and because the constitutional issues have not been properly considered, I must reluctantly vote ''no.''

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. BARLETTA. Madam Speaker, I wish to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), chairman of Judiciary.

Mr. GOODLATTE. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania, the chairman of the subcommittee, for his hard work on this legislation and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for introducing it and leading this bipartisan effort to address what I think is a serious problem.

I rise today in support of the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013.

Churches, synagogues, and also houses of worship are essential to the fabric of communities throughout this great Nation. In times of need, it seems that faith and the charitable acts that faith inspire are essential to rebuilding and healing our communities. When disasters occur, like Hurricane Sandy in the Northeast, it's often houses of worship whose faith calls them to spring into action to help their fellow man, to feed the hungry and house the homeless. Faith inspires hope that communities can become whole again.

Every Member of Congress has seen the good works and deeds that houses of worship and nonprofit organizations do in our communities. There is no reason that the Federal Government should treat churches, synagogues, and houses of worship differently than other nonprofits in times of disaster.

I want to note that the so-called ''pervasively sectarian doctrine,'' which absolutely prohibited any aid to pervasively sectarian organizations such as churches, is no longer supported by Supreme Court precedent. While that doctrine was a central part of Supreme Court jurisprudence during the 1970s when the Supreme Court handed down decisions cited by opponents of this bill, including Tilton v. Richardson in 1971, Hunt v. McNair in 1973, and Committee for Public Education v. Nyquist, also 1973, it is no longer controlling, as the pervasively sectarian doctrine was subsequently rejected by a majority of the Supreme Court in the 1999 case of Mitchell v. Helms. Indeed, as the Congressional Research Service concluded in its December 27, 2000, report to Congress:

> In its most recent decisions, the Supreme Court appears to have abandoned the presumption that some religious institutions are so pervasively sectarian that they are constitutionally ineligible to participate in direct public aid programs. It also seems clear that the question of whether a recipient institution is pervasively sectarian is no longer a constitutionally determinative factor.

Today's legislation is important because it will ensure that houses of worship are treated equitably to other private nonprofit facilities, and that they are eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency disaster relief and emergency assistance. I am glad that we are acting today to clarify that FEMA should treat churches, synagogues, and all houses of worship the same as other nonprofit organizations that are working to rebuild affected communities.

I thank Congressman SMITH for introducing this legislation, and I urge all Members to join with me to support this important clarification of existing law.

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, I'm very honored to yield 3 minutes to a cosponsor of the pending legislation, the gentlelady from New York (Ms. MENG).

Ms. MENG. Madam Speaker, I rise today to strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 592, the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013. I want to also thank my colleague, Congressman CHRIS SMITH of New Jersey, for his wonderful leadership on this issue.

On October 29 of last year, Hurricane Sandy tore through New York City and its surrounding areas and left an unprecedented amount of damage in its wake. Homes burned to the ground, our communities were devastated, properties flooded, and over 120 lives were lost. Rightfully so, one of the 113th Congress' first actions was ensuring that adequate funding was made available to begin repairing the damage, and I was happy to be part of that effort.

The $60 billion in aid that Congress made available was a great start to rebuilding our communities and making them whole, but it was only a start. If we as Members of Congress want our affected communities to recover in the aftermath of any natural disaster, we must ensure that FEMA public assistance grants are available to help rebuild all institutions that are vital to a community's way of life.

H.R. 592 is a bipartisan bill. It would allow houses of worship, such as churches, synagogues, temples, or mosques, to receive the fair treatment they deserve. The bill places these vital community institutions on the same playing field as other private nonprofits that are already eligible for FEMA disaster relief. This bill provides no new funds. It sets forth no difference, no favoritism, no promotion of religion; it simply provides for the community and its well-being.

Facilities that already are able to apply for funding include zoos, museums, community centers, and homeless shelters, and it is important that houses of worship not be discriminated against when they need our help. These houses are vital community centers that serve so many of our constituents. The centers' existence, safety, and ability to serve should not be infringed upon, especially because the funds are available under our broadly available program without regard to the religious nature of these facilities. Indeed, to deny FEMA relief to these important institutions would be to discriminate against them because they are religious institutions, in violation of the First Amendment to our Constitution.

Not every facility, home, or place that engages in religious activity will be made available for FEMA assistance because this bill uses a predefined, accepted definition for what these facilities are under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. This is how the IRS currently recognizes and provides tax benefits to houses of worship, and this definition will help prevent erroneous claims.

The concerns about promotion of religion are unfounded. Alan Derschowitz, a widely respected expert on these issues, supports this bill on its constitutional grounds. He wrote that:

> Under precedents of the U.S. Supreme Court, religious institutions may receive government aid if it is in the context of a broadly available program with criteria that are neutral toward religion and pose no risks of religious favoritism. This is certainly the case in the context of FEMA disbursing aid to repair buildings in the wake of a natural disaster.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. RAHALL. I yield the gentlelady an additional minute.

Ms. MENG. Many of the groups opposing this bill also oppose Nonprofit Security Grant funding, historic preservation grants, and parochial school funding after Katrina. They oppose Federal assistance that helped rebuild the Trinity Parish Episcopal Church in Seattle after an earthquake; aid made available after the tragic Oklahoma City bombing in which money was made available to the First United Methodist Church, First Baptist Church, St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, and St. Joseph's Catholic Church. This is not precedential; this is taking care of our constituents and their needs, our most important task in Congress.

Congress erred by not including an important part of our communities in these rebuilding efforts, and I hope we can correct that today.

DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE,
Rockville Centre, NY, February 11, 2013.

Hon. CHRIS SMITH,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: A few weeks ago I wrote to your office to call your attention to the sad situation of houses of worship that were severely damaged by Hurricane Sandy. At that time I could cite Catholic churches and Jewish synagogues who had been told that FEMA would not offer them grants to re-build their place of worship but only loans.

Today I learned that you plan to offer in Congress a bill that would offer houses of worship the same access to disaster relief as other community centers.

I write to thank you for doing this as well as to add my voice of support for just such a correction of a previous position that surely does not reflect either our traditions or our current realities. Houses of worship have been one of the first centers of response across Long Island. The Sunday after Sandy I visited the four parishes most damaged by the storm where I witnessed in parish halls without heat or electricity two signs of hope: faithful people worshipping and the same faithful people reaching out to one another to share food, clothing and other necessities even when their own homes had been destroyed.

To discriminate against houses of worship would be a mark of sectarianism that denies

the generosity of the people who helped one another and narrows the American spirit to an arbitrary sectarianism. Please know that my parishioners, my priests and all the volunteers in our various outreach centers are one with me in support of your bill.

WILLIAM MURPHY,
Bishop of Rockville Centre.

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE,
Washington, DC, February 12, 2013.

Re H.R. 592.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: We write on behalf of AJC (American Jewish Committee) to endorse the necessity and constitutionality of legislation to ensure that FEMA provides disaster-relief assistance to houses of worship and other facilities on an equal footing with analogous not-for-profit organizations.

We do not support such legislation lightly, since AJC usually opposes direct government aid to pervasively religious institutions, such as houses of worship. AJC has a long record of opposing aid to pervasively religious institutions as an ingredient of the separation of church and state that is an essential component in the protection of our religious liberties. Nevertheless, we believe disaster relief is constitutionally different.

First, disaster relief, such as the ongoing efforts following Hurricane Sandy, presents special circumstances that do not amount to a transfer of the costs of operating a place of worship from the collection plates to the taxpayer, a core concern of the Framers when they authored the First Amendment's prohibition on government establishment of religion. It is instead a form of social insurance in which society shares the burden of recovering from extraordinary disasters. There is a strong societal interest in aiding those who have suffered damage from such a broad-sweeping event, even institutions that for compelling constitutional and policy reasons would not otherwise be eligible for government assistance.

Second, houses of worship are not uniquely beneficiaries of the aid—a wide variety of not-for-profit institutions are eligible for aid under the existing statutory framework, including zoos and museums. These latter are undeniably important social institutions, but it is clearly the case that houses of worship play at least as important a role in providing essential response services to people in need. Disaster relief is thus available under religiously neutral criteria, which leave no room for discretionary or discriminatory judgments of the sort that generate Establishment Clause concerns.

For these reasons, we support in principle the goal to which H.R. 592 is directed.

We do wish to note how we read the proposed language in Section 3(b), lines 15–16, that makes eligible for aid a ''house of worship and a private nonprofit facility operated by a religious organization . . . without regard to the religious character of the facility or the primary use of the facility.'' (emphasis supplied) We read this section, as we believe it is intended; as meaning that an otherwise qualified institution is not disqualified from aid merely because it is religious, and that in its implementation, FEMA must apportion aid between secular and religious functions.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Respectfully,

MARC D. STERN,
Director of Legal Advocacy.

RICHARD T. FOLTIN,
Director of National and Legislative Affairs.

UJA FEDERATION OF NEW YORK,
New York, NY.

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT FOR H.R. 592

EQUAL TREATMENT OF HOUSES OF WORSHIP

Houses of worship for all faiths are a crucial part of the New York region's fabric and while they have always been beacons of support, comfort and community resources, since Hurricane Sandy New Yorkers have needed these institutions more than ever. These organizations are an essential part of neighborhoods and enable rites of passage, community gatherings, charitable activities and are sources of comfort and prayer. In the face of lost homes and distressed property, disruption of employment opportunities and dislocated families, houses of worship have helped many find stability and fulfillment in an uncertain time. In the aftermath of Sandy, as with so many other natural disasters, churches, synagogues and other houses of worship have been places offering essential response services to people in need—even while the church, mosque or synagogue itself is damaged.

Toward that end, UJA-Federation is proud to have funded close to $1 million to 76 synagogues to help these institutions support their communities through respite and relief and enlisted dozens of volunteers to help rebuild damaged buildings. Our efforts have made a significant impact at synagogues including West End Temple in Belle Harbor, Queens, Congregation Khal Yeraim in Sea Gate, Brooklyn and The Jewish Russian Learning Center in Staten Island and these houses of worship have helped the Jewish and broader communities in the neighborhoods they are serving.

Each of these synagogues serves as vital hubs of community providing physical, spiritual and emotional shelter for community members. That said, during Hurricane Sandy, many of the synagogues suffered severe damage and lack the resources to rebuild. UJA-Federation while helping houses of worship serve individuals in need does not have the resources to support capital needs.

Many houses of worship function similar to other non-profits by providing day care programming, schooling for children and youth, senior centers and resource centers for immigrants. These services are the lifeblood for communities. Houses of worship have worked closely with elected officials and government on city, state and federal levels to coordinate disaster relief efforts to the benefit of the entire community.

The Stafford Act provides that private nonprofit entities—such as schools, hospitals and community centers—damaged in a natural disaster may receive financial grants from FEMA to repair their buildings. The Act does not list houses of worship among its list of examples of nonprofits so eligible; neither does the Act exclude houses of worship in any way. To the extent that FEMA has provided aid to eligible programs run by houses of worship, the aid has not been provided on the same terms as the aid provided to other eligible nonprofits. It is, therefore, entirely appropriate for FEMA's aid program for private nonprofits to assist houses of worship with their rebuilding needs.

Current Supreme Court jurisprudence makes clear that religious institutions may receive government financial aid in the context of a broad program administered on the basis of religion neutral criteria. This is why houses of worship and other religious nonprofits can, and do, currently receive grants from the Department of Homeland Security to improve their security and the Interior Department for historic preservation.

Numerous houses of worship have suffered financially from this crisis and federal funding would significantly alleviate the effects of building damage and their contents.

Accordingly, UJA-Federation supports passage of H.R. 592.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
SCHOOL OF LAW,
Charlottesville, VA, February 12, 2013.

Re H.R. 592.

Hon. CHRIS SMITH,
Hon. GRACE MENG,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REP. SMITH AND REP. MENG: I write to support your efforts to include places of worship in federal relief efforts in response to Hurricane Sandy. As Professor Dershowitz has already explained, there is no constitutional obstacle to including places of worship in this measure, which is entirely neutral and very broadly applicable.

The Supreme Court has permitted government funds to flow without discrimination to broad categories of schools, including religious schools (Zelman v. Simmons-Harris). And when a university undertook to subsidize publications, the Court has actually required government funds to flow without discrimination to a broad category that included religious publications (Rosenberger v. University of Virginia).

Charitable contributions to places of worship are tax deductible, without significant controversy, even though the tax benefits to the donor are like a matching grant from the government. These deductions have been uncontroversial because they are included without discrimination in the much broader category of all not-for-profit organizations devoted to charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes.

The neutral category here is equally broad. To include places of worship in disaster relief is neutral; to exclude them would be affirmatively hostile. There is no constitutional obstacle to including them.

Very truly yours,

DOUGLAS LAYCOCK.

CAMBRIDGE, MA.

Hon. CHRIS SMITH,
Hon. GRACE MENG,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES SMITH AND MENG: I write to express my support for your legislation (H.R. 592) which will ensure that churches, synagogues, mosques and other houses of worship damaged in Hurricane Sandy will be eligible to receive federal disaster relief funds to repair their facilities on the same terms as other, similarly situated, private nonprofit organizations.

While the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment properly restricts government funds flowing to religious institutions, this restriction is not absolute. Under precedents of the U.S. Supreme Court, religious institutions may receive government aid if it is in the context of a broadly available program with criteria that are neutral toward religion and pose no risks of religious favoritism. This is certainly the case in the context of FEMA disbursing aid to repair buildings in the wake of a natural disaster.

Once FEMA has the policy in place to aid various nonprofit organizations with their building repairs, houses of worship should not be excluded from receiving this aid on the same terms. This is all the more appropriate given the neutral role we have witnessed houses of worship play, without regard to the religion of those affected, in the wake of Sandy and countless previous disasters. Federal disaster relief aid is a form of social insurance and a means of helping battered communities get back on their feet. Churches, synagogues, mosques and other houses of worship are an essential part of the recovery process.

I hope Congress will move quickly to enact your legislation.

Sincerely,

ALAN DERSHOWITZ,
Felix Frankfurter Professor of Law, Harvard Law School.

AGUDATH ISRAEL OF AMERICA,
Washington, DC, February 12, 2013.

Re FEMA Aid and Religious Institutions.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: On behalf of Agudath Israel of America, a national Orthodox Jewish organization, I write to congratulate you on sponsoring H.R. 592, the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013, which is intended to make clear that houses of worship and other religious institutions are eligible to receive FEMA disaster relief on an equal footing with other eligible nonprofits. A vote on the measure is scheduled for this week.

Over the years—most recently, during Hurricane Sandy—Agudath Israel has been engaged in helping to ensure that religious institutions obtain a full measure of FEMA aid for the repair and restoration of their disaster-damaged facilities. Unfortunately, due to unnecessary and unfair limitations placed on how and when disaster assistance may be provided specifically to religious entities—including houses of worship and religious schools—this has been an ongoing challenge. Without the much needed aid, they often face staggering costs that make rebuilding prohibitive.

There is no reason to treat religious entities in this manner. Supreme Court decisions, as well as executive action, in recent years that have allowed federal aid to go to religious institutions when the assistance is made broadly available and is distributed on a religion-neutral basis—as the FEMA program does.

Religious institutions are an integral part of American communities and play an important role in assisting devastated neighborhoods revitalize and rebuild. After natural disasters, they provide both material and nonmaterial help to those in need. They should be treated like other vital nonprofits and receive federal assistance without prejudice or discrimination.

Sincerely yours,

RABBI ABBA COHEN.

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
New York, NY, February 12, 2013.

Hon. GRACE MENG,
Congress Member, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. CHRIS SMITH,
Congress Member, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESS MEMBERS MENG AND SMITH: We are writing in support of H.R. 592, the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013. This important legislation will ensure that houses of worship affected by Hurricane Sandy will be eligible to receive assistance from FEMA to rebuild their damaged properties. At stake are the interests of New Yorkers in the many neighborhoods that were hit hard by Sandy.

Churches, synagogues and mosques serve as a bedrock for our citizens and our communities. They not only provide places for people to worship but operate after-school programs, food pantries, and other critical services. Many of the churches, synagogues and mosques that were damaged by the hurricane are now facing great difficulty reopening their doors.

Although we understand that some oppose this change due to the constitutional requirement of separation of church and state, in this case we don't agree. Recovery from a natural disaster like Hurricane Sandy isn't a matter of state sponsoring religion. It's a matter of helping those in need after one of the worst natural disasters our country has ever seen.

Under such extraordinary and painful circumstances, houses of worship should be eligible to receive aid on the same basis as all other non-profits damaged by the hurricane. We applaud you for your leadership on this matter and are happy to lend our support to your bill.

Sincerely,

CHRISTINE C. QUINN,
Speaker.
PETER F. VALLONE, JR.,
Chair, Public Safety Committee.
FERNANDO CABRERA,
Council Member.

Mr. BARLETTA. Madam Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Pennsylvania has 7½ minutes remaining.

Mr. BARLETTA. Madam Speaker, I wish to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS).

□ 1250

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to speak on behalf of my friend Mr. SMITH's sensible legislation to help rebuild communities destroyed by Hurricane Sandy.

Federal assistance is intended to make communities whole; and if we leave behind ruined houses of worship, we're taking the soul out of those places. Churches, synagogues, and other houses of worship are an essential piece of any community. They provide shelter in storms, assistance to the needy, and support for families. And they provide essential services and support to people of all faiths.

In previous disasters, including Katrina, the Seattle earthquake and the Oklahoma City bombing, the Federal Government has extended assistance to places of worship. Areas affected by Sandy should be no different.

I'm a strong supporter of the First Amendment, and I believe that this assistance is completely compatible with our Constitution. Assistance will be distributed without prejudice against any particular religion. Government cannot endorse religion, but that does not mean we should discriminate against those of faith during a time of disaster. Recovery cannot be considered successful if sacred places of our community are left empty.

FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL,
Washington, DC, February 12, 2013.

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the Family Research Council (FRC) and the families we represent, I am writing today in strong support of H.R. 592, the ''Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013'' by Reps. Chris Smith (R–NJ) and Grace Meng (D–NY). H.R. 592 would ensure that houses of worship would not be denied the same relief offered to other entities following a major storm or disaster.

Following every disaster, natural and man made that has hit the United States, our houses of worship have been there to help. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, churches, relief organizations and Christian organizations went into emergency response mode sending help in the form of money, food, supplies and volunteers. When Katrina struck Louisiana, it was religious entities that helped the victims and refugees despite being affected by the storm as well. This is just as true with the recent Hurricane Sandy that struck our Eastern seaboard.

Houses of worship across the Northeast including many faiths and denominations were among the private nonprofit facilities that sustained damage. However, it was the churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, and other houses of worship throughout communities in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and elsewhere that provided relief to many individuals while the federal government seemingly did little.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) own policies allow for grants to nonprofit organizations where citizens are known to gather and engage in a variety of educational, enrichment, and social activities. However, it is internal FEMA policy that does not believe houses of worship are worthy of the same type of relief.

H.R. 592 is consistent with recent precedents of the Supreme Court of the United States and legal opinions issued by the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice. We strongly urge your vote for this necessary legislation.

Sincerely,

TOM MCCLUSKY,
Senior Vice President.

Mr. RAHALL. How much time do I have remaining, please, Madam Speaker?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from West Virginia has 8½ minutes remaining.

Mr. RAHALL. I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise in opposition to H.R. 592, the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013, which would add ''houses of worship'' to the list of eligible entities that can receive direct government assistance from FEMA. While the devastation caused to many communities after Hurricane Sandy is severe, and while I empathize with the desire to assist all who have suffered severe losses, direct government funding for houses of worship, whether for building or rebuilding, remains unconstitutional.

The establishment clause in the First Amendment protects religious freedom by preventing the government from endorsing and funding any one religion—or all religions. And while well intended, this bill would violate years of precedents interpreting the establishment clause.

In Committee for Public Education v. Nyquist, a 1973 case which upheld the principles of Everson v. Board of Education, from 1947, the U.S. Supreme Court held that no taxpayer funds could be used for maintenance and repair of facilities in which religious activities take place, explaining:

If the State may not erect buildings in which religious activities are to take place,

it may not maintain such buildings or renovate them when they fall into disrepair.

Accordingly, longstanding precedent specifically holds that taxpayer funds cannot go to construct, rebuild or repair buildings used for religious activities. The type of buildings that this bill seeks to make eligible for direct government funding—houses of worship—are inherently used for religious activities and the bill would have the effect of unconstitutionally funneling taxpayer money for religious activities.

Other cases have also upheld the precedent established in Everson v. Board of Education and have further clarified the application of the establishment clause to cases of direct religious funding. In Tilton v. Richardson, the Supreme Court unanimously held that a government subsidy used to construct buildings at colleges and universities was constitutional but only if the buildings were never used for religious activities.

In Hunt v. McNair, 1973, the Supreme Court upheld a South Carolina law which established an ''educational facilities authority'' that issued bonds to finance construction and renovation of facilities at educational institutions was upheld because it included a condition that government-financed buildings could never be used for religious worship or instruction.

All of these cases firmly establish that it is constitutionally impermissible for the government to provide direct subsidization of religious institutions for the construction, repair or maintenance of any building that is, or even might be, used for religious purposes. Houses of worship clearly fall within this category of buildings and based on a long line of Supreme Court cases cannot be publicly funded and cannot be recipients of direct grant funding.

Now, there are constitutional ways to assist churches along with other community organizations. Loan programs, such as the government-sponsored small business loan programs available to any business in a community, could also be used by churches. Such loan programs have been upheld as constitutional so long as they are both neutral on their face and in their application and so long as their purpose is not to aid religious institutions specifically.

In Mitchell v. Helms, 2000, the Supreme Court held that loan programs for religious institutions are allowable in some cases. However, such programs are distinguishable from grants and are further distinguishable from the direct funding of church facilities that are, or may be, used for religious purposes. The opinion included that:

> Of course, we have seen special establishment clause dangers when money is given to religious schools or entities rather than indirectly.

Justice O'Connor noted the Court's ''continued recognition of the special dangers associated with direct money grants to religious institutions.'' Now, therefore, H.R. 592 clearly violates the principles prohibiting direct government grants to religious institutions. It also violates any possible exemption that could be available under the theory of neutrality—the standards in this bill applicable to houses of worship are different from the standards for other entities.

While I'm in favor of constitutionally permissible ways to assist churches that have been damaged by natural disasters, this bill clearly does not do so in a constitutionally permissible way; and for this reason, I must oppose the bill and urge my colleagues to instead work together to ensure that all entities affected by Hurricane Sandy can be assisted in an expeditious and constitutionally permissible manner.

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION,
Washington, DC, February 12, 2013.

Re Oppose H.R. 592, the so-called Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), a non-partisan organization with more than a half million members, countless additional activists and supporters, and 53 affiliates nationwide dedicated to the principles of individual liberty and justice embodied in the U.S. Constitution, we are writing to urge you to vote ''No'' on H.R. 592 when the measure comes up on the suspension calendar on Wednesday. This bill, which would authorize FEMA to provide houses of worship with direct grants of taxpayer funds, would flout longstanding constitutional law and harm religious liberty.

The Supreme Court has recognized that the First Amendment was devised to prohibit ''[t]he imposition of taxes to . . . build and maintain churches and church property,'' because such funding is an affront to ''individual religious liberty.'' Accordingly, longstanding Court precedent specifically holds that taxpayer funds cannot go to construct, rebuild, or repair buildings used for religious activities—which clearly includes houses of worship. The Court has never retreated from this bedrock Establishment Clause principle. In fact, the Supreme Court continues to recognize ''special Establishment Clause dangers where the government makes direct money payments to sectarian institutions,'' which is exactly the use of taxpayer funds at issue here. And in a variety of bills over the past several decades, Congress has prohibited the use of funds to construct buildings used for religious purposes. Indeed, in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Congress again recognized this prohibition and limited green construction funding to buildings in which secular activities take place.

Under current policy, houses of worship may obtain government loans—just not direct grants—to rebuild. All for-profit businesses and non-profit organizations—including houses of worship—are eligible to participate in the SBA Disaster Loan Program. Houses of worship, therefore, are not without government help to rebuild. Moreover, houses of worship are not the only non-profit facilities that would otherwise be ineligible for direct grants for reconstruction. Only non-profits with facilities used for emergency, essential, and government-like activities are eligible for grants. Thus, FEMA grants are not the same as ''general government services,'' like police or fire, which are available to every business, nonprofit, private residence, and house of worship. To say that the policy is unfair or that houses of worship are treated unequally—singled out among all other non-profits—therefore, is untrue.

Although houses of worship may serve a central role in the lives of their congregants, it is impossible to see how the prayer and worship conducted in these sacred buildings is equivalent to the essential, government-like activities in facilities that would be eligible for government grants. It would be a dangerous precedent to equate religious worship with the vital services government provides. And while houses of worship may host educational and social activities, only community centers that are open to the general public on a nondiscriminatory basis, serve the entire community (not just congregants), and are used for a range of different activities are eligible for a FEMA grant.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Bush administration directed that houses of worship would remain ineligible for FEMA funds. The Bush administration respected longstanding Supreme Court precedent and continued to adhere to this constitutional requirement. Churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples were damaged in Katrina just as they were in Sandy. As an organization whose offices were closed for weeks as a result, we very much understand the serious difficulties faced by people who were impacted by superstorm Sandy—so many of our friends and colleagues in New York and New Jersey continue to deal with its aftermath. But, the harm would be compounded if this misfortune were used as a reason to erode fundamental religious liberty protections enshrined in the First Amendment.

Religious liberty is one of our nation's most fundamental values and it starts from the principle that religion thrives when both religion and government are safeguarded from the undue influences of the other. Barring federal funds for the rebuilding of houses of worship is not discriminatory or hostile to religion—it is one of the most fundamental ways we have to protect and defend religious liberty for all. Indeed, the Establishment Clause protects religious freedom by preventing the government from endorsing and funding any one religion—or all religions.

Because H.R. 592 would flout longstanding constitutional law and harm religious liberty, we urge you to oppose the measure and vote ''No'' when the measure comes up on the suspension calendar on Wednesday.

Please contact Legislative Counsel Dena Sher if you have questions or comments about our concerns.

Sincerely,

LAURA W. MURPHY,
Director, Washington Legislative Office.
DENA SHER,
Legislative Counsel.

AMERICANS UNITED FOR SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE,
Washington, DC, February 12, 2013.

Re Oppose H.R. 592, the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: Americans United writes to express our strong opposition to H.R. 592, the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013, which will be debated on the House floor tomorrow, Wednesday, February 13. The sole purpose of the bill is to authorize the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to issue direct grants to fund the rebuilding of houses of worship. We oppose this bill because such funding would violate the Constitution and represent a significant shift in longstanding federal policy. Indeed, the George W. Bush

Administration followed the policies of the Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Clinton Administrations when it disallowed FEMA grants for the rebuilding of ''houses of worship'' after Hurricane Katrina.

As someone who was born and raised at the Jersey shore and whose parents are still making repairs to their home and cleaning up after the storm, I certainly appreciate the needs the community faces. But, I also recognize that the Constitution places certain limits on the government's ability to fund houses of worship. The Tilton/Nyquist line of Supreme Court cases firmly establish that it is constitutionally impermissible for the government to provide aid for the construction and repair of houses of worship. In accordance with these cases, ''the State may not erect buildings in which religious activities are to take place'' and ''it may not maintain such buildings or renovate them when they fall into disrepair.''

The rule set down by the Supreme Court in these cases remains controlling law as neither they, nor the principle behind them, have ever been overruled in any subsequent Supreme Court decision. To the contrary, in its more recent cases examining the constitutionality of government aid to religious institutions, the Supreme Court has maintained that direct money grants create ''special Establishment Clause dangers.'' Congress too just recently recognized the applicability of this precedent when it limited green construction funding in the Recovery Act to buildings in which secular activities take place.

Furthermore, proponents' claims that Tilton and Nyquist are inapplicable and that Congress should instead look to free speech forum and in-kind aid cases must be rejected. The Supreme Court has squarely held that free speech forum cases are inapposite to federal aid cases and that money grants are distinct from in-kind funds.

It is also important to note that houses of worship, like most non-profit organizations and businesses, are eligible for government loans—just not direct grants—to rebuild. In addition, houses of worship are not the only nonprofits that are ineligible for direct grants for reconstruction. To the contrary, only nonprofits with facilities that are used for emergency, essential, and government-like activities are eligible. And, eligible facilities, such as community centers, must also be open to the general public. To say that houses of worship are singled out among all other non-profits, therefore, is untrue. It is similarly inaccurate to claim that FEMA grants should be extended to houses of worship because the grants are akin to ''general government services,'' such as police or fire. FEMA grants—unlike general government services—are not available to every business, nonprofit, private residence, or other building.

Although it may not seem easy in times of tragedy to tell those seeking aid that they are ineligible for government grants, the bar on the government rebuilding of houses of worship is an important limitation that exists to protect religious freedom for all. It upholds the fundamental principle that no taxpayer should be forced to fund a religion with whom he or she disagrees and that the government should never support building (''establishing'' religion in its most basic form) religious sanctuaries. And, it protects against the government favoring, or creating the perception of favoritism for, certain religions over others.

Houses of worship are special in our country and our constitution. They are both the place where worship takes place, and, adorned with religious symbols and iconography, are themselves expressions of worship. Accordingly, they are accorded special protections—exemptions, accommodations, and tax deductions. Restrictions on government funding of religion is also a special protection—they protect the conscience of the individual taxpayer, safeguard the autonomy of the religious institution, and ensure an equal playing field for all religions by prohibiting the government from playing favorites.

For the reasons listed above, we urge you to oppose H.R. 592.

Sincerely,

MAGGIE GARRETT,
Legislative Director.

HINDU AMERICAN FEDERATION,
Washington, DC, February 12, 2013.

Re Please Oppose H.R. 592, the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE, We at the Hindu American Foundation (HAF), a 501(c)(3) advocacy organization, write to express our deep concern about H.R. 592, the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013, sponsored by Congressman Chris Smith (R–NJ). The act provides for direct grants to fund the rebuilding of ''houses of worship.'' We believe such funding violates the Constitution and represents a significant shift in longstanding federal policy. As such, HAF opposes H.R. 592.

We believe constitutionally problematic because the Supreme Court has long held that taxpayer funds cannot go to construct, rebuild, or repair buildings used for religious activities, including houses of worship without invoking ''special Establishment Clause dangers.'' In fact, the controlling law proscribing such funding was set down by the Supreme Court in three major cases—Tilton v. Richardson, Hunt v. McNair, and Committee for Public Education v. Nyquist. Even Congress has recognized the applicability of this precedent when green construction funding in the Recovery Act was limited to buildings in which secular activities take place. Past administrations, from George W. Bush to Ronald Reagan, have also all recognized that direct financial support to build and reconstruct houses of worship raises serious Establishment Clause concerns.

There are some government grant programs that benefit other non-profit facilities, such as the Stafford Act. But these grants are limited to only ''educational, utility, irrigation, emergency, medical, rehabilitation, and temporary or permanent custodial'' facilities,'' and ''any private nonprofit facility that provides essential services of a governmental nature to the general public.'' Even among potentially eligible facilities, there are prohibitions on funding structures used for religious purposes. That houses of worship are amongst non-profit facilities which sustain damage and destruction wrought by natural disasters, is a sad reality. However, providing direct funding for rebuilding, as Sec 3 of H.R. 592 seeks to do, would be unprecedented, would unnecessarily entwine government with religion, and ultimately would threaten the autonomy of religion.

This is not to suggest that houses of worship are not deserving or in need of assistance after a natural disaster; only that direct federal funding should not be granted for such uses. There are many government loans, which houses of worship could apply for should they choose. The SBA Disaster Loan Program, for example, provides loans of up to $2 million to cover losses that are not fully covered by insurance, and they can be used to reconstruct or repair property damaged after a disaster.

Since its inception, the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) has made legal advocacy one of its main areas of focus. From issues of religious accommodation and religious discrimination to defending fundamental constitutional rights of free exercise and the separation of church and state, HAF has educated Americans at large about various aspects of Hindu belief and practice in the context of religious liberty, either as a party to the case or an amicus curiae. These have included a successful suit against the State of South Carolina over a special Christian license plate mandated by the state's legislature, and amicus briefs filed before the U.S. Supreme Court in cases involving the public display of the Ten Commandments and legislative prayer in which the county allowed only those prayers which invoked a Judeo-Christian deity.

HAF seeks to be a resource for your office with regards to matters involving the Establishment Clause. Please feel free to reach out us should you need further clarification to the facts presented in this letter.

Respectfully,

SUHAG A. SHUKLA, ESQ.,
Executive Director/Legal Counsel.

BAPTIST JOINT COMMITTEE
FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY,
Washington, DC, February 12, 2013.

Re Oppose H.R. 592, the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty (BJC), a 76-year-old agency dedicated to defending and extending religious freedom for all, I am writing to express our opposition to H.R. 592, to be considered on the floor tomorrow, Wednesday, February 13. The BJC, supported by fifteen national Baptist bodies and hundreds of congregations and individual supporters, believes religion is best served when it is neither advanced nor inhibited by government. H.R. 592, which would authorize FEMA to provide houses of worship with direct grants of taxpayer funds, would flout well-established constitutional principles and harm religious liberty.

The First Amendment's Establishment Clause prohibits government from providing outright grants or similar financial support to churches and other houses of worship. Supreme Court jurisprudence has been clear on this point, having repeatedly reaffirmed the principle that direct monetary contributions of taxpayer dollars to religious institutions create ''special Establishment Clause dangers.'' Simply put, we do not allow taxpayer dollars to build churches; we likewise should not allow taxpayer dollars to be used to rebuild churches.

The damage wrought upon the Northeast by Hurricane Sandy is an instance in which our moral and humanitarian instincts may seem at odds with the constitutional requirement of no-establishment. Happily, we have ways to empathize with and provide aid to churches and other religious organizations damaged by the terrible storm. Repairs may be financed by denominational efforts, private foundation grants and contributions of the faithful. Additionally, insurance proceeds are available for rebuilding efforts, and churches and houses of worship may be eligible to obtain low-interest, long-term loans under the Small Business Administration disaster loan program for damages not covered by insurance.

Natural disasters and other times of crisis serve as a call to action for citizens of faith. When we answer that call using voluntary, private donations, we reflect the very best of America's longstanding commitment to religious liberty for all. Public funding of houses of worship threatens to undermine religious autonomy and impermissibly involve government in the private affairs of religious bodies. It is simply not a good idea—however

our heartstrings are tugged—to give churches access to the public till. H.R. 592 would do just that, and we therefore urge you to oppose it.

Sincerely,

NAN FUTRELL,
BJC Staff Counsel.

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I absolutely agree with my colleagues of the necessity of an absolute firewall around the protection of the First Amendment. And I do believe that Members understand the sacred aspect of freedom of religion and the separation of church and state.

But I rise today to support H.R. 592, and I support it so that it can be considered by the Senate and that we can reinforce the distinctive separation between church and state. But coming from Hurricane, if you will, Valley, coming from the gulf, living through Hurricane Rita and Hurricane Katrina, the pain I saw that places of worship, of any kind, were devastated, the members are taxpayers. And for all that we could do, we could never get those places to be restored.

The small business loan program does not work because many of our churches are just that, they give their money to the poor. They are not rich institutions. That is the bulk of places of worship no matter what your faith may happen to be.

And as the Federal Emergency Management Agency does, in fact, support nonprofits, I would argue to the authors of this bill whether or not they would be open to ensure that the funding is specifically for the devastation that occurred on that specific natural disaster, that there was a time limit, that there were specific items of which the church—or the place of worship, let me be general—could utilize it for.

I come to the floor because I have lived the pain of pastors, I have lived the pain of rabbis, imams and priests who have suffered the devastation of their faith. It is not a fault of their own.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, the gentlewoman is making such a persuasive case, I yield her all the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman is recognized for 1½ minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the distinguished gentleman for his kindness. Let me thank the ranking member very much.

I think we can make this work. And I also want to just mention an anecdotal story: when we had Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the places of worship opened their doors to the surviving members out of Louisiana or survivors out of Louisiana and just opened their doors.

□ 1300

They had leaking roofs. They were damaged. But in Texas, they opened their doors. We took a quarter of a million, and they opened their doors. They put cots up, and they fed them. All of those items could not be reimbursed.

We saw places of worship—no matter what their faith—literally shut down. They just could not survive because they had given their all with their leaking roof, their non-resources to give food in a place that these people could stay.

So in this instance, having walked through a number of disasters, from the tragedy of 9/11, a heinous manmade disaster, to every hurricane that we've had, including the tsunami way across the ocean, to see what a natural disaster can do and to preclude these places who can legitimately document—I would even suggest that it be on a reimbursement form. But we can work together so that we can document that what these dollars are used for will be used for the restoration of the physical plant that houses or allows those who are Americans, who pay taxes, and are contributing to this Nation.

I ask my colleagues to consider H.R. 592 and how we can make it better so that it can go forward and help the places of worship.

Mr. BARLETTA. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I thank my good friend for yielding, and I thank the gentlelady from Texas for her very strong and passionate remarks.

I especially again want to thank Congresswoman MENG for her excellent statement and her support and cosponsorship of this important bill.

Let me just say a couple of points to my colleagues. First of all, I will be submitting for the RECORD a very fine analysis by the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, an outstanding public interest law firm that has done yeoman's work throughout the country on religious liberty.

It's a statement to us as Members of Congress by its leaders. It points out first not only does the Establishment Clause provide no support for FEMA's practice of discriminating against houses of worship, that practice itself runs afoul of the First Amendment by discriminating against religious institutions.

Second, the bill you have proposed will not lead to Establishment Clause violations because no act of Congress can purport to repeal the First Amendment. Arguments to the contrary are constitutional scaremongering.

Eric Rassbach and Daniel Blomberg have authored again a very important contribution to this debate.

Madam Speaker—and Ms. MENG mentioned this earlier and it bears repeating—in letters of support for H.R. 592, Harvard Professor Alan Dershowitz concludes:

> Religious institutions may receive government aid if it is in the context of a broadly available program with criteria that are neutral toward religion and pose no risk of religious favoritism.

He states further:

> Once FEMA has a policy in place to aid various nonprofit organizations with their building repairs, houses of worship should not be excluded from receiving this aid on the same terms.

This is all the more appropriate given the neutral role that we have witnessed houses of worship play without regard to religion to those afflicted in the wake of Sandy and countless previous disasters.

Federal disaster relief aid in the form of social insurance and other means of helping battered communities get them back on their feet. Churches, synagogues, mosques, and other houses of worship are an essential part of the recovery process.

Madam Speaker, religious liberty scholar Professor Douglas Laycock of the University of Virginia School of Law wrote a letter endorsing H.R. 592 and said in part:

> Charitable contributions to places of worship are tax deductible without significant controversy, though the tax benefits to the donor are like a matching grant from the government. These deductions have been uncontroversial because they're included without discrimination in a much broader category of all not-for-profit organizations devoted to charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes. The neutral category here is equally broad; to include places of worship in disaster relief is neutral. To exclude them would be affirmatively hostile. There is no constitutional obstacle to including them.

That is according to Professor Laycock of the University of Virginia School of Law, a preeminent expert on these matters.

Madam Speaker, houses of worship are an integral, irreplaceable part of the contour and fabric of our communities. Like any other private nonprofit organization, their recovery is essential to the recovery of neighborhoods, towns, and States. They should not be excluded from Federal programs that ensure community recovery, especially since they so selflessly provide assistance to all in need.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, this legislation has been backed by a number of important organizations, including the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Association of Evangelicals.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BARLETTA. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Just to underscore for my colleagues the broad support that this has, the American Jewish Committee has also supported it, the Family Research Council. As I said earlier, the Becket Fund and so many others have written very extensive remarks in favor of it.

I do hope there will be very strong support for this important legislation. It's a matter of inclusion to stop current-day, present-day exclusion.

MEMORANDUM

To: Interested Parties

From: Nathan J. Diament, Exec. Director of Public Policy

Date: February 6, 2013

Re Legal Analysis Supporting Including Houses of Worship, Among Private Nonprofit Facilities, Eligible for Federal Disaster Relief Funds Administered by FEMA Under the Stafford Act.

Conclusion: The Establishment Clause does not bar the award of federal grants to houses of worship for the repair of facilities damaged in a natural disaster, in the context of the Stafford Act's ''private nonprofit facility'' aid program.

I.

A. BACKGROUND

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act provides that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) may provide funding, through its Public Assistance program, to restore facilities of certain private nonprofit organizations which were damaged in a natural disaster. 42 U.S.C. 5122, 5172.

The private nonprofit organizations eligible for such aid include those which provide ''critical services'' (ie: utilities, hospitals and schools) and those which provide ''essential services'' (ie: museums, community centers, libraries, day care centers and more). The Stafford Act does not explicitly include or exclude houses of worship from eligibility for public assistance. In its regulations and policies, FEMA has imposed restrictions on eligibility for aid to houses of worship. FEMA excludes facilities whose ''primary use'' is religious from eligibility.

It is worth noting an illustrative example of FEMA's unequal policy. One eligible category of nonprofit providing ''essential services'' is community centers. FEMA policy defines these entities as ''a gathering place for a variety of social, educational . . . and community service activities.'' FEMA policy describes a broad array of activities that fit this definition—but excludes a facility that hosts the very same activities if that facility and those activities are in a house or worship in a religious context.

FEMA's exclusion of houses of worship from eligibility cannot be exclusively on constitutional grounds because, as noted, FEMA awards aid to religious entities that operate what it deems to be eligible nonprofits. FEMA's exclusion is also not on statutory grounds as the statute does not explicitly exclude houses of worship.

FEMA's policy is unfair, discriminatory and not required by constitutional jurisprudence.

B. POSSIBLE CONSTITUTIONAL CONCERNS

Those who would contend that providing government funds for the repair of houses of worship is barred by the Constitution would argue that a two-part rule governs direct financial support of religious institutions. First, that direct aid may be given to ''nonpervasively sectarian'' religious institutions, provided the aid is not used to fund specifically religious activity and is channeled exclusively to secular functions. Second, that there are institutions—''pervasively sectarian'' institutions—in which ''religion is so pervasive that a substantial portion of [their] functions are subsumed in the religious mission.'' (*Hunt* v. *McNair*, 413 U.S. 734, 743 (1973)). The opponents would further contend that, because houses of worship would qualify as ''pervasively sectarian'' institutions, in which the ''secular and religious functions'' are ''inextricably intertwined,'' the government may not provide direct aid to them ''with or without restrictions,'' because the aid will inevitably end up advancing religion. (*Tilton* v. *Richardson*, 403 U.S. 672 (1971), and *Committee for Public Educ.* v. *Nyquist*, 413 U.S. 756 (1973)).

In addition, the opponents of fair inclusion of houses of worship would contend that to the extent that it is possible to distinguish between the religious and secular, any governmental effort to separate out the facilities and functions that engage in exclusively religious activities could well involve the kind of monitoring of a religious entity otherwise prohibited by the Establishment Clause. Opponents would again cite *Tilton* and *Nyquist*, which imposed certain restrictions on the government's provision of construction, maintenance, and repair aid to properties used by religious educational institutions.

As the following discussion will demonstrate however, in the context of disaster response and relief, these contentions are inconsistent with current constitutional jurisprudence.

II

A. GENERAL CONSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

A proper reading of Supreme Court decisions and jurisprudence developed in the decades since *Tilton* and *Nyquist* clearly lead to the conclusion that providing federal grants to houses of worship, among many types of nonprofits, as part of a broad disaster relief program, is constitutionally acceptable. Most notably, the Supreme Court's ruling in *Mitchell* v. *Helms*, 550 U.S. 793 (2000), explicitly undermined the continued application of *Tilton* and *Nyquist*.

First, Congress may legitimately conclude that the federal government has a secular interest in aiding a community's recovery from a natural disaster, that repairing damaged private nonprofit facilities is an essential component of that recovery and that houses of worship are among those nonprofit facilities which should be aided.

Second, the public assistance grants are not an isolated initiative designed to aid religion—it is but one part of a much larger legislative effort to assist a disaster stricken region with its recovery. In this critical way, it is quite distinguishable from the targeted aid programs considered in the *Tilton* and *Nyquist* cases.

Third, the aid to houses of worship is within the context of the Stafford Act's broader provision of aid to nonprofit entities. In this respect, inclusion of houses of worship is consistent with many existing and past examples of inclusion of religious institutions in broader infrastructure improvement and federal aid programs. Notable examples of such programs include:

i) the Interior Department's ''Save America's Treasures'' program provides grants for the repair and maintenance of historically significant properties, which have included the Boston's Old North Church and Newport's Touro Synagogue;

ii) FEMA awards disaster relief grants to repair facilities under the Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121–5206, damaged in natural disasters to religious institutions including, for example, a Seattle parochial school;

iii) following the Oklahoma City bombing, Congress authorized FEMA and other federal agencies to provide disaster relief funds to houses of worship on the same basis as all other nonprofit facilities;

iv) the California Missions Preservation Act, P.L. 108–420 (Nov. 30, 2004), authorizes federal grants for restoring colonial era missions in California, many of which are still used for religious worship;

v) Congress has overwhelmingly authorized grants for security upgrades for nonprofits, including houses of worship, under the Department of Homeland Security's UASI program;

and many other examples abound.

Therefore, a federal disaster relief program which includes houses of worship among its eligible grantees cannot be materially distinguished from other aid programs that are constitutional under longstanding precedents establishing that religious institutions are fully entitled to receive widely available government benefits and services.

B. DISASTER RELIEF AND REPAIR GRANTS ARE ''GENERAL GOV'T SERVICES''

It is highly significant that eligibility for FEMA's public assistance grants extends to a broad class of beneficiaries, defined without reference to religion and including both public and private institutions. Ever since 1947, the year of its decision in *Everson*, the Supreme Court has indicated that religious institutions are entitled to receive ''general government services'' made available on the basis of neutral criteria. 330 U.S. at 17. *Everson* held that the Establishment Clause does not bar students attending religious schools from receiving generally available school busing services provided by the government. In reaching its decision, the Court explained that even if the evenhanded provision of busing services increased the likelihood that some parents would send their children to religious schools, the same could be said of other ''general state law benefits'' that were even more clearly constitutional because they were equally available to all citizens and far removed from the religious function of the school. *Id.* at 16. As examples, the Court cited ''such general government services as ordinary police and fire protection, connections for sewage disposal, public highways and sidewalks,'' concluding:

''cutting off church schools from these services, so separate and so indisputably marked off from the religious function, would make it far more difficult for the schools to operate. But such is obviously not the purpose of the First Amendment. That Amendment requires the state to be a neutral in its relations with groups of religious believers and non-believers; it does not require the state to be their adversary. State power is no more to be used so as to handicap religions, than it is to favor them.''

Id. at 17–18. *See also id.* at 16 (''[The state] cannot exclude individual Catholics, Lutherans, Mohammedans, Baptists, Jews, Methodists, Non-believers, Presbyterians, or the members of any other faith, *because of their faith, or lack of it*, from receiving the benefits of public welfare legislation. . . . [W]e must be careful, in protecting the citizens of New Jersey against state-established churches, to be sure that we do not inadvertently prohibit New Jersey from extending its general state law benefits to all its citizens without regard to their religious belief.'').

Federal disaster aid is analogous to aid that qualifies as ''general government services'' approved by the Court in *Everson*.

As the Supreme Court explained in *Widmar* v. *Vincent*, 454 U.S. 263, 274 (1981), ''[t]he provision of benefits to so broad a spectrum of groups is an important index of secular effect.'' *Accord Zobrest* v. *Catalina Foothills Sch. Dist.*, 509 U.S. 1, 8 (1993) (''we have consistently held that government programs that neutrally provide benefits to a broad class of citizens defined without reference to religion are not readily subject to an Establishment Clause challenge''); *Board of Educ. of Kiryas Joel Village Sch. Dist.* v. *Grumet*, 512 U.S. 687, 704 (1994) (''we have frequently relied explicitly on the general availability of any benefit provided religious groups or individuals in turning aside Establishment Clause challenges''). Thus, the aid here is closely analogous to the provision of ''general'' government aid like that sanctioned by the Court in *Everson*. *See also* Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104–155, 110 Stat. 1392

(creating a program that provides low-income reconstruction loans to nonprofit organizations, including churches, destroyed by arson motivated by racial or religious animus). As Justice Brennan expressed the point in *Texas Monthly:* ''Insofar as [a] subsidy is conferred upon a wide array of nonsectarian groups as well as religious organizations in pursuit of some legitimate secular end, the fact that religious groups benefit incidentally does not deprive the subsidy of the secular purpose and primary effect mandated by the Establishment Clause.'' 489 U.S. at 14–15 (plurality opinion) (footnote omitted).

When viewed in the context of disaster response, *Walz* v. *Tax Commission*, 397 U.S. 664 (1970), strongly supports this conclusion. There the Court rejected an Establishment Clause challenge to a property tax exemption made available not only to churches, but to several other classes of nonprofit institutions, such as ''hospitals, libraries, playgrounds, scientific, professional, historical, and patriotic groups.'' *Id.* at 673; *see also id.* at 667 n.1. In upholding the tax exemption, the Court relied in part upon its breadth: the exemption did ''not single[] out one particular church or religious group or even churches as such,'' but rather was available to ''a broad class of property owned by nonprofit, quasi-public corporations.'' *Id.* at 673. As the Court stated in reference to *Everson,* if ''buses can be provided to carry and policemen to protect church school pupils, we fail to see how a broader range of police and fire protection given equally to all churches, along with nonprofit hospitals, art galleries, and libraries receiving the same tax exemption, is different for purposes of the Religion Clauses.'' *Id.* at 671. Thus, just as a broad category of beneficiary institutions was sufficient to sustain the inclusion of religious institutions in the tax benefit in *Walz*—which, after all, substantially benefitted churches' *property*—the breadth of programs funded in the Stafford Act weighs heavily in favor of the constitutionality of including houses of worship.

C. NO RISK OF PERCEIVED ENDORSEMENT OF RELIGION

No reasonable observer would perceive an endorsement of religion in the government's evenhanded provision of funds to repair a house of worship damaged in a natural disaster such as Hurricane Sandy. *See Mitchell,* 530 U.S. at 842–44 (O'Connor, J., concurring in judgment). While it is true that in a narrower direct aid program one could argue that if a school ''uses the aid to inculcate religion in its students, it is reasonable to say that the government has communicated a message of endorsement,'' *Id.* at 843, that is not the case in the context of this broader disaster relief effort. A presumption of governmental endorsement is not present where the aid is provided to a wide array of public and private entities for the sake of recovery from a disaster and where the government is indifferent to the religious or secular orientation of the facility's function. Moreover, we think a reasonable observer—one informed about the purpose, history, and breadth of the program, *see Zelman,* 536 U.S. at 655—would understand that the federal government is not paying for religious activity; it is paying to help devastated communities recover. That is not an endorsement of religion.

D. DISTINCT FROM TILTON AND NYQUIST

Opponents will contend that the Supreme Court's decisions in *Tilton* and *Nyquist,* which involved construction and maintenance aid to religious schools, should be read to support the conclusion that FEMA aid to houses of worship violates the Establishment Clause. We disagree.

In *Tilton,* the Court sustained the provision of federal construction grants to religious colleges insofar as the program at issue barred aid to facilities ''used for sectarian instruction or as a place for religious worship,'' but invalidated such grants insofar as the program permitted funding the construction of buildings that might someday be used for such activities. *See* 403 U.S. at 675, 683 (plurality opinion) (citations omitted). The Court concluded that a 20–year limitation on the statutory prohibition on the use of buildings for religious activities was insufficient because ''[i]f, at the end of 20 years, the building is, for example, converted into a chapel or otherwise used to promote religious interests, the original federal grant will in part have the effect of advancing religion.'' *Id.* The Court therefore held that the religious use restriction had to run indefinitely. *Id.*

Similarly, *Nyquist* involved a program that provided maintenance and repair grants to religious elementary and secondary schools. The grants at issue were limited to 50 percent of the amount spent for comparable expenses in the public schools, but the Court invalidated the program. ''No attempt [was] made to restrict payments to those expenditures related to the upkeep of facilities used exclusively for secular purposes,'' the Court stated, and the 50 percent restriction would not necessarily prevent rehabilitation of entire religious schools. 413 U.S. at 774. The Court thus concluded that such aid would have the effect of advancing religion, in violation of *Lemon*'s second prong. *Id.*

These holdings have been severely undermined and limited. See Mitchell v. Helms, 530 U.S. 793, 856–57 (2000) (O'Connor, J., concurring in judgment).

A broad reading and application of *Tilton* and *Nyquist* does not apply here for several reasons. First, *Tilton* and *Nyquist* are in considerable tension with a more recent line of cases holding that the Free Speech Clause does not permit the government to deny religious groups equal access to *the government's own property,* even where such groups seek to use the property ''for purposes of religious worship or religious teaching.'' *Widmar* v. *Vincent,* 454 U.S. 263, 265 (1981). *See Lamb's Chapel* v. *Center Moriches Sch. Dist.,* 508 U.S. 384, 394 (1993); *Capital Square Rev. & Advisory Bd.* v. *Pinette,* 515 U.S. 753 (1995); *Good News Club* v. *Milford Central Sch.,* 533 U.S. 98 (2001); *see also Westside Community Bd. of Educ.* v. *Metgens,* 496 U.S. 226 (1990). Providing religious groups with access to property is a form of direct aid, and allowing such groups to conduct worship services plainly ''advances'' their religious mission. The Court, however, has consistently refused to *permit* (let alone require) state officials to deny churches equal access to public school property on the basis of these officials' argument ''that to permit its property to be used for religious purposes would be an establishment of religion.'' *Lamb's Chapel*, 508 U.S. at 394.

The Supreme Court's Establishment Clause jurisprudence has greatly evolved since the Court's decisions in *Tilton* and *Nyquist* were rendered, and many of the legal principles that supported those decisions have been discarded. In 1985, for example, the Court struck down programs under which the government provided religious and other schools with teachers who offered remedial instruction to disadvantaged children. *See Aguilar* v. *Felton*, 473 U.S. 402 (1985); *School Dist. of Grand Rapids* v. *Ball*, 473 U.S. 373 (1985). The Court reasoned that teachers in the program might ''become involved in intentionally or inadvertently inculcating particular religious tenets or beliefs.'' *Ball*, 473 U.S. at 385. In *Agostini* v. *Felton*, 521 U.S. 203, 223 (1997), however, the Court overruled *Aguilar* and substantial portions of *Ball*, explaining that the Court had abandoned the presumption that placing public employees in religious schools ''inevitably results in the impermissible effect of state-sponsored indoctrination or constitutes a symbolic union between government and religion.'' Similarly, in the 1970s the Court held that the state could not provide any ''substantial aid to the educational function of [religious] schools'' reasoning that such aid ''necessarily results in aid to the sectarian school enterprise as a whole.'' *Meek* v. *Pittenger*, 421 U.S. 349, 366 (1975); *accord Wolman* v. *Walter*, 433 U.S. 229, 250 (1977). In *Agostini* and *Mitchell*, however, the Court expressly abandoned that view, overruling *Meek* and *Wolman*. *See Agostini*, 521 U.S. at 225; *Mitchell*, 530 U.S. at 808, 835–36 (plurality opinion); id. at 837, 851 (O'Connor, J., concurring in judgment). In addition, other portions of *Nyquist* have been substantially narrowed or overruled. As the Court stated in *Zelman*, ''[t]o the extent the scope of *Nyquist* has remained an open question in light of these later decisions, we now hold that *Nyquist* does not govern neutral educational assistance programs that, like the program here, offer aid directly to a broad class of individual recipients defined without regard to religion.'' 536 U.S. at 662.

Perhaps more important, recent Supreme Court decisions have brought the demise of the ''pervasively sectarian'' doctrine that comprised the basis for numerous decisions from the 1970s, such as *Tilton* and *Nyquist*. As noted above, that doctrine held that there are certain religious institutions in which religion is so pervasive that *no* government aid may be provided to them, because their performance of even ''secular'' tasks will be infused with religious purpose. That doctrine, however, no longer enjoys the support of a majority of the Court. Four Justices expressly abandoned it in *Mitchell*, *see* 530 U.S. at 825–29 (plurality opinion), and Justice O'Connor's opinion in that case set forth reasoning that is inconsistent with its underlying premises, *see id.* at 857–58 (O'Connor, J., concurring in judgment, joined by Breyer, J.) (requiring proof of *actual* diversion of public support to religious uses to invalidate direct aid to schools and explaining that ''presumptions of religious indoctrination are normally inappropriate when evaluating neutral school-aid programs under the Establishment Clause''). *See also Columbia Union College* v. *Oliver*, 254 F.3d 496, 502–04 (4th Cir. 2001) (explaining that the pervasively sectarian test is no longer valid in light of the holdings of six Justices in *Mitchell*). Justice O'Connor rejected the view that aid provided to religious primary and secondary schools will invariably advance the schools' religious purposes, and that view is the foundation of the pervasively sectarian doctrine.

Such was the reasoning and conclusion reached by a federal district court in a current case highly analogous to the FEMA aid program—*American Atheists Inc.* v. *City of Detroit* DDA, 503 F.Supp.2d 845 (2007). There, plaintiffs challenged Detroit's ''Façade Improvement Plan'' under which the city provided funds to buildings in a particular section of downtown in order to improve their appearance for the Superbowl which was to be held in the city. Three churches received such grants and this was challenged in the lawsuit. The federal court concluded that the program was available to a broad array of buildings and its grant criteria were religion neutral and the FIP was thus constitutional.

For all of these reasons, *Tilton* and *Nyquist* do not control the question at issue in the case of FEMA's public assistance aid to private nonprofit facilities, including houses of worship.

E. SINGLING OUT FAITH-RELATED ENTITIES FOR EXCLUSION RUNS COUNTER TO A PROPER APPLICATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT CLAUSE

In recent years, Justice Breyer has insightfully invoked the balanced and practical approach to the Establishment Clause previously championed by Justices Goldberg and Harlan. In *Van Orden* v. *Perry*, 545 U.S. 677 (2005), Justice Breyer wrote that ''the Court has found no single mechanical formula that can accurately draw the constitutional line in every case. See *School Dist. of Abington Township* v. *Schempp*, 374 U.S., at 306 (1963) (concurring opinion). Where the Establishment Clause is at issue, tests designed to measure ''neutrality'' alone are insufficient, both because it is sometimes difficult to determine when a legal rule is ''neutral,'' and because ''untutored devotion to the concept of neutrality can lead to invocation or approval of results which partake not simply of that noninterference and noninvolvement with the religious which the Constitution commands, but of a brooding and pervasive devotion to the secular and a passive, or even active, hostility to the religious.'' Ibid. In proceeding to rule that a display of the Ten Commandments on the grounds of the State of Texas' capitol was acceptable, Justice Breyer argued that, in so many of these cases, context matters. Thus, ''to reach a contrary conclusion here [and declare the display to violate the Establishment Clause], based primarily upon on the religious nature of the tablets' text would, I fear, lead the law to exhibit a hostility toward religion that has no place in our Establishment Clause traditions.''

If we apply Justice Breyer's principled pragmatism to the issue at hand, if Congress and the President decide to appropriate billions of dollars to help private nonprofits rebuild after a natural disaster, but also determine to deliberately exclude houses of worship when they otherwise meet the relevant criteria, such a decision would be the very exhibition of hostility toward religion that the Justices have inveighed against pursuing in the name of the Establishment Clause.

In the wake of Hurricane Sandy and every major disaster within recent memory—churches, synagogues and other houses of worship have been essential in a community's recovery and response effort. Even while the church may have its HVAC system destroyed it will welcome the homeless. Even while the synagogue may have been flooded, it will feed the hungry.

Basic fairness and principles of nondiscrimination, let alone compassion, should compel Congress and the Executive Branch to change policy and declare houses of worship eligible for disaster relief assistance administered by FEMA.

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS, AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY,
Washington, DC, February 11, 2013.

Hon. CHRIS SMITH,
House of Representatives, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: As the House of Representatives prepares to consider H.R. 592, the Federal Disaster Assistance Act, we write in support of the legislation, which would ensure the fair and equal treatment for houses of worship damaged in a natural disaster.

Your legislation is consistent with Supreme Court jurisprudence, which recognizes the right of religious institutions to receive public financial aid in the context of a broad program administered on the basis of religion-neutral criteria. The bill is not asking for special treatment, just equal treatment that conforms to constitutional protections.

It should be noted that in the aftermath of a natural disaster houses of worship often play an irreplaceable role in the recovery of a community. Discrimination that treats houses of worship as ineligible for federal assistance in the wake of a natural disaster, beyond being a legal violation, hurts the very communities most affected by the indiscriminate force of nature.

The best approach to address questions of eligibility for houses of worship is a permanent clarification of federal law. For this reason we support your bill and ask that it be adopted by Congress.

Sincerely,

MOST REVEREND WILLIAM E. LORI,
Archibishop of Baltimore, Chairman, USCCB Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty.

MOST REVEREND DENIS J. MADDEN,
Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore, Chairman, USCCB Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.

UNION OF ORTHODOX JEWISH CONGREGATIONS OF AMERICA, INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS,

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES SMITH AND MENG: We write to express our strong support for the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act of 2013. Your legislation will ensure the fair and equal treatment for houses of worship damaged in Hurricane Sandy and future natural disasters.

The Stafford Act provides that private nonprofit entities—such as schools, hospitals, museums and community centers—damaged in a natural disaster may receive financial grants from FEMA to repair their buildings. The Act does not list houses of worship among its list of examples of nonprofits so eligible; neither does the Act exclude houses of worship in any way.

In the aftermath of Sandy, as with so many other natural disasters, churches, synagogues and other houses of worship have been places offering essential response services to people in need—even while the church or synagogue itself is damaged.

It is, therefore, entirely appropriate for FEMA's aid program for private nonprofits to assist houses of worship with their rebuilding needs. Moreover, if houses of warship are excluded from this otherwise religion neutral program—that unfair treatment would be improper anti-religious discrimination.

Current Supreme Court jurisprudence makes clear that religious institutions may receive government financial aid in the context of a broad program administered on the basis of religion neutral criteria. This is why houses of worship and other religious nonprofits can, for example, currently receive grants from DHS to improve their security and the Interior Department for historic preservation.

Your legislation clarifying the Stafford Act is consistent with these precedents and policies and we urge the House of Representatives to pass this measure as soon as possible.

Thank you,

YEHUDA NEUBERGER.
NATHAN DIAMENT.

NJ STATE ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH FEDERATIONS,
February 11, 2013.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN SMITH: The N.J. State Association of Jewish Federations and its eleven constituent federations and their network of affiliated and beneficiary agencies are pleased to acknowledge your leadership in introducing H.R. 592, the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act. We support the legislation which would authorize those houses of worship impacted and devastated by Hurricane Sandy to receive assistance through the recently enacted Sandy relief funding.

Our houses of worship, as with other faith based institutions, play a crucial role every day providing stability, comfort and serving as a community resource. With the hurricane's impact still very much in evidence for our state, we have needed houses of worship more than ever to ease the path of recovery for community and each of their individual members. Even though the church, mosque, temple or synagogue may have been physically damaged, houses of worship continue to provide essential response services to people in need.

Jewish Federations in those areas that suffered most from Sandy's might assisted their synagogues and congregants to overcome the immediate crisis through financial aid, respite and relief while securing dozens of volunteers to help rebuild damaged buildings in the greater local community. The Jewish Federation of Monmouth County, as one of the communities hardest hit by the hurricane, the relief funding provided by it and its partner Federations in the state have enabled Monmouth to meet a wide array of human service needs in the county. Their approach has been strategic, identifying both short-term and long-term needs and dislocations following the storm, empowering our partners in their efforts to respond, and connecting those who could most benefit to these resources. Most importantly, the Federation has been proactive in spreading word throughout Monmouth County that the Jewish community is here to help in storm recovery efforts.

Jewish Family and Children Service organizations replaced lost clothing, provided gift cards for food, counseled Sandy victims easing their anxiety and emotional pain and made available flexible repayment loans to help families and businesses recover. The Jewish Federation of Greater Metro West has provided $50,000 to JFS agencies to assist with the medium and long term needs. Chabad of Hoboken received $5,000 for counseling assistance, while federation is also developing a partnership with Union Beach, a community outside their catchment area and will provide $10,000 toward relief efforts there.

Many of our synagogues suffered severe damage and lack the resources to rebuild. Jewish Federations, while helping houses of worship serve individuals in need, do not have the resources to support capital needs. Assistance from the Jewish Federation of Monmouth County helped ''Chabad of the Shore'' roof and carpet repaid, as well as providing plywood to cover vulnerable windows. Temple Shalom in Aberdeen had roof damage which was repaired through Federation assistance. There were a number of other similar actions of relief provided by the Monmouth federation.

This is not only the Jewish community experience, but one shared with houses of worship of all religions. It is entirely appropriate for FEMA's aid program for private nonprofits to assist houses of worship with

their rebuilding and community outreach needs.

For all the reasons stated, herein, the passage of H.R. 592 will bring equity in a time of crisis and will recognize the unselfish sacrifices made by our houses of worship in response to an event that left devastation in its wake and tragic consequences for its victims. Accordingly, the NJ State Association of Jewish Federations is pleased to support the enactment of the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act.

Sincerely,

RUTH COLE,
President.
JACOB TOPOREK,
Executive Director.

DIOCESE OF TRENTON,
Trenton, NJ, February 11, 2013.

Hon. CHRIS SMITH,
Rayburn House Office Building, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN SMITH: I understand that you will soon be presenting a bill to Congress which would provide federal funding in the form of grants to houses of worship which were devastated by the hurricane last October.

I applaud your efforts and offer my full support for this bill. Volunteers from the Catholic churches as well as other denominations were on the front line with food, clothing, shelter and other basic necessities as soon as the storm passed. They were surely the first responders and just as surely will be there as long as they are needed. To exclude houses of worship from which these volunteers have come is a grave injustice.

On behalf of the clergy, religious and lay people who live and work within the Diocese of Trenton, I thank you for being our advocate and for taking the initiative to introduce this bill on behalf of all faith communities.

Sincerely,

MOST REVEREND DAVID M. O'CONNELL, C.M.,
Bishop of Trenton.

CONGREGATION SONS OF ISRAEL,
Lakewood, NJ, February 12, 2013.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH,
Rayburn House Office Building, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN SMITH: As the House of Representatives prepares to consider H.R. 592, the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act, we write in support of the important legislation that you have introduced. Thank you for your effort to ensure the fair and equal treatment for houses of worship in the aftermath of this devastating natural disaster.

It is universally acknowledged that houses of worship play a central role in the recovery of a community in the aftermath of any natural disaster. Faith-based volunteers are the first responders providing aid and comfort to those who have lost so much, and they persevere with their efforts as long as help is needed. To exclude the houses of worship from where these volunteers have come from government assistance would be a grave injustice.

Discrimination that treats houses of worship as ineligible for federal assistance in the wake of a natural disaster, beyond being a legal violation, hurts the very communities most affected by the devastating storm.

We strongly feel that you have identified the best approach to address recurring questions of eligibility for houses of worship by proposing a permanent clarification of federal law. We therefore strongly support your bill and ask that it be adopted by Congress.

With much appreciation for your efforts,

RABBI SAMUEL TENDLER,
Congregation Sons of Israel.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS,
February 12, 2013.

Hon. CHRIS SMITH,
Hon. GRACE MENG,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES SMITH AND MENG: Thank you for your efforts to correct a misguided policy of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that currently bars houses of worship from receiving federal disaster assistance for rebuilding damaged structures. Your work to insure that government assists private nonprofit entities, including houses of worship, in an evenhanded way is very much appreciated.

In any major natural disaster, churches, synagogues and other houses of worship play indispensable roles in providing comfort and relief to those who have experienced loss. They bring food, water, clothing and other essential supplies to those who are stranded or displaced. They care for the wounded and comfort the bereaved. Our communities are stronger because they are there.

When the houses of worship themselves have been damaged, the effects are often felt far beyond the membership. When an important part of the community infrastructure is damaged, the entire community suffers. Many times, churches continue serving their communities even after their own buildings have been destroyed.

FEMA does not violate the establishment clause when it administers a religion-neutral program of support for the rebuilding of community infrastructure. In fact, if religious organizations are specifically excluded when comparable secular organizations are included, the government's practice would be discriminatory. This is the clear conclusion of Supreme Court jurisprudence, and is consistent with current federal practice in the Department of Homeland Security and the Interior Department.

Thank you for your leadership in working to restore fairness to FEMA disaster assistance.

Sincerely,

GALEN CAREY,
Vice President, Government Relations.

BAIS KAILA TORAH PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS,
Lakewood, NJ, February 12, 2013.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH,
Rayburn House Office Building, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN SMITH: I hope that all is well with you and your family. With your introduction of H.R. 592, the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act, we see that you are again taking the initiative to do what is right, especially considering that houses of worship are always at the forefront of the recovery process when communities are hit with natural disasters. It is therefore very appropriate that they be able to participate on an equal footing with other nonprofits in receiving federal aid, as a means of helping damaged communities get back on their feet.

As I understand it, the Federal Emergency Management Agency is charged with ensuring that communities are prepared for natural disasters, and then responding to facilitate recovery in the wake of such disasters. FEMA has historically provided disaster-related aide to parochial schools damaged by earthquakes. Other examples of federal aid to houses of worship, includes grants for security improvements from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and historic preservation grants from the U.S. Department of the Interior. Your legislation, H.R. 592, would simply ensure that the Stafford Act is consistent with these policies.

In conclusion, once again we thank you for your leadership and advocacy and we look forward to seeing the passage of H.R. 592.

Sincerely yours,

RABBI YISROEL SCHENKOLEWSKI,
Dean.

THE JEWISH FEDERATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA,
Washington, DC, February 11, 2013.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives, Capitol Building, Washington, DC.
Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
House Democratic Leader, House of Representatives, Capitol Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER AND LEADER PELOSI: The Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) is writing to express our support for H.R. 592, the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act. This bill, scheduled to be on the suspension calendar this coming Wednesday, February 13, 2013 and co-sponsored by Representatives Chris Smith (R–NJ) and Grace Meng (D–NY), will ensure the fair and equal treatment for houses of worship damaged in Hurricane Sandy.

JFNA is the national organization that represents and serves 154 Jewish Federations and 300 independent Jewish communities across North America. In their communities, Jewish Federations and volunteers in the central address for fundraising and an extensive network of Jewish health, education and social services. In response to Hurricane Sandy Jewish Federations have raised almost $7 million in direct Sandy-related relief and allocated almost $11 million to Sandy victims in Connecticut, New Jersey and New York.

The Stafford Act provides that private nonprofit entities—such as schools, hospitals and community centers—damaged in a natural disaster may receive financial grants from FEMA to repair their buildings. The Act does not list houses of worship among its list of examples of nonprofits so eligible; neither does the Act exclude houses of worship. To the extent that FEMA has provided aid to eligible programs run by houses of worship, the aid has not been provided on the same terms as the aid provided to other eligible nonprofits.

In the aftermath of Sandy, as with so many other natural disasters, churches, synagogues and other houses of worship are locations where essential response services have been provided to people in need—even while the church or synagogue itself has suffered extensive damage. It is, therefore, entirely appropriate for FEMA's aid program for private nonprofits to assist houses of worship with their rebuilding needs. Moreover, if houses of worship are excluded from this otherwise religion neutral program—that unfair treatment would be improper anti-religious discrimination. Additionally, for almost 30 years, it has been FEMA's mission to lead America to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from domestic disasters. This has led to FEMA's provision of disaster-related aide to parochial schools damaged by earthquakes.

Current Supreme Court jurisprudence makes clear that religious in receive government financial aid in the context of a broad program administered on the basis of religion neutral criteria. This is why houses of worship and other religious nonprofits can, and do, currently receive grants from DHS to improve their security and the Interior Department for historic preservation.

H.R. 592, the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act, would ensure that the Stafford Act is consistent with these

policies, and we ask that you vote in favor of this legislation.

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM C. DAROFF,
Vice President for Public Policy & Director of the Washington office.

THE BECKET FUND FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER SMITH,
House of Representatives, 2373 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.
Re FEMA's discriminatory treatment of houses of worship.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN SMITH: You and others have asked us to examine the application of the Establishment Clause of the United States Constitution to the disbursement of federal disaster relief funds to houses of worship damaged in severe weather events such as Superstorm Sandy. In particular, you would like us to examine (1) whether the Federal Emergency Management Agency's practice of not funding repairs to houses of worship is justified by the Establishment Clause grounds, and (2) whether your proposed act preventing FEMA's practice would give rise to Establishment Clause problems.

The answer to both questions is no. First, not only does the Establishment Clause provide no support for FEMA's practice of discriminating against houses of worship; that practice itself runs afoul of the First Amendment by discriminating against religious institutions. Second, the bill you have proposed will not lead to Establishment Clause violations because no Act of Congress can purport to repeal the First Amendment. Arguments to the contrary are constitutional scaremongering.

BACKGROUND

Superstorm Sandy devastated many of the Northeast's coastal cities. The federal government is expected to spend about $60 billion to help restore these hard-hit communities. Yet FEMA has categorically denied foundational elements of those communities—synagogues, churches, mosques, and other houses of worship—access to this otherwise generally-available relief funding. A broad range of nonprofit organizations, including zoos and museums, qualify for disaster-relief grants administered by FEMA. But when religious organizations asked FEMA for the same assistance it provides many other nonprofits, FEMA told them that it considered them ineligible for the grants. This leaves houses of worship like All Saints Church of Bay Head, New Jersey, which was built by shipbuilders in 1889 and now has a sinkhole for a sanctuary, without access to the help that is available to the neighborhood zoo.

Despite acknowledging that religious facilities can meet the threshold aid requirement that the facility be ''used for a variety of community activities,'' FEMA considers ''churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, and other centers of religious worship'' categorically ineligible simply because of their religious use. Nor is this a recent problem: the George W. Bush Administration took the same stance after Hurricane Katrina, based on a federal regulation promulgated in 1990 by the George H.W. Bush Administration. (As noted below, though, the federal government has often departed from this stance to assist houses of worship through neutral and generally available funding programs.)

ANALYSIS

FEMA's discriminatory policy. To justify its discrimination against houses of worship, FEMA has cited arguments asserting that the Establishment Clause of the United States Constitution prevents houses of worship from having equal access to FEMA disaster assistance grants. Others make the same claim. For instance, Barry Lynn of Americans United for Separation of Church and State has stated that, ''even after the devastation of [Superstorm] Sandy,'' the federal government cannot provide relief to destroyed synagogues, churches, and mosques.

But this argument is simply not true. When Lynn recently made a similar argument in an amicus brief to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, the court—in an opinion authored by Judge Sutton—flatly and unanimously rejected the argument. The court noted that long-standing Supreme Court precedent allowed ''churches, synagogues, and mosques'' to receive ''generally available benefits'' like ''police and fire-protection services'' and access to ''sewers and sidewalks.'' The court reasoned that ''[i]f a city may save the exterior of a church from a fire,'' it could certainly provide equal access to government funds that ''help that same church with peeling paint.''

That conclusion is all the more true here, where the problem the government seeks to remedy is not peeling paint but complete devastation. Notably, the Sixth Circuit supported its conclusion by explicitly noting the widespread legal acceptance ''of government programs designed to provide one-time emergency assistance through FEMA . . . to churches devastated by natural disasters.''

Indeed, the federal government—including FEMA—has repeatedly given disaster relief to religious groups in the past. For instance, after Seattle Hebrew Academy was damaged by a major earthquake in 2002, FEMA awarded a disaster relief grant for repair. Before it did so, FEMA asked the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel whether that was constitutionally permissible. OLC's detailed response concluded that ''a FEMA disaster grant is analogous to the sort of aid that qualifies as 'general government services' approved by the [Supreme] Court'' for provision to houses of worship. The OLC letter pointed out that, far from banning equal access to government funding, the First Amendment bans the government from ''deny[ing] religious groups equal access to the government's own property,'' and ''require[s] equal funding'' of religious expression. The letter ended by noting that an argument could be made that ''excluding religious organizations from disaster assistance made available to similarly situated secular institutions would violate the Free Exercise Clause and the Free Speech Clause.''

OLC has likewise approved, and the federal government has permitted, the participation of houses of worship in the Save America's Treasures program, which authorizes matching grants for preservation of properties with historical significance. For instance, the OLC approved a National Park Service grant to restore Boston's Old North Church—a church which is currently used by an active Episcopal congregation and was once used to warn Paul Revere of British military plans. Similar grants have been provided for Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church, where Martin Luther King, Jr., preached, the historic Franciscan missions in California, and Touro Synagogue in Rhode Island. All of those houses of worship needed repairs for damage caused by the ravages of time—why would damage caused by the ravages of Sandy be any different?

Several other federal statutes permit federal funding or support for houses of worship that have been damaged or destroyed. Indeed, after the Oklahoma City bombing, Congress specifically authorized FEMA and other agencies to provide disaster relief to damaged churches on the same basis that any other private nonprofit facilities may receive such aid.

Finally, FEMA's policy of discriminating against houses of worship is itself problematic under the Establishment Clause because it denies religious institutions access to a generally available benefit, solely because they are religious. The Supreme Court has repeatedly held that ''[t]he First Amendment mandates governmental neutrality between religion and nonreligion.'' Singling out religious institutions for special disfavor is not neutral. Similarly, FEMA's approach also creates a potential conflict with federal civil rights law, specifically the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which forbids government imposition of substantial burdens on religious exercise. As courts have frequently held, denial of a generally available benefit to religious persons because they are religious constitutes a substantial burden on the exercise of religion.

In short, FEMA is wrong to claim that the Establishment Clause—which combats discrimination—justifies its decision to discriminate. It is instead FEMA's discrimination policy that is more likely to trigger scrutiny under the First Amendment and related civil rights laws.

The proposed bill. For the same reasons, it is our opinion that your proposed bill will not raise Establishment Clause problems. Instead, it will alleviate them by offering a way to stop discrimination against houses of worship in federal disaster relief funding.

On the night before your bill was set for a vote, FEMA issued a statement in opposition to the bill. As an initial matter, much of FEMA's three-page statement does nothing more than lay out existing law and reiterate what we've established above: Congress has made similar regulatory fixes before and the OLC has provided legal opinions supporting religious organizations' equal access to generally available government funds.

FEMA really makes only two complaints against the proposed bill. First, it warns that entities like the ACLU have threatened to sue unless it keeps discriminating against religious organizations. But, as explained above, such threats are meritless and will be met in court by the Becket Fund and other organizations that are happy to defend equal access for houses of worship that have been devastated by natural disasters. Further, it is imprudent to allow such threats to take federal legislation hostage, as giving in to them will only encourage future threats. Finally, concerns about litigation might make some sense if FEMA were run by a tiny village government with a small budget that might be intimidated by the prospect of litigating against the ACLU. But given the resources of the Department of Justice, this argument from fear of litigation makes no sense.

FEMA's second complaint is that the bill could require them to choose whether to fund ''arks of the covenant [and] prayer books.'' But, as a factual matter, it appears FEMA is trying to manufacture this particular controversy in order to scare legislators. As Rabbi David Bauman of Temple Israel in Long Beach—which was flooded by up to 14 feet of storm-surge saltwater—explained, no one is asking the government to restore prayer books; they need help with basic structural repairs, just like other buildings in the neighborhood. More importantly, the bill cannot repeal the Establishment Clause: FEMA will remain bound by the Constitution. Thus to the extent a religious organization requests funds that would result in a constitutional violation, FEMA will still be bound to turn them down. What the bill actually does is get rid of the artificial and discriminatory standard created by FEMA and replace it with the standard of neutrality required under the First Amendment.

In addition, to the extent that there is any problem it is one of FEMA's own making. As

it admits in its statement of opposition, it is FEMA's own regulatory interpretations that would require it to pay for prayer books or other similar items. But neither of the regulations that FEMA cites as forcing it to make the apparently unpalatable choice appear to require any such decision. And FEMA can always exercise its interpretive power to avoid a constitutional violation.

Again, no one is asking the government to buy prayer books or Torahs. Instead, synagogues, churches, and mosques are simply asking that they receive the same disaster relief as many other private nonprofits. Doing anything less would not live up to the neutrality required by the Establishment Clause—it would express a blatant hostility to religion that the Establishment Clause rejects.

In conclusion, it is our opinion that FEMA cannot rely on the Establishment Clause to categorically ban houses of worship from competing for disaster relief funds on the same terms as other eligible nonprofits. Your proposed bill will not violate the Constitution but will instead protect it.

Very truly yours,

ERIC C. RASSBACH,
DANIEL BLOMBERG,
The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty.

Mr. BARTLETT. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I know all too well and firsthand what happens when disaster strikes at home. My constituents were affected by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

So I would like to commend the gentleman from New Jersey for his hard work for the constituents back home. It's times like this that we need to come together in a bipartisan fashion to help Americans who need that help.

With that, Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, in the wake of the devastation caused by Superstorm Sandy, Congress must be an active partner in the effort to rebuild, so I will vote in favor of the bill before the House today, which extends FEMA disaster relief assistance to houses of worship on an equal footing with other not-for-profit organizations affected by the storm.

I wish, however, that the House had taken the time to hold hearings on this legislation before bringing it to the House Floor so that we could have more fully explored the constitutional issues involved with this matter. Clearly, the federal government can and does provide federal resources to houses of worship for a variety of purposes, including homeland security grants and small business loans, but we must tread carefully in this area to ensure that the assistance extended passes muster with the basic provisions of the Constitution. It would have been better to thoroughly vet the language of this bill, among ourselves in the House and with constitutional scholars before bringing it up for a vote. As this legislation must pass the Senate in order to become law, I hope there will be in their proceedings a careful review of these issues before they act, including making any needed changes, which would bring the bill back to the House for final enactment.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Madam Speaker, we often come to this floor to advocate any number of controversial issues—issues that often produce strong disagreement from the given Speaker's opposing party. But I stand here today stating what I'm confident an overwhelming majority of Americans would deem simple common sense: if the government responds to a disaster—like Hurricane Sandy, which caused devastating damage and losses in the tens of billions of dollars—it should strive to help the entire community recover, not pick and choose some to receive help and others to go it alone.

But, stunningly, that's not the way it currently works, Madam Speaker. As it stands, many of the strongest, most necessary pillars in our society—churches and other places of worship—are being excluded from even being considered for the recovery aid provided by FEMA in the wake of Sandy.

Since the policy has come to light, some have attempted to defend it, invoking that all–too–commonly abused notion of the separation of church and state. But, Madam Speaker, even if we accept the most radical definition of this phrase, there would still be no reasonably legal explanation for this inexcusable oversight.

The Supreme Court responded to a similar issue when it decided Everson v. Board of Education. In that decision, the court criticized the ''imposition of taxes to pay ministers' salaries and to build and maintain churches and church property.'' But in the very same decision, the court makes clear the obvious exception to this policy, stating that the state has the duty to maintain neutral relations with places of worship, and that they should be granted access to the same basic government services as the rest of the community—''such general government services as ordinary police and fire protection, connections for sewage disposal, public highways and sidewalks.''

Who can, with any modicum of intellectual honesty, suggest that disaster relief does not fit the definition of a basic government service? The government is not maintaining neutral relations with houses of worship in this sphere. It is actively and specifically excluding them from a basic government service enjoyed by every other member of the community.

Of course, perhaps the cruelest irony of this entire situation is the fact that it is so often the churches who step in to help in the immediate aftermath of such disasters. They are the ones sending their congregations to feed, clothe, and house a desperate community. They are the ones taking up donations en masse to help the most afflicted. And they are the ones selflessly emptying their food closets to sustain, for just a little while longer, families anxiously awaiting government aid—the same government aid for which they will inexplicably not even be considered.

Madam Speaker, this unconstitutional, un-American, unreasonable discrimination against these essential, compassionate members of our society simply must not continue. Churches and other places of worship must be held to the same criteria as other members of the community in these decisions. I urge my colleagues to strongly support H.R. 592.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 592.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. BARLETTA. Madam 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, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 592, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 267, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

FEDERAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE NONPROFIT FAIRNESS ACT OF 2013

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 592) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to clarify that houses of worship are eligible for certain disaster relief and emergency assistance on terms equal to other eligible private nonprofit facilities, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 354, nays 72, not voting 5, as follows:

[Roll No. 39]

YEAS—354

Aderholt	Bishop (UT)	Bucshon
Alexander	Black	Burgess
Amodei	Blackburn	Bustos
Bachmann	Blumenauer	Butterfield
Bachus	Bonner	Calvert
Barletta	Boustany	Camp
Barr	Brady (PA)	Campbell
Barrow (GA)	Brady (TX)	Cantor
Barton	Braley (IA)	Capito
Beatty	Bridenstine	Capps
Benishek	Brooks (AL)	Cárdenas
Bentivolio	Brooks (IN)	Carney
Bera (CA)	Broun (GA)	Carter
Bilirakis	Brown (FL)	Cartwright
Bishop (GA)	Brownley (CA)	Cassidy
Bishop (NY)	Buchanan	Castor (FL)

Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Daines
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
Delaney
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Doggett
Doyle
Duffy
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Engel
Eshoo
Farenthold
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Hinojosa
Holding
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Kelly
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Long
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moore
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Napolitano
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Paulsen
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Radel
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schiff
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Swalwell (CA)
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NAYS—72

Amash
Andrews
Barber
Bass
Becerra
Bonamici
Capuano
Carson (IN)
Chu
Cicilline
Cohen
Conyers
Davis (CA)
DeGette
DeLauro
Duckworth
Duncan (SC)
Edwards
Ellison
Enyart
Esty
Foster
Garamendi
Gosar
Grijalva
Hastings (FL)
Himes
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Huffman
Keating
Kennedy
Labrador
Lee (CA)
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lynch
Markey
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
Michaud
Miller, George
Moran
Nadler
Neal
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Pocan
Polis
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Schakowsky
Schneider
Scott (VA)
Sinema
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stutzman
Takano
Tierney
Tsongas
Visclosky
Walz
Welch
Woodall

NOT VOTING—5

Dingell
Farr
Pearce
Shea-Porter
Watt

□ 1334

Messrs. CARSON of Indiana, POLIS, Ms. BASS, Messrs. HIMES, RYAN of Ohio, NOLAN, GOSAR, MARKEY, LABRADOR, DUNCAN of South Carolina, and WOODALL changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. THOMPSON of Mississippi, WITTMAN, DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, FRANKS of Arizona, GARDNER, BARTON, SALMON, and Mrs. CAPPS changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1340

HONORING JOHN LAWRENCE

(Ms. PELOSI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, I rise with great pride to pay tribute to a very distinguished American and a longtime member of the congressional staff, John Lawrence. In fact, he has served the Congress for 38 years as a member of the staff—30 years of it for GEORGE MILLER and 8 years as my assistant in the leadership office. I'm happy to pay tribute to him.

I'm sad because John will be—and I don't know if the word is retiring—but he will be leaving service in the Capitol. He has always been a great proponent of science, technology, and innovation. As he concludes his service to the House, it is only fitting to cite the words of Alfred Lord Tennyson as inscribed on the walls of the House Science and Technology Committee:

For I dipped into the future, far as human eye can see, saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.

Over his nearly four decades serving the Congress, John has always kept his sights and his vision firmly on the future. He believed and he knew that the future is about investing in our children, supporting working families, and strengthening the middle class. He knew that the future is about protecting our environment and preserving our planet for generations to come.

John knew that the future of the House is strengthened by fellow staff members working in a bipartisan way. John has always respected the role played by our staffs on the Education Committee, the Natural Resources Committee, the offices of the Democratic leader, and as my role of Speaker of the House and as our distinguished Speaker's role as Speaker today. Indeed, the staff looked to him for leadership, just as Members looked to him for guidance.

In that spirit, this afternoon, my colleagues, the Speaker will honor John Lawrence with the John W. McCormick Award of Excellence on which, as declared by former majority leader, then-Majority Leader Carl Albert in 1970:

The name of the House employee, who performs the most valuable service for the House, will be inscribed.

What a fitting tribute to John Lawrence's 38 years of valuable service, extraordinary leadership, and dedication to the future. We've had the privilege of honoring in a bipartisan way other members of the staff in the Congress, and John's name will bring luster to that list.

Colleagues, please join me in thanking a dear friend, my former chief of staff, John Lawrence.

I yield to the Speaker of the House, Mr. BOEHNER.

Mr. BOEHNER. This is a day of mixed emotions for the House. John Lawrence's retirement means that we're losing a faithful public servant, one of our own. But we can all agree that John deserves some time off after 38 years of working here in the House. And for those of you who may not know John, he is currently the longest-serving staffer in the House.

John and I have known each other for a long time, going back to my days as chairman of the Education and the Workforce Committee. I can safely say that it really didn't matter whether we were on the same side of the page or whether we had opposing views—he always handled it in the same way, with class and integrity. He's a real stand-up guy. That didn't just make John an asset to GEORGE MILLER or Leader PELOSI. It made him a great asset, I think, for the House as a whole and to the American people.

So I know all of my colleagues and I want to say to John, thank you for all of your service to this House. We're sorry to see you go, but we want to wish you and your family the best in the future.

Congratulations.

Ms. PELOSI. With the Speaker's permission, I acknowledge Elijah Lawrence, the teenage son of John and Deborah Lawrence, who's with us in the Chamber.

I yield back the balance of my time.

HYDROPOWER REGULATORY EFFICIENCY ACT OF 2013

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 267) to improve hydropower, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. WHITFIELD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 422, nays 0, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 40]

YEAS—422

Aderholt
Alexander
Amash
Amodei
Andrews
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Cassidy
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grijalva
Grimm
Guthrie
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Markey
Massie
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
O'Rourke
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Radel
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Southerland
Speier
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—9

Coble
DeFazio
Dingell
Farr
Gutierrez
Pearce
Schock
Shea-Porter
Watt

□ 1348

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr PEARCE. Madam Speaker, on rollcall 39 I was unavoidably detained, due to a public hearing scheduled by the Administration in my district. If I had been present, I would have voted ''yea.''

On rollcall 40 I was unavoidably detained, due to a public hearing scheduled by the Administration in my district. If I had been present, I would have voted ''yea.''

ELECTING MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BECERRA. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 64

Resolved, That the following named Members be and are hereby elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

(1) COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.—Mr. Garamendi.

(2) COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET.—Mr. Blumenauer (to rank immediately after Mr. Cárdenas).

(3) COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM.—Mr. Welch (to rank immediately after Mr. Danny K. Davis of Illinois).

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JOYCE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, we're going to spend the hour talking about gun violence prevention, and in particular, how the National Rifle Association has systematically unwound laws that have already been on the books.

Last night, the President referenced the fact that since the horrific deaths at Sandy Hook there have been a thousand more people that have died due to gun violence. It is not good enough to wear a green ribbon in support of the Sandy Hook families and think you have done enough.

Times have changed, and the polling that's been done is overwhelming in support of sensible gun violence prevention laws. Let's be clear at the outset—the Heller decision by the U.S. Supreme Court has made it very clear: Every American has a right to own a gun for recreational purposes or to have a gun in their home for purposes of safety, and that is not going to change. We embrace that decision, we support it. But we also support safe laws around the use of guns.

So let us begin by looking at this, a Quinnipiac survey done very recently. Ninety-two percent support background checks for all gun purchases, including 91 percent of gun-owning households; 89 percent support closing the gun show loophole by requiring background checks for all gun purchases; 69 percent support banning the sale of semi-automatic, military-style assault weapons; 68 percent support banning the sale of large-capacity ammunition magazines; and 81 percent favor prohibiting high-risk individuals from having guns, including those convicted of serious crime as juveniles or convicted of violating domestic violence restraining orders.

So Frank Luntz, the Republican pollster, polled NRA members and non-NRA members who were gun owners, and what did they find out there? There they found out that 85 percent of gun owners and 87 percent of NRA members believe Second Amendment rights and gun safety laws can coexist. That's what we're talking about. Eighty-seven percent of gun owners and 74 percent of NRA members support requiring background checks of anyone buying a gun. We're talking about that right now. But in a couple of minutes, I'm going to show you how that has changed among the leadership in the NRA.

Fifty-three percent of gun owners and 57 percent of the NRA members mistakenly believe that everyone has to pass a background check. Eighty percent of gun owners, 79 percent of NRA members, support requiring background checks of gun retailer employees.

Eighty percent of gun owners and 71 percent of NRA members support barring people on the terror watch list from buying guns. It's a surprise to most people that they can in fact buy guns.

All right. Let's move on. Let's talk about the CEO of the National Rifle Association.

□ 1400

What did he say in 1999? In 1999, after the Columbine shootings, when so many children lost their lives at Columbine High School, he said:

> We think it's reasonable to provide mandatory instant criminal background checks for every sale at every gun show, no loopholes anywhere for anyone.

That's what he said.

What did he say after 20 children and six adults lost their lives in Newtown at Sandy Hook? In 2013, he says, at a Senate hearing, when Senator LEAHY asked:

> You do not support background checks in all instances at gun shows?

Mr. LaPierre said:

> We do not because the fact is the law right now is a failure the way it's working. None of it makes any sense in the real world.

Well, we are living in the real world, and the real world would suggest to everyone that a commonsense law is to have a universal background check for everyone.

Let's look at the next time we saw a flip-flop by Mr. Wayne LaPierre. Again, the point here being that the NRA leadership does not reflect the NRA membership.

In 1999, after Columbine, he says:

> We believe in absolutely gun-free, zero tolerance, totally safe schools. That means no guns in America's schools, period.

On ''Meet the Press'' just a few weeks ago, Mr. LaPierre said:

> If it's crazy to call for armed officers in our schools to protect our children, then call me crazy. I think the American people think it's crazy not to do it. It's the one thing that would keep people safe.

The point here, colleagues, is that the public, NRA members and gun-owning families in this country believe in commonsense reforms, and we owe it to them. We owe it to them to vote on these commonsense bills that will not restrict anyone's ability to own a gun for self-protection or to own a gun for recreation, but will take these assault weapons that are military weapons that are invented for one reason and one reason only, and that is to tear the hell out of anything they come in contact with.

As one law enforcement officer said very recently:

> The energy in an assault weapon bullet will tear open a brick wall.

You don't need that to go hunting, and you don't need that to protect yourself in your home.

I yield to the gentlewoman from New York, CAROLYN MALONEY.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. I'd like to yield to my inspiration in so many ways—we share the same name—CAROLYN MCCARTHY. And on this issue, from New York, she is our spokesperson.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. I want to thank my colleagues for having this hour to talk about, really, the real issues and certainly hopefully break up some of the myths that are out there on what we're hearing, not only in the papers but certainly from some NRA members.

I've been battling this, and many of us have been battling this issue for many, many years. I think that what happened just about 2 months ago today, that Newtown shooting happened. And that went through everybody's heart to think in this day and age that we could have a shooting that totally rips apart 20 children is unacceptable to the American people—unacceptable to the American people.

Since that, being that we're trying to give as much information as possible to the American people what's happened since that day, over 2,000 people have been killed. Two thousand Americans have been murdered in episodes of gun violence.

There are a number of us here, Members of Congress, that have gone through this kind of violence, either with a loved one, our colleague from California, JACKIE SPEIER, we know what this can mean to a family. Last night, we had 25, 30, unfortunately, victims. And yet here we are debating, hoping, even after what the President said, give us a vote. Give us a vote. This isn't about us. This is about what our job is. We can have people disagree, and I know it's a lot of tough votes for some Democrats and certainly some Republicans. I believe that when we came here and got elected and we swore to uphold the Constitution, we knew we'd be facing tough votes. Who said this was going to be an easy job? It's never been an easy job. But it is a job that the majority of us here want to do.

When the President spoke last night, and listening to the aftermath late last night on what some of the pundits were saying about what the President was actually trying to do, we heard the NRA say that the reason they're against some of the things that we want to do as far as Members of Congress and our task force that we want to really take everybody's gun away. Do you know that program that we were talking about, the buy-back? What they were saying was it's not really just a buy-back. It's confiscating every single one of the guns. Well, I don't think that would hold up constitutionally. And I think that we have put together, in my opinion, a reasonable, very practical way of reducing gun violence in this country.

I also heard last night that assault weapons, long guns, and it only adds up to 8 percent of the people that are killed every year—8 percent. Can we stop putting numbers on everything and remember the faces that were here? Can we remember the people and the families that have lost their loved ones? They are not a number.

Then they had another chart out that talked about handguns. Well, let me tell you something about handguns that affects almost everybody in our communities. Legislation that we are putting forward, the background checks, preventing straw purchasers, which basically is someone else is buying a gun for someone that is legally barred from buying a gun, think about how many handguns would not be sold to criminals. Think about how many lives will be saved.

But, also, let's think about those who have survived gun violence. But many of them, if you think about a lot of the young people in Aurora that had no health care insurance—and I can talk about my own son who was 26 when he was shot with five others, and, unfortunately, his father was murdered that day. I can tell you his medical bills to this day—to this day—they have cost this country millions of dollars.

Now I will say to you that we were very, very lucky; and I have been very, very blessed that he survived. But even back then, the doctors said that we would see changes in him as he got older because of the brain injury. And Kevin—God, I can't tell you how proud I was of my son. Two years of intensive therapy and they said he would never walk. He learned how to walk. Yes, he

is still partially paralyzed, but he learned how to walk.

□ 1410

They said he would never talk. And when I talk about those days and somebody asks how is Kevin doing, I say, ''Well, you know, he just said.''

I spent my life as a nurse before I came here. And a lot of times when we think of patients who have had strokes and we're teaching them how to speak again, when we say they were talking, trying to get the words out is so hard. Every word becomes so difficult, but he had the power to do that.

Our friend Gabby Giffords, who was here last night, to watch, in my opinion, her long struggle reminded me so much of what Kevin had to go through. I will say that Kevin went back to work, and he worked for many years. Unfortunately, he has reached the point now where he can't work, and he had to go on to Social Security disability.

That has hurt his pride so much because of the work that he has done. All they want to be is looked upon and seen as just a regular person. There are thousands and thousands and thousands of Kevin McCarthys across this country. We are trying to prevent those kinds of injuries.

Background checks, why should anybody be afraid of a background check? Why? Why should anybody—again, as was brought up in an earlier poster—when you go to a gun show—I remember when we closed the gun show loopholes in New York. Gosh, we had the NRA all over us basically saying it's going to ruin the business. I say to you, go to New York and see the gun shows that are held on weekends. There's a big difference, though. Nobody can go into that gun show without buying a gun from a licensed Federal dealer.

By the way, the Federal licensed dealers, the gun shop owners in this country, they want everybody to go through a background check because you do have less than 2 percent of gun stores that are selling these illegal guns or guns disappear. It's ruining their reputations. These are honest businessowners. We're actually protecting them.

There is so much that we can go on about. When it was talked about the people that are on the terrorist list, do people know that they can actually buy a gun without a problem? God forbid we should put them on background check. I mean, they're on the terrorist list, but they can go and buy a gun.

I want to thank my colleagues, and I want to give them an opportunity to speak because I know we all care passionately about this. And I certainly will sit here and listen to my colleagues. If we have time, hopefully, we can all speak again.

It's exactly two months since the shooting in Newtown and since then up to 2,000 Americans have been murdered in episodes of gun violence in our country.

I know that ours is a country that believes in safety and in protecting innocent people.

That's why we've instituted some of the most thorough auto safety laws in the world, and why we regulate access to medicine, and why we inspect food.

It's also why we should be looking at the most dangerous consumer products in the world and seeing how we can make their use safer for Americans.

When it comes to reducing gun violence, the president has already said everything he could possibly say.

There can't be any more excuses—the ball is in our court here in Congress.

The president was right in his State of the Union Address that gun violence victims ''Deserve a Vote.''

There's no shortage of options—I'm the sponsor of a bill to ban assault weapons, a bill to ban high-capacity magazines, a bill for universal background checks and a bill to limit online ammunition sales.

Another bipartisan bill by my colleagues cracks down on illegal gun trafficking.

Here in the House of Representatives, too many members of the Majority have been completely silent on these bills. They haven't even held a simple hearing to discuss the topic, and that's shameful.

I would ask my friends on the other side of the aisle—what are you afraid of?

I would tell them—you don't have to be afraid.

Poll after poll after poll since Newtown—national polls—show that the majority of Americans want their lawmakers to take action to reduce gun violence.

The majority of Americans support banning assault weapons. The majority of Americans support banning high-capacity magazines. And over 90 percent of Americans support universal background checks.

Even three-quarters of all NRA members support universal background checks.

So I would tell my friends across the aisle—I know this is a tough issue, but you were elected to make tough decisions.

Tell us where you stand on these measures to reduce gun violence—the American people deserve to know where you stand.

And then, have the courage to hold votes on the measures that are out there.

This is a democracy—it's our job to represent the American people.

If we don't hold votes on this issue that the American people are screaming out about every single day since that awful shooting in Connecticut, then this body will have failed in its duties and in its purpose.

I will say to my friends across the aisle—let the people speak, and let their voices be heard.

Over 30 Americans are being killed by gun violence every single day and it would be shameful to turn a blind eye to that fact.

Thank you for doing this.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you to the gentlelady from New York for her always powerful comments.

Now we're joined by the gentlewoman from New York, CAROLYN MALONEY, who has just introduced a bill co-authored by Democrats and Republicans that deals with the trafficking of guns.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Thank you so much to JACKIE SPEIER for organizing this. She has told me she's going to continue working with her colleagues in Congress to raise this issue, to focus on it. She's going to try to get us here at least once a week to keep the focus on this priority of the American people and our President.

We see here some important information. I think what we should do every week, Jackie, is print the names of the innocent children, men, and women who are murdered every day in our great country because of senseless gun violence like my dear friend's husband and her son who was critically wounded. She told me how hard it was for her to tell her son that he had lost his father. And I want to publicly thank Carolyn for making this a priority in her time in Congress and giving so selflessly of her time to help us pass meaningful gun legislation.

I'm a cosponsor of all my colleagues' bills. I think they all are common sense and important and should pass. But I want to focus on one that I think every NRA member should be for, and that is to take the guns out of the hands of traffickers, people who are selling guns to criminals, to cartels that are used only to kill, whether it's gangs or robberies or whatever they use them for. Why can't we do that? Why can't we make that a felony and put teeth behind the punishment?

When we were having hearings on the Fast and Furious program in the Government Reform and Oversight Committee, law enforcement came and testified. They said: Help us. Trafficking and guns is not even a felony. It's not even a crime. You can be a drug kingpin selling guns all over the place, and you won't be convicted because it's not a crime.

No law-abiding person is a kingpin and trafficking guns. One thing that's good about this bill and why we have so much support on the other side of the aisle is that it doesn't in any way infringe on Second Amendment rights. Law-abiding Americans, if they want a gun for recreation or shooting practice or defense, fine. But these are guns that are being sold to criminals, to thugs, who then go out and kill more people.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday in a Federal courtroom in Las Cruces, New Mexico, two people were convicted of being part of a larger conspiracy to smuggle guns to some really bad people, criminals. They had smuggled guns to folks who worked as ''muscle'' for a vicious Mexican drug cartel. In fact, one of the defendants had purchased three semiautomatic weapons that showed up a month later at the scene of a triple homicide. Another of the guns he bought surfaced at a Juarez drug seizure. These two men were found guilty, but they didn't get much of a sentence because it's not a crime.

The sad fact is that about all the prosecutors could reasonably hope for in the case—under Federal law, gun traffickers can expect to do about as much time as people who illegally traffic in livestock. Illegally sell an assault weapon to a known killer or drug

kingpin or sell a chicken without a permit, and you can expect to do about the same amount of time for each. This is ridiculous.

Mr. Speaker, there is something dreadfully wrong with this picture. Right now people known as straw purchasers can buy multiple guns and immediately resell them to cartels or killers and know that if they are caught that they will not be charged with anything but paperwork violations. Law enforcement told us at the committee that they don't even bother to arrest and try to prosecute straw purchasers because there's no penalty. Well, our bill changes that and can give up to 20 years in prison for being a straw purchaser.

Tragically, this is what happened in my own State of New York last Christmas Eve just 10 days after the massacre at the Sandy Hook children's school. Last December in Webster, New York, a convicted felon set fire to a house and then set himself up as a sniper to shoot down law enforcement when they came to protect him. He shot and killed two firefighters and seriously injured two others before taking his own life.

This is a heart-wrenching tragedy, and it is one that could never have happened but for the fact that the gunman's neighbor had acted as a straw purchaser for him. Authorities say she purchased a 12-gauge shotgun and a Bushmaster rifle for the man who, as a convicted felon, could not have purchased a gun in his own name. For knowingly acting as a straw purchaser for a felon, the neighbor has been charged with the only law that really applies: State and Federal paperwork violations.

□ 1420

I believe she would not have been buying these weapons for him if she knew she could have faced 20 years in prison. That's what prosecutors all too often have to rely on—a toothless Federal law that prohibits ''engaging in the business of selling guns without a Federal license.'' Little wonder then that, according to the ATF, straw purchasers is the most common channel of illegal gun trafficking in America.

Believe me, if guns made us safer, we'd be the safest country on Earth. We are the most armed country on Earth, and we know from statistics that, if you own a gun, the degree of probability of being hurt or injured or killed by a gun is 8 to 15 percent higher than it is for other individuals. It is no surprise then that U.S. Attorneys are forced to decline to prosecute 25 percent of gun trafficking cases. This is an outrage. This is a crime. This is causing the loss of lives. The investigation can take longer than the sentence a trafficker might receive. In the wake of recent tragedies, the voice of the American people has been clear on this issue: They want something done, and they want it done now. They want us to do something to address this problem. They want something done that shows some bipartisan cooperation.

As our President said, we came here to do a job. Let's have a vote. Let's put this bill out on the floor of Congress, and let's have a vote. If some of my colleagues would like to vote against making trafficking in guns a felony, then let them do it. If some of my colleagues would like to vote against having meaningful penalties for trafficking and a straw purchaser's buying guns to be given to criminals, then let them do it, but let's have a vote. That's a democracy.

I introduced a bill in the last Congress and have reintroduced it in this Congress, H.R. 452. I hope that the listening public will urge their Members of Congress to cosponsor this bill and help us pass it for the American people. It is called the Gun Trafficking Prevention Act. It is a bipartisan bill, cosponsored by my friends and colleagues on the other side of the aisle: Mr. RIGELL of Virginia, who happens to be an NRA member, said this doesn't infringe on any gun owner's rights. He owns guns, but he just wants to go after the kingpins and the murderers and the illegal traffickers; and Mr. MEEHAN of Pennsylvania, who is a former prosecutor and knows firsthand why law enforcement needs these tools.

This bill will help keep guns out of the hands of felons and domestic abusers and the dangerously mentally ill, who cannot and should not be able to legally buy guns on their own. This bill prohibits the purchase or transfer of a firearm if the intent is to deliver the firearm to someone else who is prohibited by Federal law or State law from possessing a firearm. Persons who commit this offense are subject to up to 20 years of imprisonment. For the first time, our bill makes firearms trafficking a Federal crime—something law enforcement officials have been asking for in hearings, in letters. They have been asking for this for years.

The bill also establishes significant penalties for straw purchasers who buy firearms on behalf of someone else. Buy a firearm for a convicted felon and you could look at 20 years in prison. These increased penalties will provide law enforcement officials with the critical tools that they've been asking for, tools that BOBBY SCOTT knows from his judiciary work are critically needed. The increased penalties can be used to encourage straw purchasers to cooperate with prosecutors in order to make it possible to go on up the food chain—after the cartels and the kingpins who now have little to fear.

Let me be absolutely clear that this bill has no impact whatsoever on the Second Amendment, on legal gun ownership or purchases.

As the President pointed out in his speech last night, this bill will not put an end to all gun violence. No bill can do that. No bill can prevent any particular act of violence, but we can stop some. We can do something and we can do this, and law enforcement is begging for the passage of this bill. We can begin the healing. We can restore some trust. We can stop putting guns in the hands of criminals. We can do it in a bipartisan way, and we can do it together.

Again, I thank my good friend and wonderful colleague, JACKIE SPEIER from the great State of California, for organizing this. I will be with you at all of your future events.

Ms. SPEIER. I thank the gentlelady from New York for making it clear that we are talking about safe and sane, commonsense laws on the books, and I am honored to be a cosponsor of her bill.

I want to just take a minute and go through a timeline of what has happened under the NRA's leadership in terms of the unraveling of laws that have been on the books but, because of the NRA's leadership, they have been unraveled. Let's start with the very first one.

Between 1980 and 1987, the number of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents was slashed by 21 percent, from 1,500 to 1,180, and the number of inspectors dropped from 655 to 626. What was happening during that period of time? During that period of time, there were more and more dealers. So why would the NRA be so interested in reducing the staffing of the ATF? In 1986, the Firearm Owners' Protection Act was passed—again, sponsored by the NRA. It set a high burden of proof to prosecute violations of Federal gun laws. It limited ATF inspections to once a year, and it weakened the penalty. It allowed unlicensed individuals to sell their firearms as a hobby, avoiding meaningful regulations, thus leading to an increase in gun shows.

What does that mean when you have to establish a standard that is so high that you end up not revoking any firearm dealer's license? Well, willfully—not knowingly but willfully—violating gun safety laws is the standard that is now on the books. It's an extraordinarily high standard, and the loopholes that were created allowed for dealers to hand off their businesses, even when they had these horrendous violations, to relatives or to convert their inventory of guns into a ''personal collection,'' which they then could sell because it was now a hobby, without doing background checks. Let me give you one example.

An example is Sandy Abrams. He was a member of the NRA board of directors. He was cited with over 900 violations of Federal firearm laws at his shop, Valley Gun, and 483 crime guns were traced to his shop. This is an NRA board member who violated the laws 900 times, and 483 crime guns were traced to his shop. What did the NRA do? The NRA, in a subsequent bill, banned the tracing of crime guns. What happened to him? The only power that ATF had was to revoke his license. So what did they do? No criminal charges were ever brought. Abrams transferred hundreds of his firearms to his personal

collection, despite the revocation of his license, and faced charges of illegally selling those guns from his personal collection. As I mentioned earlier, in 1986, the Firearm Owners' Protection Act limited these inspections and weakened penalties.

We then moved on to the Dickey amendment in 1996. What did the Dickey amendment do? The Dickey amendment held that the CDC could no longer conduct public health research. Now, why would the NRA be so concerned about research going on? Because when you do research, you can link it, and it can create the opportunity for public policy decisions that are, in fact, thoughtful.

Then came the famous Tiahrt amendments in 2004 that placed restrictions on law enforcement, limited access to crime gun tracing data and required approval—background checks—of 24 hours only. That amendment said that if you're going to do a background check, you can only have that document in place for 24 hours, and then it has to be destroyed. So, to the point made by our colleague from New York about what are called ''straw purchasers,'' how would you even know there was a straw purchaser if you had to destroy that record in 24 hours?

Then in 2004 came the assault weapons ban, which was sponsored by Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN. The chair then of the Judiciary Committee, our good Vice President, was also the shepherd of that bill.

□ 1430

In 2005, Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, this was heralded by the NRA as being their biggest get ever because that particular bill became law, and it protects gun manufacturers from civil liability suits—the only industry in this country that is not subject to civil liability suits for dangerous equipment and the like. The Sandy Hook families that are looking at trying to bring actions right now are stymied because this law is in place. There's no protection for auto manufacturers if they have unsafe products, but we've given carte blanche protection to gun manufacturers.

And in 2005, the U.S. PATRIOT Act, what did we do there? Well, then the NRA decided that, you know what, that ATF Director shouldn't just be appointed; it should be confirmed by the Senate. So in the PATRIOT Act, they got an amendment that provides that the ATF Director must be confirmed by the Senate. And guess what happens? There hasn't been an ATF Director confirmed in 7 years because of the control that they exhibit.

And then in 2005, ironically, George W. Bush does something his father didn't even do. His father, George H.W. Bush, by executive order, banned the importation of guns in this country, particularly the assault weapons. When President Clinton came into power, he, by executive order, expanded that importation ban to include high-capacity magazines. George W. Bush comes in as President, and he lifts the ban on the importation of assault weapons.

And between 2009 and 2012, we've had 99 gun safety laws rolled back at the State level. That's what the NRA is doing.

I now yield to my colleague from Rhode Island for his comments.

Mr. CICILLINE. I thank the gentlelady from California for yielding, and also for organizing this conversation about the dangers of gun violence and our responsibility to reduce gun violence in communities all across this country.

I want to also acknowledge the leadership of the gentlelady from New York, CAROLYN MCCARTHY, who long before I arrived here was an inspiration to me and so many others across the country who have been fighting for responsible gun safety legislation.

Just to give a context to the problem we are confronting, the U.S. gun murder rate is about 20 times the average of other developed nations. What that means is someone in this country is about 20 times as likely to be killed by a gun as someone in another developed country. As some have already said, since the horrible, horrible killings, the murders of Newtown, 1,772 people have been killed by guns since that tragedy.

According to the CDC, there are 11,078 firearm homicides that accounted for 68 percent of all homicides in 2010. These are just some numbers that I think give us an understanding of the seriousness of the problem that we face with gun violence in this country. It's an epidemic.

I salute Mayors Against Illegal Guns and Mayor Menino and Mayor Bloomberg, who began that. I was a founding member. I salute the Brady Campaign for their work, but there are a couple of facts that are undeniable:

Number one, the Second Amendment gives individuals the right to possess firearms, and the vast majority of gun owners are responsible and they possess firearms for their self-defense and their own protection. That's a fact.

Two, there are certain categories of individuals that we all agree ought not have access to firearms—dangerous criminals, the seriously mentally ill, and children.

So if we agree on those two facts—guns are permitted by the Constitution to be possessed by individuals, three categories of individuals at least ought not have access to those firearms—then we have a responsibility to design a system and pass laws that ensure that those three categories of individuals, in fact, don't have access to firearms; and we have the ability to do that by closing the gaping loopholes from private sales and from the fire sale that the gentlelady from California just referenced where, when your license to sell guns, your Federal license is revoked, that you're rewarded by having your entire inventory turned into a personal collection, and then you can sell it free from the constraints of background checks.

We can fix the background check system, be sure that States are putting accurate information into the system. We can ban assault weapons, which are weapons of war which don't belong in the neighborhoods of our cities and towns, and high-capacity ammunition whose only purpose is to kill a great number of people in a very short period of time. We have these very reasonable, commonsense solutions which are available.

Last night at the President's State of the Union, we had 30 victims who suffered the grievous impact of gun violence, who put a face on the devastation, the scourge of gun violence in this country. We owe it to them, we owe it to families all across this country to move on this legislation, to hold a vote up or down so we can take what most Americans support, responsible gun safety legislation to reduce gun violence in our country.

When the gentlelady was just going through the examples of what the NRA has been successful in doing, let's not forget, the NRA doesn't have a vote in this Chamber, so every single one of those actions happened because individuals in Congress voted for them, and they should be accountable for that. And we can fix it by taking votes today to enhance public safety, to impose reasonable gun safety measures that will protect children and families all across this country and continue to honor the right of individuals to possess a firearm as guaranteed in the Second Amendment.

I thank the gentlelady for her leadership and for yielding. This is an important issue.

I'll end with The New York Times headline that said, ''Do we have the courage to stop this?'' talking about the carnage in Newtown and the courage that family members have displayed who have been victims of gun violence. If we can match that courage, Members of this House can match just 10 percent of the courage that they've demonstrated in sharing their stories, then we'll do the right thing and pass responsible gun safety legislation.

Ms. SPEIER. I thank you for your extraordinarily sound comments on this issue. As you were talking about courage, I remember recently having an opportunity to listen to a family from Newtown who lost a child, who said to me and to others:

> You're just a bunch of talking heads. Can't you two groups get together and do what's right?

With that, let me yield to the Member of Congress who represents that extraordinary community and who has done so much to help them heal from what has been a devastating impact on not just everyone in the country but particularly those families in Newtown, Ms. ESTY.

Ms. ESTY. I would like to thank the gentlelady from California for organizing this Special Order hour, and I

want to thank you for your longtime leadership on the gun violence prevention issue; and to our friend and colleague Congresswoman MCCARTHY, for your tireless effort, sadly over decades now, to ensure that this Congress takes action to keep our communities safer.

Last night in this Chamber, people affected by gun violence, including a number of families and officials and first responders from Newtown, were here in this Chamber. I have the honor of representing this small, brave town that now finds itself at the center of this national debate. And, folks, they are the face. They are paying the price of our political inaction.

Among the people here last night was a courageous educator by the name of Natalie Hammond. Natalie was the lead teacher at the Sandy Hook school that day, and she was in the hall trying to stop that madman, and her colleagues on either side were killed and she was seriously injured. She got out of physical therapy and came out publicly for the first time to be here last night to put a human face on the cost of inaction.

These people, as the gentlelady from California suggested, as The New York Times and others have suggested, are so courageous. And they have one question for us: What are we going to do? What is this country going to do to address this epidemic?

The President spoke eloquently, yet very directly, last night about how we must do better as a country. As he said, the families of Newtown deserve a vote.

□ 1440

He is right. Commonsense measures that respect Second Amendment rights, like universal criminal background checks, a reinstatement of the assault weapons ban, and restrictions on high-capacity magazines should, at the very least, be voted on in this Chamber and in the Senate.

The voices of the American people should be heard in this Congress. It's up to us. It's up to us, as elected leaders, to see that these families, that every family touched by gun violence has a vote.

Lynn and Chris McDonnell, the parents of Grace McDonnell, were here in the Chambers last night, as witness to their daughter, who loved pink, who did a beautiful painting, which they gave to the President of the United States.

The McDonnells asked me this morning, they said, you know, Elizabeth, what more can we do to ensure that Congress acts? And I was astounded by the question. To think that this grieving family, what more could they do? It's, what more must we do?

They are doing everything they can to make sure that every Member of Congress understands not only their loss—their loss is America's loss, because every child that was murdered, every life lost on the city streets of our country is a loss that ripples throughout families and communities, lives. We will never know what these people could have done, could have contributed to our society, and it is an enormous hole in the fabric of our country.

The price of inaction is too high. The price of inaction is being paid every day by grieving parents like Lynn and Chris McDonnell.

So I want to thank, again, the gentlelady from California for all you're doing to ensure that we do the right thing here today, that we continue the discussion of this critical issue, that we do not lose our will to take action, and that we do bring about real change to save lives in our communities across this country.

The parents, the families, the children of Newtown deserve no less than our best efforts. We must act.

Thank you very much.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, can I inquire as to how much time we have left?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 13 minutes remaining.

Ms. SPEIER. It's now my pleasure to yield time to my good, good, good friend and colleague from California, BARBARA LEE, who has been an outspoken advocate for gun violence prevention for decades.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you very much.

First of all, let me thank you, Congresswoman SPEIER, for bringing us all together today to speak out on the important issue of addressing gun violence, not next month, not next year, not next Congress, but right now. And I have to just thank you so much for your tremendous leadership.

Yourself and Congresswoman MCCARTHY, both of you have so eloquently laid out why we need gun violence safety measures, both with your intellect and with your heart. Both of you have shared your very painful experiences, really, basically, so that others can live rather than die from gunshots. So thank you so much for staying the course.

I can think of no more important subject than what we're talking about today because this gun violence has been destroying communities, taking lives, and injuring too many people for much too long across America.

As President Obama invoked in his State of the Union speech last night, the families grieving from losing loved ones to gun violence deserve a vote. In fact, though, we're saying they deserve more than a vote. They deserve concrete steps to reduce gun violence, and we can take those steps right here in Congress.

We cannot accept one more innocent life being lost to gun violence, not one in Newtown, not one in Chicago or Cleveland, not one in my district in Oakland, California, not one in any town, any city, any school, in any theater, or any place of worship, mall, or any neighborhood.

We have an obligation to our children to ensure that Newtown marks a turning point that made us finally say, ''Enough is enough.'' We must come together to build an America where our children do not have to live in fear, and where they really believe that they have a future. Many of my young people in my district don't even think they have a future, and this is a very sad state of affairs that we've got to turn around.

Recently, I had an event in my district in West Oakland. It was the unveiling of a mural painted by several talented young artists. This ''Tree of Life'' mural depicted the hope and the faith that my young people have for a future from violence and without violence. Yet they've seen and experienced so much gun violence in their communities throughout their young years, but they still have a lot of hope, and they're counting on us here to make sure that their dream lives.

Too many of my constituents have been affected by gun violence, have pleaded for help in protecting their children from the horrors of gun violence, only to see the status quo at the Federal level.

Mr. Speaker, we need to take some serious action that includes what we've heard today, and I'll reiterate, commonsense measures such as the Federal gun buyback programs, banning high-capacity magazines, expanding the 24-hour background check, closing gun show loopholes, and reinstating the assault weapons ban. We need to do this immediately.

But we also need to work to end domestic violence in our homes and reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. We need to do this right away.

We must also seek input from our young people, community stakeholders, faith community leaders, and others. We can work together to identify the root causes of this Nation's more than 16,000 homicides a year.

Let me call to your attention the work of a magnificent community-based organization in my district that I actually am very proud of, that I helped found in the early nineties, called the Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center. These young people continue to work on conflict resolution and violence prevention efforts day and night, but they constantly tell us that their work is thwarted by too many guns on the street. And so we have to pass these gun safety measures.

We have to repeal the Tiahrt amendment, which I know Congresswoman SPEIER and Mr. MORAN and myself and other appropriators are working to do. And we must, as part of this, rededicate ourselves to getting the guns off of the street and working for, finally, a culture of peace and security.

Thank you again for your leadership.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you to the gentlelady from California.

We now are joined by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO), who has been a voice for mental health reform in this country for decades. I yield such time as she may consume.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Thank you, Gentlelady Speier, for being our lead on the gun prevention, gun violence prevention.

One of the things we don't talk about is a mental health component on which Congress has got to act. We've got to make sure that we bring it to the forefront. We've got to fund the programs to be able to help our communities deal with the mental health issues, elevate it to the level of other illnesses such as cancer, diabetes, heart issues.

We need to destigmatize it. It will not solve itself. We need to end the school tragedies, the government office attacks. Mental illness is an invisible illness. We don't talk about it, we don't listen to it, and we don't want to share it because of the stigma. We need to educate our public.

Children at a young level can be identified when they're beginning to have emotional disorders that can be addressed at a very early age. Now, that's not to say—there's many reasons why we need to go, and the time does not allow me to go into it, but when you hear that 2,000 people are killed, how many are maimed? What is the cost to society and the cost to our business, to the law enforcement? And, as you say, they are very much in favor of controlling the guns on the street, the high-capacity, the assault weapons.

□ 1450

And women are highly in favor. As you can tell, most of your speakers are women who understand this is our children, our grandchildren, our neighbors, our friends who are impacted. And we need to be able to fund mental health services at the local level so it can be addressed and help can be found for them.

I've introduced the Mental Health in Schools Act, H.R. 628, which was a companion to Senator FRANKEN's Senate bill 195. But I must ask that the public has got to raise their voice. Email, fax, mail, phone your Member of Congress, and tell them we need to pass reform.

Ms. SPEIER. I thank the gentlelady from California.

I now welcome our new colleague from California, a colleague who I have served in the State legislature with for many years, Congressman ALAN LOWENTHAL.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. I want to thank the gentlelady from California for calling us and bringing us together to discuss this very important issue.

I stand here and join my colleagues as we put forth responsible solutions to reduce gun violence in our communities and throughout our country. It was my honor to introduce from my district Peggy McCrum, the chapter leader of the Long Beach Area Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, at yesterday's conference hosted by the Brady Campaign and Mayors Against Illegal Guns.

Three decades ago, her brother, Robert Kelly, was shot and killed by a complete stranger as he walked to his car, unaware that any peril awaited him. Peggy's brother, Robert; the victims of tragedies that occurred in Newtown and Aurora's mass shooting; and the thousands of Americans whose lives are ended each year by gun violence should serve as a reminder to all of us about the fragility of human life and our ability as Members of Congress to enact commonsense legislation necessary to prevent such horrific tragedies from continuing to devastate innocent Americans.

I stand here today in total support of a ban on military-style assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, similar to the gun laws that we have in California. These instruments of mass destruction have no place in our society outside of the military. And I thank my colleagues on the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, especially Congressman THOMPSON and Congresswoman PELOSI, for leading the charge on this effort.

The tragedy of gun violence will not be solved just by banning assault weapons and ammunition alone. We must strengthen our current background check system as well as the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. We must increase access to mental health services, we must increase the student-to-counselor ratio in our schools, and we must lift the research ban on the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes of Health. All of these commonsense proposals are crucial to achieving the meaningful reforms that will save countless lives.

As a community psychologist, I understand that early identification and treatment of mental illness is the key to preventing potentially harmful acts. That being said, I am proud to cosponsor Congresswoman BARBARA LEE's Student Support Act, as well as Congresswoman GRACE NAPOLITANO's Mental Health in Schools Act. Both of these bills will address the growing mental health needs of our Nation's 95,000 students.

I do not believe in taking away any American's Second Amendment rights. Just as you cannot yell ''fire'' in a movie theater, I believe you cannot own and use weapons that are capable of killing 20 school children in a matter of seconds.

To conclude, I think we all must continue to listen to those who have been injured by gun violence, to survivors, to law enforcement, and even to those who speak out against gun law reforms. We will not be able to reach common ground on this issue unless we keep an open mind to all of the voices in America.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentlelady from California for calling us together to discuss this important issue.

I stand here today to join my colleagues as we put forth responsible solutions to reduce gun violence in our communities and throughout our country.

It was my honor to introduce from my district Peggy McCrum, the Chapter Leader of Long Beach Area Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence at yesterday's press conference hosted by the Brady Campaign and Mayors Against Illegal Guns. Three decades ago, her brother Robert Kelly was shot and killed by a complete stranger as he was walking to his parked car—unaware of the perils that awaited him.

It can be all too easy to see Robert as a statistic on a crime map, but he—like all victims of senseless violence—was much, much more. He was a son . . . a brother . . . and a loved one. He was 28 years old; a graduate of Cal State Long Beach who was excited about starting his career at an accounting software firm. That future . . . his future . . . ended all too soon at the hands of a criminal with a gun. To date, the killer has not been found.

None of us are statistics. We are all living, breathing caring people with real lives and hopes and dreams, and we all deserve the freedom to feel safe from gun violence, be it in our schools, our movie theaters, or our streets.

Peggy's brother Robert, the victims of tragedies like the Newtown and Aurora mass shootings, and the thousands of Americans whose lives are ended each year by gun violence, will never be forgotten; they should serve as a reminder to us of the fragility of human life and our ability as members of Congress to enact commonsense legislation necessary to prevent such horrific tragedies from continuing to devastate innocent Americans.

These children, their parents, and all of the families who have been affected by the senseless acts of violence that left our country shocked and in disbelief are counting on us to do something—anything to ensure that they have the freedom to feel safe in their schools and communities.

I stand here today in open support of a ban on military-style assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, similar to the gun laws we have in California. These instruments of mass destruction have no place in our society outside of the military, and I thank all of my colleagues on the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, especially Congressman THOMPSON and Congresswoman PELOSI, for leading the charge on this effort.

The tragedy of gun violence will not be solved by banning assault weapons and ammunition alone. We must strengthen our current background check system, as well as the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) system; we must increase access to mental health services; we must increase the student-to-counselor ratio in our children's schools; and we must lift the research ban on the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). All of these commonsense proposals are crucial to achieving meaningful reforms that will save countless lives.

As a Community Psychologist, I understand that the early identification and treatment of mental illnesses is the key to preventing potentially harmful acts. That being said, I am proud to cosponsor Congresswoman BARBARA LEE's Student Support Act and Congresswoman GRACE NAPOLITANO's Mental Health in Schools Act. Both of these bills would address the growing mental health needs in our nation's 95,000 public schools.

The American people want action, and they are demanding a plan. My colleagues, I stand

here wanting and demanding a plan. As the President said in his State of the Union address, these victims deserve a vote.

However, I do not, I repeat, I do not believe in taking away any American's Second Amendment right. Just as you cannot yell "fire" in a movie theater, I believe you cannot own weapons capable of killing 20 school children in a matter of seconds. The United States Supreme Court ruling on Heller v. DC clearly stated that there are, indeed, limitations to the Second Amendment, and I stand with that ruling. Heller v. DC was not meant to strip gun owners of the rights, it was meant to instill a greater sense of responsibility that comes with owning a gun.

I am in favor of protecting an individual's right to own a gun; I also want to help create a more accountable gun culture—one that upholds Americans' constitutional right to bear arms, and keeps us safe from harm. The constitutional right to own a gun and the God-given human right to feel safe from gun violence is not mutually exclusive.

I want to conclude by saying that we must all continue to listen to the victims, the survivors, and even those who speak out against gun law reforms; we will not be able to reach common ground on this issue unless we keep an open mind to all of the voices of the American people.

Thank you.

Ms. SPEIER. I thank the gentleman from California for his thoughtful remarks. And I want to thank each and every one of you who has participated in this Special Order. It's something that we must do week after week so that our message gets out to the American people and so that they truly understand what has happened in this country over the last 20 years that has taken away so many commonsense laws that were on the books to provide the kind of safe and sane laws to make sure that everyone who owns a gun has it appropriately and everyone who shouldn't own a gun, doesn't have a gun.

This is our to-do list:

Pass the universal background check, pass a ban on large magazines, pass an assault weapon ban, crack down on gun trafficking, remove the handcuffs on law enforcement, remove the gag order on gun safety research, keep illegal and unwanted guns off the street, invest in gun safety technology R&D, close the holes in our mental health system, and take steps to enhance school safety.

Someone said:

> Too many children are dying. Too many children. We must do something. It will be hard, but the time is now. You must act. Be bold. Be courageous. Americans are counting on you.

These are the words of our own Gabby Giffords in the Senate just a couple of weeks ago. It still sends shivers up and down my spine. Gabby almost lost her life. We owe it to Gabby, we owe it to the 26 people who lost their lives in Newtown, the countless people who lost their lives in Aurora and Columbine, and the 32 people each and ever day in this country who lose their lives to gun violence. We owe it to the American people. Let's act.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MENG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great passion and urgency to talk about our need, as Members of Congress, to strengthen our Nation's gun violence prevention laws. Last night at the State of the Union, President Obama said it best—gun violence victims deserve a vote. From Newtown to Aurora, Oak Creek to Tucson and Blacksburg—these victims deserve a vote. Every day in this country, men, women and children die from gun violence. It doesn't have to be this way. We don't have to live in fear when we send our children to school.

I'm proud to be a member of the House Democratic Task Force on Reducing and Preventing Gun Violence. Last week, we issued a series of commonsense priorities that could make the difference in preventing future gun violence. One of the most basic priorities is implementing universal background checks. It is the only way to ensure that people who are legally barred from owning a gun are prevented from buying a gun. Right now, the law is voluntary—someone who fears failing a background check can simply avoid it by acquiring a gun from a private seller.

Another commonsense measure is a bill I introduced, the Fire Sale Loophole Closing Act, that prevents gun dealers whose licenses were revoked from reclassifying their inventory as personal and then selling the same guns as a private seller. We have to close these loopholes. These practices of getting around the law need to stop. I urge my colleagues to bring these commonsense gun safety laws to the floor for a vote because President Obama was right—our victims deserve a vote.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian Pate, one of his secretaries.

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO LIBYA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 113–9)

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAMALFA) laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the Federal Register and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the Federal Register for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13566 of February 25, 2011, is to continue in effect beyond February 25, 2013.

Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, his government, and close associates took extreme measures against the people of Libya, including by using weapons of war, mercenaries, and wanton violence against unarmed civilians. In addition, there was a serious risk that Libyan state assets would be misappropriated by Qadhafi, members of his government, members of his family, or his close associates if those assets were not protected. The foregoing circumstances, the prolonged attacks, and the increased numbers of Libyans seeking refuge in other countries caused a deterioration in the security of Libya, posed a serious risk to its stability, and led me to declare a national emergency to deal with this threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.

We are in the process of winding down the sanctions in response to developments in Libya, including the fall of Qadhafi and his government and the establishment of a democratically elected government. We are working closely with the new Libyan government and with the international community to effectively and appropriately ease restrictions on sanctioned entities, including by taking actions consistent with the U.N. Security Council's decision to lift sanctions against the Central Bank of Libya and two other entities on December 16, 2011. The situation in Libya, however, continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States and we need to protect against this threat and the diversion of assets or other abuse by certain members of Qadhafi's family and other former regime officials. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to Libya.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *February 13, 2013.*

HONORING CHIEF PETTY OFFICER CHRIS KYLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great American hero, Chief Petty Officer Chris Kyle, who, unfortunately, was killed on February 2. Normally, you would think that this would be honoring a soldier who was killed in action. Unfortunately, Chris Kyle gave his life while trying to help a fellow soldier who was dealing with some big issues.

□ 1500

And so today my colleagues and I want to spend the next hour honoring the life and the sacrifice that Chris Kyle did and gave for his country.

This is a difficult time for me, not only to honor Chris like this, but Chris

Kyle was not only a Navy SEAL hero, but he was also a personal friend of myself and my family. And our warmest wishes and prayers and thoughts go out to Taya and the family in this difficult time.

Now, this will be a time today where we're going to reflect on Chris' life. And we had a tremendous outpouring of people who wanted to share stories about Chris, and we're going to share some of those.

I know Chris would have wanted this also not to be necessarily about him, but for the country that he fought for and believed in and loved so dearly. Chris was all American. Everything he did, his service to his country, was about his love for the country.

Not only did Chris love his country, he loved his family. He loved his friends and he loved his wife and children. So I wanted to talk just a little bit about Chris' career.

Chris spent 11 years as a member of SEAL Team 3, and of course his record is nothing but superb. He retired in 2009, and when he retired he had 255 kills, with 160 of those confirmed by the Pentagon, making him the most lethal sniper in American history. And one thing about that is that Chris was very unassuming.

I remember knowing a little bit about his background, but then meeting Chris for the first time and how humble he was and how down to earth he was, and he really didn't talk about records. He talked about people, and he talked about what his job was was to protect his fellow soldiers.

His ability in the battlefield was unmatched. His longest shot came in 2008 when he identified an enemy insurgent that was about to launch a rocket near an Army convoy. From 1.2 miles away, he fired his .338 Lapua Magnum rifle and killed the insurgent, potentially saving the lives of countless Americans.

Chris was awarded countless honors for his service. He earned two Silver Stars, five Bronze Stars, two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, and one Navy and Marine Corps Commendation.

He was admired by people all over the country. And on this Monday, about 7,000 or 8,000 people gathered in the Dallas Cowboy Stadium in Dallas, Texas, to come and pay their respects for Chris Kyle. It was a great loss for our country. It was a great loss for his friends and family. They weren't just honoring an American hero. They were also honoring a husband, a father, a son, a team member, a comrade.

Chris was a born-and-bred Texas son and a devout Christian. He is survived by his wife, Taya, and two children, whom he loved and cared for deeply. In fact, he made the decision to leave the Navy in 2009 just so he could spend more time with his family at home.

After retiring from the Navy, Chris founded Craft International, a military and law enforcement training company. He also was intricately involved in numerous charities, including cofounding FITCO Cares Foundation, and other charitable events benefiting wounded and disabled servicemen and -women returning from combat.

He also wrote The New York Times bestseller, entitled, ''American Sniper,'' which chronicled his time as a SEAL sniper. Chris donated the proceeds to the families of some of the comrades that died with him in combat.

These examples really show that his sense of service was genuine and deep. He lived by the motto, ''It is our duty to serve those who serve us.'' It is our duty now as American citizens to remember this young man who served so bravely, to pray for his family in a time of mourning. America lost one of its finest sons and a true patriot. We keep Chris and his family in our thoughts and prayers, and we ask God to look after them.

We also pray for his friend, Chad Littlefield, who was killed alongside Chris, and for his family.

I am honored to have known Chris, and while he left this Earth at a young age, we know that God is watching over him.

Before I yield, I wanted to just make one point about the book that Chris wrote, ''American Sniper.'' It was a great book, and it really chronicled the sacrifice and the conditions that a lot of our men and women are under while they serve.

But what was also an important part of that book was that Taya would chronicle, from time to time, what it was like to be serving alongside Chris in a different capacity, and that is the spouse of one of our deployed men and women, and the pressures and all of the things that are involved in that and the stresses and the separation. And I think it was a great tribute to Chris and Taya to share that intimacy with us so that we could come to greater appreciate his service and her service to our country.

It is now my pleasure to recognize another gentleman from Texas, who Chris lived in his congressional district, Mr. BARTON.

Mr. BARTON. I thank the gentleman from Lubbock for yielding, and I'm proud to be a part of this Special Order.

I want to say at the very beginning that, unlike Congressman NEUGEBAUER, I did not know Chris Kyle or Chad Littlefield, the other individual who was killed. They both lived in my congressional district in Midlothian, Texas, and the tragedy of both of their early deaths is equal. Although I didn't know either one, I have studied up on them, and I went to the memorial service at Cowboy Stadium and was very moved by the eulogies and the people's remembrances that did know them.

I would like to say with regards to Mr. Littlefield, he, too, was a lifelong Texan, born in Dallas, and went to high school in DeSoto. He would have turned 36 Monday, and his funeral was at the Midlothian First Baptist Church last Friday. He is survived by his wife, Leanne, who is a middle school principal in Midlothian, and, I believe, a daughter. So our hearts go out to that family, too.

With regards to Chris, you could not have attended the service on Monday at the Cowboy Stadium and not have come away very impressed. The press reports are that there were 5,000 to 7,000 in attendance. I have done a number of events at Cowboy Stadium. I asked the head of security for the Cowboys who I know what they estimated the crowd. They said about 11,000.

As Mr. NEUGEBAUER has already pointed out, Chris was an individual who was driven by a love for his country and a love for his fellow man. I thought it was very telling at the service that the mother of one of his Navy SEALs who had been killed in combat, Chris adopted her as a second mother and asked that some of the proceeds of his book ''American Sniper'' go to her family. That, to me, is just amazing.

The president of Craft International also spoke at the service, and he spoke about how much Chris really cared about other people.

□ 1510

I think it is very telling that Chris Kyle and Chad Littlefield were both killed trying to help another troubled veteran. They were taking the suspected murderer to a gun range over in I think near Glen Rose, Texas, and trying to help him work through some problems. The person they were trying to help turned on them. So he died trying to help another person who was in need, and that's something his family can be very proud of.

I think another thing that we need to say about Chris is when people met him, they liked him and wanted to help him. The number of people who have helped in these service arrangements runs the gamut: The Governor of Texas, Governor Perry, who helped arrange the cemetery plot at the Texas State Cemetery in Austin; Jerry Jones and his family, the owner of the Cowboys, I think donated the use of Cowboys Stadium and were personally in attendance at the funeral; all the law enforcement agencies in the DFW area helped arrange the cavalcade from Midlothian down to Austin. And I am told that at almost every overpass on Interstate 35 and U.S. 287 that there were people showing flags and in attendance. There was an outpouring of love and affection that in my knowledge in the Congress is just unheard of for somebody who was not a public figure. And Chris was not. He was a public patriot, but he was not an ostentatious, grandstand kind of person.

He loved his family. He loved his two children. He loved his wife. He loved his mother and father. And he loved those whom he served with in the military. As Mr. NEUGEBAUER has pointed out, he served a number of tours in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In one of the stories that is in his book, he was under orders not to fire unless fired upon. In order to get the enemy so that he could shoot them, he put up an American flag, stood up and basically dared them to take a shot at him. And I think this is correct from the book, that when they started shooting at him he got everybody to take a shot at him, and he silenced them.

So, Congressman NEUGEBAUER, you are to be commended for organizing this Special Order. I'm proud that Chris Kyle and Chad Littlefield were constituents of mine. I'm very proud their families still live in my district. Myself and my staff will do everything we can to help them. We will cherish the memory of Chris and Chad for many, many years.

With that, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy and I yield back.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I thank the gentleman.

One of the things about Kyle is, you said he wasn't a public figure. Kyle was pretty unassuming. Sometimes people wanted to talk about these records that he had accumulated. Chris would always kind of shake that off. He said:

> My service wasn't about trying to get a record. My service was trying to help my country, and my job was to make sure that the bad guys didn't get my guys.

I think that's the kind of man that he was.

One of the things that the gentleman mentioned was regarding the motorcade from Dallas yesterday to Austin, to the Texas State Cemetery. I saw some of the video of that, and it was just amazing, the patriotism all along that almost 200-mile trek of people that wanted to express their appreciation. Many of them never met Chris Kyle, but they knew what he stood for and what he meant.

As we go along, before I recognize another great patriot from Texas, I was going to read some of the emails that have been pouring in to me. This is one from Jim DeFelice, who is a coauthor of the ''American Sniper'' book with Chris. He sent an email, and I will read just a little of it. He said:

> Of my many memories of Chris, perhaps this one sums up the kind of man he was: On the morning of Hurricane Sandy, as I was going out to check on the damage to our house in the neighborhood, I received a text message from him asking if I was okay and if we needed anything. Even though he was over 2,000 miles away, I knew that if I asked for help he would have thrown a bag in the back of his pickup and driven up within the hour. It was that kind of spirit, in everything he did, that made Chris a great warrior, a great SEAL and a great American. I am grateful to have known him.

It is now my honor to recognize Mr. GOHMERT, the gentleman from Texas, for words he might want to speak.

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you, and I thank my dear friend from Texas for having this time and for honoring such a great American hero.

Chris Kyle clearly loved his country. He loved his family, he loved those with whom he served and was willing to lay down his life for his friends. Every time he was committed to hostile theater, he knew he might be laying down his life for his friends. He also knew that the ultimate authority on love, Jesus, is quoted in John 15:13 saying:

> Greater love hath no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

Chris had that commitment every time he was in a hostile area. He was willing to do that. And the fact that he gave up his life trying to help another servicemember who was suffering from a mental problem still is an act of laying down his life in service for others. He did it for this country, he did it for his friends, and he did it for those, including the gunman that took his own life.

Now, it was a very moving service. I don't believe it was broadcast. But for all of us who were there, we were deeply moved. The show of support, love, and affection for an American hero was deeply touching.

Chad Littlefield, the same situation, a man that was willing to lay down his life for his friends, and he did.

I think most people, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, have heard and read about this extraordinary man, Chris Kyle, his service to the country, three Silver Stars and five Bronze Stars. What an incredible, incredible service to his country. He deserves the tribute being brought and much, much more.

I would like to say a little bit about the sacrifice of some American heroes who don't always get recognized as heroes. In Chris' case, it's his wife, Taya, and their two children—sweet little notes on the bulletin at the funeral that they had written. His parents—it was an honor to meet Chris' parents. But we don't often think of the families and what they have laid down. They have lost father, husband, friend, confidante, a man who would do anything for them. They have paid an ultimate sacrifice.

I was reading some years back in—actually it's a journal basically that C.S. Lewis had written after his wife died. In one of the entries, he was talking about how much he missed his wife, how much he wished he had her back, and then he realized how selfish that was because she was in paradise, and his act of selfishness was to want a loved one to come back into a world where that loved one would only have to some day again die before they could return to paradise. I believe with all my heart that Chris, as a Christian, is in paradise. He's greatly missed, and especially by those closest to him that paid that ultimate price.

□ 1520

We wish he were back, but then he would have to go through that process again.

C.S. Lewis said, We've always heard that Stephen was the first martyr, but didn't Lazarus get the rawer deal? I never thought about it before. We're told Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. You can't find any reference in scripture of Lazarus saying anything ever because he might have said something like, I was in paradise, and you're bringing me back here now?

Nonetheless, Chris has served honorably and well. He's greatly missed. And we should not forget the family members of those who have lost loved ones in service to this country. They have paid the ultimate price: his parents, his wife, his kids, his brother. Obviously, his brother sorely missed Chris. So let's pay tribute to Chris, to those who have sacrificed in giving their loved one Chris for our country.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I thank the gentleman, and I think the point that you make is extremely important about our families. As Members of Congress, we get an opportunity and many occasions to travel to the theater and to thank those men and women that are deployed and for their outstanding service to their country.

I know that my colleagues also do the same thing I do; that is, when you're around their families, you understand and they understand that this is a team sport. It's those families that support our military folks back home and keep the homefront going while our men and women go and do the job we ask them to do, which is an important part of making sure America has a strong defense.

I got an anonymous email from a person that wanted to express their thoughts about Chris. He says:

> When veterans asked for help or wanted to meet with him, Chris made time for them. When children needed him, he made time for them. The week before he died, his wife was marveling at how he could make time for so many different aspects of his work while making time for his family and still squeezing in time for children and veterans in need. He shrugged and let this simple reply speak volumes of his character, ''Kids and vets, right, babe?''

Chris was working hard, juggling many different things to make a living for his family. He worked hard mostly because he had already made the decision to give away more money than he had earned in his lifetime in order to support the families of the fallen. I think that says a lot about Chris. Chris wasn't caught up in material things. He wasn't caught up in honors. Every day, Chris had a servant's spirit

It is now my honor to recognize another great Texan, my neighbor to the south, Mr. CONAWAY.

Mr. CONAWAY. I thank the gentleman for yielding some time and allowing me to add my inadequate words and thoughts for Chris and his family.

I had purchased Chris's book a long time ago; but as things go, I just hadn't read it. After he was murdered a week or so ago, I read his book. It was a very unsettling experience.

The book is written in what appears to be Chris's voice. I never met Chris, and so I didn't know what he actually sounded like when he spoke. But the book is written in a very conversational tone, and it's almost like you're

having that conversation with Chris. You're reading, and you're caught up in the stories, and you're caught up in the action. You go, Oh, he was murdered several days ago.

Chris's style of talking about himself and the things that he did on behalf of his country were very self-deprecating, very matter of fact. I'm sure most of the instances in there where he talked about coming close to being hurt or coming close to near-death experiences are sugarcoated from what the real deal was because I know he didn't want his wife and family and many to know. He certainly wouldn't have been bragging about that anyway.

But Chris had a very matter-of-fact tone when he was with the SEALs and he was in those battles. Even when he was home, he had a very—''casual'' is not the right word—but very matter-of-fact attitude toward the fact that he could be killed, that something bad could happen to him.

He also spoke in the book often about his faith and a guardian angel. There was one instance where he just moved differently than he normally would have moved, and a bullet went right where he had been. That's a Holy-Spirit-kind of thing. It just wasn't Chris's time.

So you read through that book, but you know Chris has been taken from us, he's been murdered, and America has lost one of her very best to have worn our colors and to have served.

I think the thing that comes out of the story in the book was he and his wife's struggle. What was most impressive about it was how torn he was between duty to country and duty to family. He was clear that his first duty was to God, but he was legitimately torn between the responsibilities to not only himself, but his men and the others under his watch and care, and those he protected by killing bad guys before they had a chance to kill our guys. That role he played, he relished it, he cherished it, and he wanted to do it; but he also began to recognize and see the impact it was having on his wife and kids.

So the struggle he and Taya went through of trying to come to the decision of, Do I give up something I really love to do, and I feel like my duty to do it, that I will have abandoned my friends if I go in a different direction? How difficult that decision was for him and his family, but that he ultimately decided that his role, God's direction for him, was that he be a full-time father to his two kids and a full-time husband to his wife.

The sense of loss from leaving the service, leaving the SEALs—the truth of the matter is he was in a period of our country's history that is not likely to be repeated ever again. I certainly hope not. The way he spoke about the opportunity to lay his life down for others is very matter of fact in that he was certainly willing to do that.

I agree with RANDY and LOUIE as they talked about the families. They really are the unsung—I got a little taste of this back when Iraq was going on in a big way and Afghanistan. I've made multiple trips. My wife, Suzanne, is just a basket case while I'm in country. And they never take Members of Congress to any place scary. They're not going to do that. If anything, it would be a helicopter failure or something. For the most part, they never take us anywhere scary, but she doesn't know that. I know it. I know everything is fine. We're wearing suits and ties, and it's fine. But she doesn't know that until I get out of country. As soon as she knew that, I would sense the relief in her.

That gives me a microscopic sense of what these families have done for 12 years now across the board with their loved ones downrange. As far as the family is concerned, it's a 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week risk for their loved one. The loved one knows when it's scary and when it's not and knows when things are going crazy, but the family back home doesn't. They're dreading that car pulling up out front because they know that their loved one is someplace where they could get hurt or killed. The strength of the American serviceman's and servicewoman's family is to support them throughout this timeframe, where we've asked them as a country to do far more for this country than should ever have been asked of any one individual.

Yes, it's an all-volunteer force and, yes, they continue to reenlist, re-up, and go at it. But we've asked them to do more than we should have. They've recognized that we had to ask them to do these things. So I too brag on the families because that really is where the strength of America is shown, in families being able to back Chris up and the things that he was trying to do to make sure he was able to do downrange all he needed to do without worrying about what was going on back home.

It is so difficult to lose someone like Chris. We had a wonderful organization in Midland, Texas, called Show of Support, a similar thing to what Chris was doing with his life after he got out, and that is in this instance they take wounded vets on deer hunts. They bring them into town, and they have a big banquet. They take the wives on a shopping spree and to the spa, and then they take the guys hunting. In this past year, they were in the parade heading down to the banquet. And the float that several were on was hit by a train, and four of these men were killed. These men who were killed had already had wounds of war that showed up in their lives every single day. One was killed pushing his wife out of harm's way.

So losing those four, the personal experience we think we feel with Chris—and we don't, but we do, because he's one of our best and one of those who has done far more for our country than we should have asked—does feel personal.

I ask folks around Memorial Day every year that we thank our country and we thank folks for the sacrifices made on behalf of our country, but it's generally in the generic, generally as a group. What I ask people to do is I say, Look, I want you to pick out somebody specific. I want you to think about somebody who we're memorializing today who has actually laid down their life in defense of this country. I want it to hurt a little bit. I want it to cost something for you to say the things we say very casually on Memorial Day.

□ 1530

I now have someone else I can think about on Memorial Day when we should all, as a country, recognize these collective sacrifices. Sometimes when you recognize them in the collective, it loses the impact, so I would encourage folks to recognize those sacrifices in the specific by picking out somebody you went to high school with who was killed in Vietnam, as in my case, or someone you know—a family member or whomever—about whom you can say, All right, as it ought to hurt just a little bit.

I want to thank the gentleman for giving me a chance to add, as I mentioned earlier, my inadequate thoughts on Chris and on his dedication to this country and his sacrifice. I wish Godspeed to his family as they cope with Chris' absence in this life.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I thank the gentleman.

If Chris were here and were standing next to me, I think one of the things he would say is, RANDY, you need to talk about my team members.

He was a Navy SEAL. If you read the book or if you talk to a Navy SEAL—and I've visited with Chris—the SEAL team members, because of the things that they do together, have to trust each other explicitly. He lost some of his team members while they were serving our country. He grieved over that, and he thought about them a lot.

One of his teammates sent me an email that reads:

> Chris Kyle is an American hero who will be sorely missed by his brothers in arms, the great State of Texas, and the entire United States of America. For the last week, we have mourned his death, but I ask you today to take joy in his life, to truly appreciate the time he was with us; and may we continue Chris' legacy of service unto one another and support our wounded veterans who are battling with PTSD. Thank you to everyone for their support and prayers. God bless America.

Now it's my pleasure to recognize the gentlewoman from the Fort Worth area, Ms. GRANGER from Texas, who has spent a lot of her career in Congress helping to make sure that our soldiers have the things that they need and supporting them.

Ms. GRANGER. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to rise today to honor a true American hero, who is Chris Kyle, a retired Navy SEAL chief petty officer who was killed in Glen Rose, Texas, on February 2.

Chris Kyle heroically defended his country through four tours of duty in Iraq, where he participated in major battles throughout the country. He was the single deadliest sniper in the history of the United States military. Chief Kyle was shot twice in the fighting and was in six separate IED explosions. However, he never received the Purple Heart because he didn't want to be separated from his unit while the paperwork was being processed.

Chris Kyle fought for his country and saved the lives of many of his fellow Americans, but his accomplishments extended far beyond the battlefield. After 10 years of service as a SEAL, Chris retired from the Navy to focus on his family. He continued to train military personnel and security staff, and he wrote a book documenting his time in combat, which one of the Members talked about. Rather than keep the proceeds from the sale of the book, he donated the money to the families of two fellow SEAL members who had fallen in battle.

On February 2, Chris and his friend Chad Littlefield were tragically killed by a veteran they had sought to help. This act of violence may have taken Mr. Kyle's life, but it doesn't erase the powerful legacy he leaves behind.

Mr. Kyle is survived by his wife and two young children. He lives on through his family, through the lives he saved through his heroism in combat, and through the veterans he helped. He continues to be a source of inspiration to all who know his story.

On February 11, more than 7,000 people from around the country gathered in Cowboy Stadium for Chris Kyle's memorial service. Hundreds more braved bad weather to line roads and highways to honor Chris by watching his funeral procession on the way to the Texas State Cemetery. It was a fitting tribute to a man who touched the lives of so many and who will continue to do so even after his death.

This country owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to Chris Kyle for his selfless service to his country, both on and off the battlefield. His heroism and the heroism of all his fellow veterans will never be forgotten. My thoughts and prayers are with his wife, his children, his family and friends, and especially with his teammates.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I thank the gentlewoman.

As was mentioned, after Chris left the SEAL team, he went to Texas, and they formed a company called Craft International. The CEO of that company is a gentleman by the name of Steven Young, and he sent this email:

> Chris was a true American hero in having devoted his adult life to serving his country in combat as a member of the U.S. Navy SEALs and in training our military and law enforcement personnel after leaving the Navy. Chris was also an extremely devoted family man, a wonderful husband and a loving father. He gave so much of his time to charitable causes that assisted military personnel and their families, and he died while trying to help a struggling servicemember. We are all saddened by his tragic death. America lost one of its finest sons and a true patriot.

I think, again, there is a common theme here. Chris was always doing things for other people. As was mentioned, when someone was involved in a hurricane, Chris was saying, Do I need to go all the way to New York to help you? That was his motto—he was service-oriented.

It is now my pleasure to recognize another great Texan, one of our newer Members of Congress, Mr. BLAKE FARENTHOLD.

Mr. BARTON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. BARTON. You keep saying ''another great Texan.'' That's redundant. If you say ''Texan,'' it's assumed that they're great.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. They're all great. Exactly.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Thank you very much. It's my pleasure to be up here even though it is a very solemn occasion.

I didn't have the honor or privilege of knowing Chief Chris Kyle, but as I've heard my fellow Texans speak of him and as many Americans have gotten to know him through his book, it's just a true testament to the American soldier and to the traditions of our military that Chris, after heroic and valiant service to our country, came back, and instead of just fading, he continued to help his fellow servicemen. The tragedy associated with his death, one of helping another, is heart-wrenching, but it does call to mind that the greatest traditions and values of America are manifested through our service. He was doing just that when he was killed by a fellow veteran he was trying to help.

We in this country and in Congress have worked hard to provide health care, including mental health care, for our veterans. We are growing and expanding that service through the VA now. Just last week, I toured a new VA facility in my hometown of Corpus Christi. It has a large area devoted just to treating some of the psychological problems that many of our veterans come home with after experiencing the horrors of war. It's something that we need to continue to do as a country, and it's something that we need to continue to do as Americans.

Though the result of Chief Kyle's help was tragic, it doesn't diminish our responsibility and our duty to help our fellow Americans, especially our heroes who are suffering, and we can do that in a wide variety of ways. We're doing it, obviously, in Congress in the way Congress does things—we're enacting laws; we're appropriating money; we're doing programs—but helping on a very personal level is something that we need to continue to do, and that is a legacy of Chief Kyle's.

I was reading a Dallas Morning News article this morning about the kind of funeral that he received. There were 200 Patriot Guard Riders accompanying the funeral procession from the memorial service that was held at Cowboy Stadium in Dallas, Texas, to his burial in a place of honor—in the Texas State Cemetery, right in the center of the cemetery. This is just indicative of how we as Texans and how we as Americans feel about our servicemen. They deserve our honor and respect, and I'm proud that Texas and America have turned out for Chris Kyle.

I want to add my and my family's prayers to those of the rest of this Congress for Chris' wife and their children and for the entire Kyle family. We as a Nation have a profound sense of gratitude for our servicemen and -women, both active and retired, and it's our responsibility to care for them when they return home.

□ 1540

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I thank the gentleman. A couple of other emails here. This is from Jeff Staubach:

> He was very appreciative of his friends and family. He never hesitated to thank me for the smallest gestures. We were lucky to have him fighting for us, risking his life for us, and being our friend. About 2 months ago, I emailed him and told him that we needed to go get a beer soon. It was Thanksgiving, then Christmas, then New Year's, SHOT Show. We never pinned down a date. I wish I could grab another beer with him, just to sit back and talk about our kids, what the Cowboys will do this fall, and when we'd go shoot again together.

I imagine what Chris would tell us today, and what Chris knew, because he was putting his life on the line every day, is that every day is precious. Every day is a gift from God, and that we must be a good steward of that day that he gives us. Chris Kyle, the day that he left us, left his house, thought he'd go out and shoot, maybe help this young man, and, unfortunately, actually lost his life doing that.

Mark Spicer, another friend, said:

> I once asked Chris why he chose the SEALS, and he told me it was because he had been told it was the hardest to get into, and that typified the Chris Kyle we all knew. Chris would hit any challenge head on and never flinch from hard work and his unselfish devotion to those around him.

It is now my pleasure to recognize one of our newer members from the Texas delegation, Mr. STEVE STOCKMAN.

Mr. STOCKMAN. Thank you for offering this opportunity to honor a gentleman and a Texan who has demonstrated beyond any belief that he is dedicated to his country. After he served, he could have gone, walked out and done other things. But instead, Chris took it upon himself to have compassion for his fellow soldiers. And in that process, he gave the ultimate sacrifice, his life. He's an American hero, and I offer my deepest sympathy to his wife and his two children. He served our Nation courageously, and served with multiple injuries during four tours of Iraq.

Chris retired in 2009 to spend more time with his family. On top of being a warrior, Chris was a Christian, a son, a husband, and a father. On behalf of myself and my wife, Patty, our hearts go out to Chris' wife and her family. Our Nation will never forget and forever be grateful to Chris' service and for Chris' undying belief in Christ and sharing his testimony. Chris was the kind of humble and kind man who always put the needs of others before himself. Chris continued his passion with his nonprofit, FITCO Cares, which provided inhome fitness equipment to physically and emotionally wounded veterans.

I'd like to say to Chris—which I know he's upstairs listening to us with God and with his Lord—that we are so honored and deeply touched that you gave your entire life for this Nation and that you have set an example for all of us in this House on how to behave. He's an individual, and we say nowadays that we don't have many heroes, but he's a true hero. He's not a pop star. He's not something that is glitter. He did his work and his dedication in silence so that not many people knew until his passing. We all should look to him as a leader and a hero. We're blessed that we had him on the Earth, and one day we'll all see him again.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I thank the gentleman.

Another friend of Chris' said:

> You are the definition of a true American hero, but you are also the definition of a true friend. From the late nights to the early mornings, you could always make me laugh. You have ever changed my life and many others. You will forever be missed, but never forgotten. We miss you, brother. Kevin.

Another friend of Chris' is David Feherty. David has been very involved in the Wounded Warrior program and was a friend of Chris'. An excerpt from his email, and I think he's talking to all of us:

> So think upon this tonight as you lay yourselves down to rest, and be thankful for the life and service of Chris Kyle, whose spirit lives on in the lives of those who were lucky enough to have known that sweethearted, straight-shooting Texas prince. May he rest in peace, and our sorrow turn quickly to happy memories. David Feherty.

It is now my pleasure to recognize a fellow Texan who also served our Nation in the Navy, Mr. OLSON.

Mr. OLSON. I thank my colleague from Lubbock, the 19th Congressional District.

I rise today to pay tribute to a fellow swabbie, a fellow squid, and a fellow sailor, Navy Chief Petty Officer Chris Kyle, an elite retired Navy SEAL who was much more than the sum of his parts. Chris Kyle lived his life the way he died—in defense of our country and helping his fellow man in their time of need.

Assigned to SEAL Team 3, Sniper Element Charlie platoon within the Naval Special Warfare Command, and with over four tours of duty, Chris served in every major battle of Operation Iraqi Freedom. His service and sacrifice on behalf of America is well known.

What is lesser known is his humanity as a devoted husband and a loving father. He was a decorated Navy hero with a bright future ahead of him. He was on track to become a master chief petty officer, maybe even the master chief petty officer for the whole United States Navy, the first time a SEAL would hold that title. But he stepped away from that career to devote his time to a higher priority—to his children and his wife.

He was active in helping sailors and other veterans with their transition back to civilian life. Chris also paired with FITCO Cares Foundation, a nonprofit organization which created the Heroes Project.

FITCO Cares provides free in-home fitness equipment, programs, personal training, and life coaching to any veteran with disabilities, Gold Star families—those are families who lost a loved one in combat—or those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. He was always willing to lend a helping hand.

Today, Texas honors our native son, Chris Kyle. As someone who wore the same uniform, I am deeply proud of his commitment to God, family, and our country. He was an American patriot, a defender of liberty, a husband, and a father. A grateful Nation says good-bye to a man taken from this Earth much too soon.

May God bless Chris Kyle's wife, Taya, his children, his family, and all who loved him. I'm sure that in heaven, Chris Kyle is watching over his family and us.

Chris, I wish you fair winds and following seas.

If Chris were here today, I'd thank him for the gift he gave me and my wife, Nancy. When I took off in my P–3 Orion, I knew that if I were shot down and fortunate enough to survive the crash, Chris Kyle would come get me and take me home from wherever I was in the world, regardless of the challenges. We lost an American hero.

Chris Kyle, I salute you.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. One of the things that Chris liked was he liked law enforcement people. He had a great deal of respect for them, and they knew that, that he had respect for them. What Chris knew was, just like he put himself in harm's way on a daily basis, that our first responders, our policemen and our sheriffs and those State troopers, that they put their lives on the line for our country and for our citizens as well.

This is a letter from Dan Parker. He is a law enforcement officer.

□ 1550

He says:

> I first met Chris in 2010, at a ranch in Texas. I was told just before I would meet him of the truly incredible deeds that he was involved in during the war in Iraq as a soldier and a sniper, and that he was a former SEAL. Being a law enforcement sniper, I was really looking forward to meeting him and was unsure of what to expect.
>
> What I found was a great man who was truly humble, down to Earth, and was a lot of fun to be around. I also found that Chris truly loved his country and that he'd sacrificed much for it and did not consider himself any type of hero, but only doing his job with his God-given talents.
>
> Chris also made it very clear he felt a deep sense of responsibility to help any veteran or law enforcement officer he could.

I now want to recognize Mr. BARTON again for some remarks.

Mr. BARTON. Well, thank you, Congressman NEUGEBAUER. I think we have spent a good bit of our time extolling the virtues and honors of Chris Kyle and the other gentleman who was murdered, Mr. Littlefield.

I want to take a minute to brag on you a little bit. Most people don't have a very high opinion of the U.S. Congress. Luckily, they think higher of their own Congressman.

I think we should acknowledge how hard you've worked to help the family in this time of need, since you knew the family personally. You intervened with the Pentagon if the family wanted to try to bury Kyle at Arlington Cemetery. I know you've personally interacted with the Governor and his staff down in Austin, my staff, obviously, since they're my constituents.

You've gone above and beyond the normal requirements of a Congressman to reach out and help because you feel that commitment personally and professionally, and I want to commend you.

I also want to ask a question that I think you know the answer to. I have heard and read that an education fund has been established for Kyle's children. Is that true?

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I believe that is correct. The gentleman is correct.

Mr. BARTON. So that being the case, it's certainly appropriate to honor the past. But part of his legacy are his children, and I would encourage anyone who wishes to get the address or the email and make a contribution so that the Nation shows its respect for his service by making sure that his children have the education that this country is capable of providing.

I would also encourage anybody who lives near their families to reach out and touch them personally. I plan to go by and see both the widows of the two gentlemen who were killed and see if I can be of personal assistance.

And then the last thing, obviously, we're here to honor somebody who was exceptional, in Chris Kyle. But as we speak, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of Chris Kyles on duty right now, protecting us in Afghanistan and ready to serve and ready to rescue. All of our servicemen and -women, we should thank them when we see them.

We should show their families here at home we support their service, and we should dedicate ourselves today to making sure that our Armed Forces have the best equipment, the best training, and, if necessary, the best rescue operations, and their families get the very best while they're serving

their country, because we're here in freedom because of the Chris Kyles and all that they've done and continue to do.

And, again, I just want to thank you, Congressman, for your effort in this and organizing this and all you have done to try to help the family. You are truly a gentleman and honorable in every sense of the word.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I thank the gentleman.

I want to read a few more of these emails I got. And I'm reading excerpts of them. And one of the things I'm going to do is put all of these in the RECORD so that the kindness that a lot of people have shown, and their love for Chris, can be reflected in our CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

This is from Elizabeth Robinson, and she says:

> I only knew Chris from a little under 3 years, but in that time he stood up for me in one of my most confusing moments, gave me encouragement that helped push me into one of my toughest physical trials, and entertained many a moment in the office with his fun banter and laughs. He was a hero of such a grand scale, but that heroism trickled into the everyday through his shining character that made everyday encounters with him special.

I think that's one of the things about Chris that most of us will miss is Chris's sense of humor. He had a great sense of humor. As I said, he didn't take himself seriously, and his sense of service.

This is from Nathan Kirk:

> I move forward with sadness, but equally with the confidence in knowing that the path to healing is through service to others, as evident by the life of Chris Kyle.
>
> I will never fail you, Chief.
>
> Semper Fi.

This is from Tommy Hicks:

> Chris was a good father, a husband, a friend to many. But through his service to our country in the Navy and after, impacted many others, more than he would ever imagine. He is the man everyone strived to be, a man who every American should want their son to be, a man to whom everyone owes a debt. May his memory be served for generations as a role model to the youth of America.

I'm going to close out our time by reading something that I think exemplifies Chris, and it was a big part of his life, and I think it also says what Chris's code in life was, and that is the Navy SEAL creed. It goes like this:

> In times of war or uncertainty, there is a special breed of warrior ready to answer our Nation's call. A common man with uncommon desire to succeed.
>
> Forged by adversity, he stands alongside America's finest special operation forces to serve his country, the American people, and to protect their way of life.
>
> I am that man.
>
> My Trident is a symbol of honor and heritage. Bestowed upon me by the heroes that have gone before, it embodies the trust of those who I have sworn to protect. By wearing the Trident, I accept the responsibility of my chosen profession and way of life. It is a privilege that I must earn every day.
>
> My loyalty to country and team is beyond reproach. I humbly serve as the guardian of my fellow Americans, always ready to defend those who are unable to defend themselves. I do not advertise the nature of my work, nor do I seek recognition in my acts. I voluntarily accept the inherent hazards of my profession, placing the welfare and the security of others before my own.
>
> I serve with honor on and off the battlefield. The ability to control my emotions and my actions, regardless of circumstance, sets me apart from other men.
>
> Uncompromising integrity is my standard. My character and my honor are my steadfast. My word is my bond.
>
> We expect to lead and to be led. In the absence of orders I will take charge, lead my teammates and accomplish the mission. I will lead by example in all situations.
>
> I will never quit. I persevere and thrive on adversity. My Nation expects me to be physically harder and mentally stronger than my enemies. If knocked down, I will get back up every time. I will draw on every remaining ounce of strength to protect my teammates and to accomplish our mission. I am never out of the fight.
>
> We demand discipline. We expect innovation. The lives of my teammates and the success of our mission depend on me, my technical skill, my tactical proficiency, and my attention to detail. My training is never complete.
>
> We train for war and we fight to win. I stand ready to bring the full spectrum of combat power to bear in order to achieve my mission and the goals established by my country. The execution of my duties will be swift and violent when required, yet guided by the very principles that I serve to defend.
>
> Brave men have fought and died building the proud tradition and feared reputation that I'm bound to uphold. In the worst of conditions, the legacy of my teammates steadies my resolve and silently guides my every deed.
>
> I will not fail.

I think that sums up the life of Chris Kyle.

□ 1600

I will personally miss him, and my thoughts and prayers go out to Taya and the family. We're going to miss Chris. But I think what Chris' friends would say and what Chris would say is: If I made an impact in your life, go out and impact somebody else's life.

May God bless Chris Kyle, may God bless you, and may God bless the United States of America.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Throughout his life, Chris Kyle struggled to put his responsibilities to God, Country, and Family into the proper order. God was always first, but he often debated where Country and Family belonged. But through all of his life, he never once put himself ahead of any of those three things. He personified the best traditions not just of the American military and the SEAL community, but of American citizenship. He was truly a warrior in every facet of life.

There are many ways you can describe Chris—hero, SEAL, father, husband—but I think for most who knew him the most powerful way would be the simplest: Friend.

My friendship with Chris began when I was privileged to work with him on American Sniper, the story of his life and (some) of his heroic exploits. Though perhaps unlikely, the professional relationship between a Texas good ol' boy and a hard-bitten New York native quickly blossomed into a true friendship.

Of my many memories of Chris, perhaps this one sums up the kind of man he was: on the morning of Hurricane Sandy, as I was going out to check on the damage to our house the neighbors, I received a text message from him asking if I was OK and if needed anything. Even though he was over two thousand miles away, I knew that if I asked for help he would have thrown a bag in the back of his pickup and driven up within the hour.

It was that kind of spirit, in everything he did, that made Chris a great warrior, a great SEAL, and a great American. I am grateful to have known him.

—Jim DeFelice

Chris Kyle was a man who set his own standards. He believed in hard work and he believed in generosity. He did not believe in a free ride and he did not believe in taking credit for the work of others. He was gracious in his dealings with the public and expected nothing in return.

Chris Kyle was humble and determined to be the best at whatever he set his heart to do. He clearly set his heart to being the best Navy SEAL he could be. As a warrior, he allowed his heart to harden in the face of adversity in order to do the work necessary to protect his brothers in arms. As a warrior he also made a choice to be a man whose children and wife would know him more as a man than a warrior. He chose to be available for ball games, nighttime prayers and dropping the kids off for school. He tirelessly devoted his time to his community and would not accept payment for anything he did in support of his hometown.

When veterans asked for help, or wanted to meet him, Chris made time for them. When children needed him, he made time for them. The week before he died, his wife was marveling at how he could make time for so many different aspects of his work while making time for his family and still squeezing in time for children and veterans in need. He shrugged and let his simple reply speak volumes about his character, ''Kid and vets, right babe?''. Chris was working hard juggling many different things to make a living for his family. He worked hard mostly because he had already made the decision to give away more money than he had earned in his lifetime in order to support the fallen. ''Kids and vets, right babe?''

Chris Kyle was a man like no other. If we can take away anything from his life it would be: live your dreams, make your family a priority even when you are working hard, be patriotic, and take care of kids and vets.

—Anonymous

Chris Kyle is an America Hero that will be sorely missed by his brothers in arms, the great state of Texas and the entire United States of America. For the last week we have mourned his death but I ask you to take joy in his life. To truly appreciate the time he was here with us. And may we continue Chris's legacy of service unto others and support our wounded veterans and those battling with PTSD. Thank you to everyone for their support and prayers. God bless America.

—Anonymous

Chris was a true American hero having devoted his adult life to serving his country in

combat as a member of the U.S. Navy SEALs and in training our military and law enforcement personnel after leaving the Navy. Chris was also an extremely devoted family man—a wonderful husband and loving father. He gave so much of his time to charitable causes that assisted military personnel and their families and died while trying to help struggling service member. We are all saddened by his tragic death. America lost one of its finest sons and a true patriot.

—Steven Young, Craft International's CEO

I met Chris just a couple weeks after he arrived in Dallas from San Diego in 2009. I remember hearing stories about him and not knowing what to expect. I found him to be a genuine person. He could kick the tar out of just about anyone but that's not what impressed me. It wasn't the stories from Ramadi that impressed me, it was seeing him with his family and his friends. He was very appreciative of his friends and family. He never hesitated to thank me for the smallest of gestures. We were lucky to have him fighting for us, risking his life for us, and being our friend. About two months ago I emailed him and told him we've got to get a beer soon. It was Thanksgiving, then Christmas, then New Years, Shot Show. . .etc. We never could pin down a date. I wish I could grab another beer with him and just sit back to talk about our kids, what the Cowboys will do this fall, and when we were going to shoot together again. I'll miss times like you see in the attached photo, throwing my arm around him with a joking threat to choke him out, jeans, boots, and cold beer.

—Jeff Staubach

Chris Kyle was a normal Texas boy, had a normal education and entered into ranching, considered to me a normal Texas profession, but he was to go on to become anything but normal.

I once asked Chris why he chose the SEALS and he told me it was because he had been told it was the hardest to get into and that typified the Chris Kyle we all knew. Chris would hit any challenge head on and never flinched from hard work and his unselfish devotion to those around him. It was an inspiration to see.

Chris always had a mischievous twinkle in his eye and loved to play pranks, laugh and enjoyed life as I have rarely seen but there was another side to Chris that few saw. Chris never truly cared about how successful he was at his chosen profession, he cared deeply about this country, what it stands for and mostly for the fellow soldiers he believes he couldn't save. Chris agonized over this subject many times and it was never far from his thoughts as he settled back into being a husband, loving father and came to terms with not being the tip of the spear anymore, a subject all professionals struggle over. Chris's answer was to join a fellow sniper and form a company designed to pass on their wealth of experience to those who follow and who now stand in harms way.

—Mark Spicer

Chris, you are the definition of a True American Hero, but you are also the definition of a True friend! From the late nights to the early morning you could always make us laugh! You have for ever changed my life and many others. You will be forever missed but never forgotten!

We miss you Brother!!!!

—Kevin

Everyone fortunate enough to call themselves Americans should mourn the passing of one of our country's greatest sons, Chris Kyle, for he represented everything that is good about our nation and for that matter, our species. The single greatest threat to mankind's survival on this planet is now and always has been the violent intolerance of those whose religious beliefs differ from those of others. Chris Kyle put himself in harms's way in order to defend our basic human right to evolve as a species, from those who consider teaching their children to commit suicide to be part of the same process.

Every time Chris Kyle squeezed his trigger, he served to create a safer environment in which we who choose to be tolerant of others, to be kind to others, and to simply try to do the next right thing can co-exist in peace. Sadly mankind finds itself now at a tipping point which most seem to have chosen to ignore, presumably in the hope that it will just sort itself out without the help of men like Chris Kyle. Well people, go luck to all of us with that one, for without such help and the strength of the armed forces of the United States and her allies our children are surely destined to fall victims to the vilest cruelties of our enemies, who would keep their own people so ignorant that they fear for their own lives daily.

So think upon this tonight as you lay yourselves down to rest, and be thankful for the life and service of Chris Kyle, whose spirit lives on in the lives of those who were lucky enough to have known that sweethearted, straight-shooting Texan prince. May he rest in peace, and our sorrow turn quickly to happy memories.

—David Feherty

A tribute to a true American Hero that I call a friend.

I first met Chris in 2010, at a ranch in Texas. I was told just before I meet him of the truly incredible deeds that he was involved in during the Iraq War as a soldier and sniper and that he was a former SEAL. Being a law enforcement sniper I was really looking forward to the meeting but was unsure of what to expect. What I found was a great man that was very humble, down to earth and a lot of fun to be around. I also found that Chris truly loved this country and had sacrificed much for it and did not consider himself any type of hero but was only doing his job with his God given talents. Chris also made it very clear he felt a deep sense responsibility to help any veteran or law enforcement officer he could.

Chris is gone now due to doing what he felt he had a duty to do. I would like to encourage everyone to keep the memory of Chris Kyle alive and do anything you can to honor him by doing whatever you can to help this countries honored veterans that have given so much and received so little in return. Our veterans are hero's in my eyes and I know Chris felt the same way.

Chris, I will miss you brother and only wish we could have had more time together before the Lord took you home.

—Dan Parker, Texas Law Enforcement Officer

I only knew Chris for a little under 3 years, but in that time he stood up for me in one of my most confusing moments, gave me encouragement that helped push in one of my toughest physical trials, and entertained many a moment in the office with his fun banter and laughs. He was a hero on such a grand scale, but that heroism trickled into the everyday through his shining character that made everyday encounters with him special. Whether he was cranking up the treadmill as I ran, telling me he'd beat up my ex boyfriend for being mean, or telling hilarious stories in the Craft conference room I'll never forget how Chris knew a million different ways to elicit a smile. You'd think meeting such a man as Chris with his reputation and history would make people nervous, but within minutes someone who just met him would be smiling and at ease. Even the times of frustration were colored in such a memorable light by his personality. In a world full of double standards, muddled meaning and confusion, his direct manner was refreshing. I loved being in his presence not because he was a hero or a celebrity, but because he was as genuine a person as you can find today.

—Elizabeth Robinson

After having attended the services yesterday for Chris, I owe him yet another ''thank you.''

The first ''thank you'' is the obvious one that we all owe to him; his military service to the nation in his unrelenting determination to his duties as a SEAL.

The second ''thank you'' is more personal, and that is the ''thank you'' I owe Chris for giving me a chance when he brought me onboard to his company. To me this is very important, as after having not one, but two ''medical discharges'' from the military, both non-combat related and not allowed to carry on with my brothers; I felt like a failure as a man at the resultant outcome of both of my enlistments. Chris looked beyond this and never made me feel less for my limited service versus his own extraordinary accomplishments and provided an opportunity to serve along side of him in a new and noble mission in the service to our military and law enforcement men and women, and treated me with nothing but equality and respect at all times along the way.

The third ''thank you'' is in the honor it was to stand with his family, brother SEALs and friends, and salute this man goodbye. As I walked within the line that followed him off the field, I was overwhelmed by grief with more than just the fact that we all had lost an American Hero, but that we had lost a bright shining example of a truly great human being in terms of compassion, generosity, and selfless service to his family, friends, fellow veterans and a nation.

I move forward with sadness, but equally with the confidence in knowing that the path to healing is through the service to others, as evident by the life of Chris Kyle.

''I will not fail you Chief.''

Semper Fi

—Nathan Kirk Merithew—USMC

I was fortunate to have met Chris when he moved back to Texas in 2009 Chris was immediately a presence in my life. His character and sense of loyalty and duty was something I admired and appreciated. He was great to my family, and role model for me and my brother.

Chris was a good father, husband and friend to many. But through his service to our country in the Navy and after, impacted many others—more than he would ever imagine.

He is the man everyone should strive to be. A man who every American should want their son to be. A man to whom everyone owes a debt. May his memory be served for generations as a role model to the youth of America.

Chief Kyle, thank you for your friendship, your service, and the impact you did have on so many of us. You made Texas, the United States, and the world a better place. We will make sure your legacy lives longer than the rest of us.

—Tommy Hicks

Randy, thank you for pushing this in Congress. As you know, when Chris retired from an 11–yr career on Seal Team 3, he was the most lethal sniper in US military history with 255 confirmed kills (DOD made him take the number down to 150 as the prior US

record holder was Carlos Hathcock or White Feather in Vietnam with 90). You may wish to include these numbers or not but this is for your information. Chris lived with me and my family for 6 months while his wife and kids prepared and sold their home in Coronado California before they moved to Texas. Chris was born in Hamilton, Texas and was essentially back home when this tragedy took place. He became a best-selling author and decided early to donate the proceeds of the book to the 3 families of team members he had lost while on Seal Team 3. Little did he know that it would be his family needing it the most.

On Saturday, February 2, 2013, Chief Chris Kyle (USN), Craft International LLC's President and the author of the best-selling book, American Sniper, and a friend were killed on a gun range in Glen Rose, Texas. Chief Kyle, a former Navy SEAL, served four Combat tours in Operation Iraqi Freedom and elsewhere. For his bravery in battle, he was awarded two Silver Stars, five Bronze Stars with Valor, two Navy and Marine Corp Achievement Medals, and one Navy and Marine Corps Commendation. After retiring from the Navy, Chief Kyle founded Craft International LLC, a military and law enforcement training company, and was involved in numerous charities, including cofounding FITCO Cares Foundation, and other charitable events benefiting wounded and disabled servicemen and women returning from combat.

—J. Kyle Bass

Yesterday, I had the privilege of witnessing the outpouring of support for Chief Petty Officer Chris Kyle as he was escorted to his final resting place in Austin, Texas. 200 miles of support. Patriot Guard Riders leading the way. Thousands of people standing in the cold and rain. Flags flying at every turn. Banners and signs with heartwrenching messages of love and support lining the streets and being hung from freeway overpasses. Veterans raising their arms to salute a hero, their eyes filled with tears, as the procession passed.

The outpouring of support online was no different. Thousands of people from all over the country who wanted to be there, whose hearts ached to be there, gathered as well. Pictures and videos poured in from all along the 200-mile route. As items were posted, people commented and shared and talked about how they were feeling, how they were touched, how they were watching and listening through tears. It was both a heartbreaking and heartwarming journey.

I never knew Chris, but his life affected me in profound ways; ways I almost hesitate to share because they are so deeply personal. Chris was a patriot. Not a fair-weather patriot, a standing up and speaking out for what he believed in, knocked down and dragged through the mud, ''I am never out of the fight'' patriot. His passion for his country and his belief in what he stood for were unshakeable.

I admire Chris, not just for being the warrior he was, but for the man he was. The way he believed in his wife, Taya, when she did not yet believe in herself, and honor his greatest honor was being a father to his two children, is a tribute to the rare, beautiful gift that love is, and the joy it brings to our lives. I love the way he teased he family and friends. The way he reached out to others who were in pain. The way he not just shared, but *lived,* his faith.

I believe Chris represents the best in all of us. He exuded the highest ideals. He believed in his country and in his fellow man. He showed us what we are capable of as, individuals, and more importantly, what we are capable of as a nation. What overwhelmed me most yesterday is still what overwhelms me today, and that is how We Stood Together. We stood together for Chris, but more importantly, we stood together for what he believed in. We stood together for our country and for one another. I will carry that moment with me all the days of my life.

May God bless Chris Kyle, his family, and the United States of America

Thank you.

—Anne M. Stratford, Michigan

With the untimely and unfortunate death of Chris Kyle the world witnessed the coming together of a cross section our Country's people that one never would have placed on the same stage. Military hero's honoring one of their own; family mourning the loss of their rock; a beautiful, smart and strong wife holding it together and providing the stability and comfort for her adoring two young children.

The world has just begun to hear from Chris Kyle. He has made a difference.

God rest his soul and bless his wife Taya and the children.

—Ron Lusk

I want to note how profoundly sad and sorry I am at the passing of a great American, Chris Kyle, just a few days ago. So many of you on my personal list knew him well. For those who didn't, Chris Kyle was many things: America's most accomplished military sniper, a Navy SEAL, and a selfless servant of our nation at war. You may have heard he was murdered in a terrible fashion in my own hometown of Glen Rose, Texas. It was a sad end for a good man, and it recalls to mind the epitaph given by Thucydides:

''The whole earth is the tomb of heroic men: and their story is not graven on their clay, but abides everywhere without visible symbol—woven into the stuff of other men's lives.''

The work of Chris Kyle is indeed ''woven into the stuff of [our] lives,'' as we prosper, live, and love, in the liberty he defended. It is in his memory, and so many others who fought and died before him, that this work, the work of defending freedom, must continue.

Our prayers are with his family and friends.

—Brooke L. Rollins, President and CEO, Texas Public Policy Foundation

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It is not often you see the very best of the United States on display: too often, a problem postponed is considered a problem solved. Yet from time to time the citizens of that nation will do something to remind you of its greatness.

This past Monday afternoon, in Dallas, I can confidently say I did indeed see the very best of the United States on display as I joined seven thousand others to pay tribute to an extraordinary person. As a friend who was also there observed:

I don't think an assemblage of so many bronze and silver stars has ever honour one of their own and while we think of Chris as our friend and our hero, he was truly a hero's hero.

The thing that resonated most with us on Monday afternoon at Cowboys Stadium was not his heroism nor his decorations, it was his personality and his selflessness for his teammates and especially for his children. While I sent out several copies of Chris book, American Sniper, in my November 2012 booklist I did not realize that 100% of the proceeds were going to the families of team members who did not make it back from Iraq.

—James Aitken

TRIBUTE TO CHRIS KYLE

(By Kevin ''Dauber'' Lacz)

Of what is a legend forged?
Is a legend born of a practiced skill or a cold lethality?
Is it bred by tests of physical strength, overcome and surmounted?
Does it exist because of records broken, distances conquered, or kills acumulated?
Is a legend made by numbers in a desert, a tally kept neatly on a papers in an office?
Can a legend be worn like a trident?
No. This is not the stuff of legends.
A legend is made by a man with immeasurable courage and uncommon valor.
It lives in the heart of the bravest of men—a heart the size of Texas.
A legend is forged by a man who would lead when others would follow, would risk gladly his safety if only to serve God, country, and family.
A legend becomes, through the blood of a man shed generously and willingly in defense of the greatest nation on Earth.
A legend grows through a man's unfathomable love for his wife, his son, and his daughter.
A legend spreads as a man's generosity, warmth, and infallible friendship reach out and engulf all those he touches.
A legend endures.
A legend is forever so long as a man's memory lives on in the hearts of his Brothers, his family, and all those who loved him.
A legend lives on.

Chris Kyle's legend lives on in my own heart—the heart of his SEAL Brother, his pupil, and his friend. His legend survives in the memory I keep and pass to my son, as Chris joins the ranks of our nation's finest heroes and warriors. So long as there are men willing to defend the helpless, to hunt down and destroy evil, and to love their God, families, neighbors, and country, Chris Kyle can never die.

Chris, it was an honor to serve with you. It was a greater honor that you called me friend. Your legend lives on in me.

—Kevin ''Dauber'' Lacz

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, on February 2 America lost Naval Chief Petty Officer Christopher Scott Kyle in a tragic shooting.

Chief Kyle was a true Texan who grew up learning the cowboy ways in central Texas. After a riding injury to his arm, his future in the rodeo was lost. Kyle went on to pursue his other dream and joined the military. He served in the Navy for 10 years most notably as a Chief Petty Officer in the Navy SEAL's. Assigned to SEAL team 3 as a sniper, he served 4 tours in "Operation Iraqi Freedom." At the time of his tragic death, he was helping two fellow veterans cope with post-military life as he did with many other veterans.

During his 10 years of service to our country, Chief Kyle earned many awards and decorations. He earned two Silver Stars, five Bronze Stars with Valor, two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, and one Navy and Marine Corps Commendation. Kyle's achievements and ferocity earned not only the respect of his fellow service men and women, but the enemy as well.

On February 12, Chief Petty Officer Chris Kyle was laid to rest at the Texas State Cemetery in Austin, Texas. Thousands lined the streets and highways to pay their respects and honor the service and sacrifice of Chief Kyle as his funeral procession traveled 200 miles from Midlothian to Austin.

On that day, we laid this American hero to rest. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and the many friends of Chief Kyle. He

will forever be remembered as an outstanding sailor, husband, and father. We thank him and his family for their service and sacrifice for our country.

His sacrifice reflects the words of Jesus in John 15:13, ''Greater love hath no man that this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.''

God bless our military men and women, and God bless America.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor an American hero, Chief Petty Officer Chris Kyle.

Eleven days ago, Chief Kyle was taken away from all of us while doing what he did best—helping others, especially fellow veterans.

During his four tours in Iraq, Chief Kyle served in every major battle of Operation Iraqi Freedom. His skill as a sniper became legendary among Americans and insurgents alike. He was given the nickname ''the devil of Ramadi'' by the insurgents and a $20,000 bounty was placed on his head.

By the time Chief Kyle left the Navy in 2009, he had made 160 confirmed kills, more than any other U.S. military sniper in history.

Chief Kyle returned home to Midlothian, Texas in 2009 to be with his wife, Taya Kyle, and their two young children.

Chief Kyle continued protecting his fellow warriors through the creation of the Fitco Cares Foundation, which raised awareness and money to help veterans overcome post-traumatic stress disorder.

In 2012, Chief Kyle's, American Sniper, was published. Though his book became a best seller, he never received money from it. Instead, he used the proceeds for the families of two friends and fellow SEALs.

Most notable of all, Chief Kyle was a man who loved his family deeply, watched over his friends, and did all he could to protect and help those close to him.

I offer my condolences to the family and friends of Chris Kyle and offer the thanks of a grateful nation.

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart after the loss of an American hero. I was saddened last week to learn about the tragic death of Chris Kyle, a former Navy SEAL, decorated Iraq war veteran and valuable member of the North Texas community. Mr. Kyle was a native Texan and received numerous awards and decorations throughout his four tours of duty in Iraq, including two Silver Stars, five Bronze Stars with Valor, and two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals.

Upon his honorable discharge in 2009, Mr. Kyle returned home to North Texas and began focusing his attention on helping other veterans cope with the physical and emotional struggles of life after deployment. Whether he was in combat or in the community, Mr. Kyle was always dedicated to providing support for his fellow service members. His death is truly a significant loss, not only for North Texas, but for the country as a whole. I ask my colleagues to join me in mourning the passing of this selfless American hero and to continue to send thoughts and prayers to his family and loved ones.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of native Texan, Chief Petty Officer Christopher Scott Kyle, a Navy SEAL and a true American hero.

Chris Kyle grew up in Odessa, Texas and as a young child, was taught to shoot by his father. He went on to use those skills in defense of our nation as a SEAL in the U.S. Navy. Chief Kyle served in every major battle of Operation Iraqi Freedom during his four tours in Iraq. During his time in Iraq, he was shot twice and involved in several IED explosions, and was awarded for his distinguished service both the Bronze and Silver Star medals several times.

After being honorably discharged from the Navy in 2009, this devoted family man to wife, Taya, and their two children, settled in Midlothian, Texas to run Craft International, a firm that provides law enforcement training and security protection. Determined to help his fellow soldiers, Chris helped create the Fitco Cares Foundation, which provides support and encouragement to veterans in need.

The untimely death of this American patriot and military hero is a devastating loss—not just for his precious family, but for his fellow veterans, his community and the entire nation. We grieve for his wife, and children, who must go on without his presence. We lament that his good works are left unfinished. And we mourn for the lives who have been robbed of ever knowing him and benefitting from his faith, encouragement, and tenacity.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, my prayers today are with the family and loved ones of Chief Petty Officer Chris Kyle. I was deeply saddened to learn of the tragic shooting of two men, including Chief Petty Officer Kyle, that took place in Erath County, Texas on February 2nd. A Navy SEAL, Chief Petty Officer Kyle earned distinction for his actions in battle during several tours of duty in Iraq, and is renowned as the most lethal sniper in American military history. Chief Petty Officer Kyle—by all accounts, a devoted father and husband—committed his life after serving to assisting his fellow veterans.

I join the citizens of a grateful nation in honoring Chief Petty Officer Kyle and all of our current and former military personnel for their valiant service. As the son, grandson, and brother of veterans, I deeply appreciate the brave men and women who have sacrificed to make our country and the world a better, safer place to live. President Calvin Coolidge once said, ''The nation which forgets its defenders will itself be forgotten.'' I agree, and will do my utmost to make sure that our defenders, such as Chief Petty Officer Kyle, are remembered.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today in honor and in memory of former U.S. Navy SEAL Chris Kyle. Chris was senselessly killed on Saturday, February 2, 2013, along with a fellow veteran at a gun range 50 miles southwest of Fort Worth, Texas.

Chris was a true patriot who served our country with distinction and honor. Born in Odessa, Texas, Chris joined the United States Navy in 1999, after being initially rejected due to an arm injury sustained during his time as a professional bronco rodeo rider. Following his initial training, Kyle was assigned to the illustrious SEAL Team 3, where he participated in every major battle of Operation Iraqi Freedom. For his bravery, he was awarded two Silver Stars, five Bronze Stars with Valor, two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, and one Navy and Marine Corps Commendation. Additionally, Kyle is credited with sniping more than 160 insurgents throughout his four deployments, making him one of the most lethal snipers in the history of the United States military.

After completing his combat duty in 2009, Chris continued to serve not only his country but also the unit he loved so much—the Navy SEALs—as well as fellow veterans of all branches struggling to cope with the effects of serving their country in wartime. Chris authored the Naval Special Warfare Sniper Doctrine—the first Navy SEAL sniper manual—and became chief instructor training Naval Special Warfare Sniper and Counter–Sniper teams. In 2011, Chris paired with FITCO Fitness to establish the FITCO Cares Foundation Heroes Project to help disabled or struggling veterans improve their lives. Chris knew that his experiences as a SEAL and the challenges he faced upon returning home could best be channeled into helping fellow veterans and their families who have given so much to ensure our safety and our freedom.

Sadly, Chris, along with his friend and fellow veteran, Chad Littlefield, died senselessly Saturday while trying to help another fellow veteran. While we may never be able to make sense of this terrible tragedy, today, we remember the sacrifice of these two brave men, who were not only heroic in their defense of this nation, but were also heroic here at home as they attempted to better the lives of their returning comrades.

Chris Kyle was deeply committed to serving both his country and his fellow veterans and will always be remembered as one who placed honor and duty above his own personal interest and safety. I am humbled by his service and dedication to not just the SEALs, but to his country, his fellow veterans, his community, his friends and his family. His sacrifice exemplifies that set forth in John 15:13, ''Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.''

May the peace of God be with those they loved and those who loved them and sustain them through this time of sorrow.

□ 1610

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces, without objection, that the Speaker's appointment of members of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence on February 8, 2013, is made notwithstanding the requirement of clause 11(a)(4)(A) of rule X; and the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to clause 11 of rule X, clause 11 of rule I, and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, and notwithstanding the requirement of clause 11(a)(1)(C) of rule X, of the following Members of the House to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence:

Mr. THOMPSON, California
Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Illinois
Mr. LANGEVIN, Rhode Island
Mr. SCHIFF, California
Mr. GUTIERREZ, Illinois
Mr. PASTOR, Arizona
Mr. HIMES, Connecticut

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 13 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1919

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. NUGENT) at 7 o'clock and 19 minutes p.m.

REGARDING COMPOSITION OF PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that, notwithstanding the requirement of clause 11(a)(1) of rule X, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence be composed of not more than 21 Members, Delegates, or the Resident Commissioner.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces, without objection, the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to clause 11 of rule X, clause 11 of rule I, and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, and notwithstanding the requirement of clause 11(a)(1)(C) of rule X, of the following Member of the House to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence:

Ms. SEWELL, Alabama

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 273, ELIMINATION OF 2013 PAY ADJUSTMENT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. WOODALL, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 113–9) on the resolution (H. Res. 66) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 273) to eliminate the 2013 statutory pay adjustment for Federal employees, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 21 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, February 14, 2013, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

267. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Alpha-Cypermethrin; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2010-0234; FRL-9376-1A] received January 30, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

268. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Styrene-2-Ethylhexyl Acrylate Copolymer; Tolerance Exemption [EPA-HQ-OPP-2012-0456; FRL-9367-2] received January 30, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

269. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Minnesota; Flint Hills Resources Pine Bend [EPA-R05-OAR-2011-0328; FRL-9774-4] received January 30, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

270. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Texas; Beaumont/Port Arthur Ozone Maintenance Plan Revision to Approved Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets [EPA-R06-OAR-2012-0435; FRL-9775-2] received January 30, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

271. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Revisions to the California State Implementation Plan, San Joaquin Valley United Air Pollution Control District [EPA-R09-OAR-2012-0614; FRL-9771-3] received January 30, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

272. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — 2-Pyrrolidone, 1-ethenyl-, polymer with ethenol; Tolerance Exemption [EPA-HQ-OPP-2012-0789; FRL-9376-1] received January 30, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

273. A letter from the Acting Secretary, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's report on Foreign Policy-Based Export Controls for 2013; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

274. A letter from the Acting Secretary, Department of Commerce, transmitting a certification of export to China; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

275. A letter from the Acting Secretary, Department of Commerce, transmitting a certification of export to China; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

276. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Treasury, transmitting as required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Libya that was declared in Executive Order 13566 of February 25, 2011; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

277. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting as required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to transnational criminal organizations that was declared in Executive Order 13581 of July 24, 2011; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

278. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting as required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the former Liberian regime of Charles Taylor that was declared in Executive Order 13348 of July 22, 2004; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

279. A letter from the Honorary Secretary, Foundation of Japanese Honorary Debts, transmitting the 218th petition to the Prime Minister of Japan; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

280. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive, Deputy Chief Acquisition Officer, General Services Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; Free Trade Agreement-Columbia [FAC 2005-65; FAR Case 2012-012; Item III; Docket 2012-0012, Sequence 1] (RIN: 9000-AM24) received January 31, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

281. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive, Deputy Chief Acquisition Officer, General Services Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; Extension of Sunset Date For Protests of Task and Delivery Orders [FAC 2005-65; FAR Case 2012-007; Item II; Docket 2012-0007, Sequence 1] (RIN: 9000-AM26) received January 31, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

282. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive, Deputy Chief Acquisition Officer, General Services Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; Prohibition on Contracting with Inverted Domestic Corporations [FAC 2005-65; FAR Case 2012-013; Item I; Docket 2012-0013, Sequence 1] (RIN: 9000-AM22) received January 31, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

283. A letter from the Senior Procurement Executive, Deputy Chief Acquisition Officer, General Services Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Federal Acquisition Regulation; Federal Acquisition Circular 2005-65; Introduction [Docket: FAR 2013-0076, Sequence 1] received January 31, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

284. A letter from the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's report on the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program, managed by the Office of Justice Programs' National Institute of Justice, pursuant to Public Law 90-351, section 2806(b); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

285. A letter from the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the annual report entitled, ''Prioritizing Resources and Organization for Intellectual Property Act of 2012''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. WOODALL: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 66. Resolution providing

for consideration of the bill (H.R. 273) to eliminate the 2013 statutory pay adjustment for Federal employees, and for other purposes (Rept. 113–9). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. ROGERS of Michigan (for himself and Mr. RUPPERSBERGER):

H.R. 624. A bill to provide for the sharing of certain cyber threat intelligence and cyber threat information between the intelligence community and cybersecurity entities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select).

By Mr. LOBIONDO (for himself and Mr. PALLONE):

H.R. 625. A bill to amend chapter 178 of title 28 of the United States Code to permit during a 4-year period States to enact statutes that exempt from the operation of such chapter, lotteries, sweepstakes, and other betting, gambling, or wagering schemes involving professional and amateur sports; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PALLONE (for himself and Mr. LOBIONDO):

H.R. 626. A bill to amend title 28 of the United States Code to exclude the State of New Jersey from the prohibition on professional and amateur sports gambling to the extent approved by the legislature of the State; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PAULSEN (for himself, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KIND, and Mr. REICHERT):

H.R. 627. A bill to provide for the issuance of coins to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the National Park Service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mrs. NAPOLITANO (for herself, Mr. BARBER, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Ms. CHU, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. COURTNEY, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. HINOJOSA, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Ms. MOORE, Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD, Mr. PASTOR of Arizona, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. PETERS of Michigan, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. RUSH, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. SIRES, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. TONKO, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. VELA, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. WATERS, and Mr. WALZ):

H.R. 628. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to revise and extend projects relating to children and violence to provide access to school-based comprehensive mental health programs; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. SCHAKOWSKY (for herself, Ms. CHU, Ms. CLARKE, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Ms. HAHN, Mr. HONDA, Ms. LEE of California, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MOORE, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. POLIS, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. VARGAS, and Ms. WATERS):

H.R. 629. A bill to provide protections against violence against immigrant women, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Financial Services, and Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. DEFAZIO:

H.R. 630. A bill to recalculate and restore retirement annuity obligations of the United States Postal Service, eliminate the requirement that the United States Postal Service pre-fund the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund, place restrictions on the closure of postal facilities, create incentives for innovation for the United States Postal Service, to maintain levels of postal service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. FLORES (for himself and Mr. TAKANO):

H.R. 631. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide requirements for the contents of the Transition Assistance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PETRI (for himself, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, and Mr. AMODEI):

H.R. 632. A bill to authorize the Department of Labor's voluntary protection program and to expand the program to include more small businesses; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. CHAFFETZ (for himself, Mr. LABRADOR, and Ms. LOFGREN):

H.R. 633. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to eliminate the per-country numerical limitation for employment-based immigrants, to increase the per-country numerical limitation for family-sponsored immigrants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRIMM (for himself, Mr. PETERS of Michigan, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, and Mr. MCINTYRE):

H.R. 634. A bill to provide end user exemptions from certain provisions of the Commodity Exchange Act and the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PEARCE (for himself, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. FORBES, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. HALL, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. FLORES, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. JONES, Mr. GOSAR, and Mr. POSEY):

H.R. 635. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts with community health care providers to improve access to health care for veterans in highly rural areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CONNOLLY (for himself, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. HAHN, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BERA of California, Mr. ISRAEL, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. OWENS, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. MORAN, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Mr. RAHALL, Mrs. BUSTOS, Ms. ESTY, Ms. KUSTER, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, and Mr. PETERS of California):

H.R. 636. A bill to prohibit Members of Congress from receiving any automatic pay adjustments through the end of the One Hundred Thirteenth Congress; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. POE of Texas (for himself and Ms. LOFGREN):

H.R. 637. A bill to provide for a legal framework for the operation of public unmanned aircraft systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. FLEMING (for himself, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. JONES, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. POSEY, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. AMODEI, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. SOUTHERLAND):

H.R. 638. A bill to amend the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 to require that any new national wildlife refuge may not be established except as expressly authorized by statute; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD:

H.R. 639. A bill to reform immigration detention procedures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS:

H.R. 640. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to strengthen student visa background checks and improve the monitoring of foreign students in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. BORDALLO (for herself and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina):

H.R. 641. A bill to amend title 32, United States Code, to codify the National Guard State Partnership Program regarding the funding sources for and purposes of the program and specifying certain limitations on the use of such funding; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BURGESS:

H.R. 642. A bill to make clear that an agency outside of the Department of Health and Human Services may not designate, appoint, or employ special consultants, fellows, or other employees under subsection (f) or (g) of section 207 of the Public Health Service Act; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BURGESS:

H.R. 643. A bill to provide that no Federal or State requirement to increase energy efficient lighting in public buildings shall require a hospital, school, day care center, mental health facility, or nursing home to install or utilize such energy efficient lighting if the lighting contains mercury; to the

Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CARNEY (for himself, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. DENT, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. HOLT, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. RUNYAN, and Ms. SCHWARTZ):

H.R. 644. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a program to build on and help coordinate funding for restoration and protection efforts of the 4-State Delaware River Basin region, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. COHEN (for himself, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. MICHAUD, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. HOLT, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. BASS, Mr. FARR, Mr. HONDA, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas):

H.R. 645. A bill to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to prohibit the use of consumer credit checks against prospective and current employees for the purposes of making adverse employment decisions; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 646. A bill to amend title 11 of the United States Code to provide additional protections for debtors from discrimination by private employers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CRENSHAW (for himself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. RUNYAN, Mr. MICA, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. COOPER, Mr. MORAN, Mr. HARPER, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. SARBANES, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. TONKO, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mr. HOLT, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. MATHESON, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. NUNNELEE, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. WOMACK, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. KING of New York, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. VELA, Mr. WOLF, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. YARMUTH, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. YODER, Mr. ROONEY, Mr. MARCHANT, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Ms. NORTON, Mrs. BACHMANN, Mr. HONDA, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. WELCH, Mr. WALBERG, and Mr. DEUTCH):

H.R. 647. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the tax treatment of ABLE accounts established under State programs for the care of family members with disabilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. DEUTCH:

H.R. 648. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to require the Federal Election Commission to establish and operate a website through which members of the public may view the contents of certain political advertisements, to require the sponsors of such advertisements to furnish the contents of the advertisements to the Commission, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. DEUTCH (for himself, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Mr. CICILLINE, and Mr. LANGEVIN):

H.R. 649. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make improvements in the old-age, survivors, and disability insurance program, to provide for cash relief for years for which annual COLAs do not take effect under certain cash benefit programs, and to provide for Social Security benefit protection; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. EDWARDS (for herself, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Mr. RUSH, Mr. HONDA, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. ENYART, Mr. NADLER, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD):

H.R. 650. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to establish a base minimum wage for tipped employees; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. ELLISON (for himself, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Mr. MORAN):

H.R. 651. A bill to modify provisions of law relating to refugee resettlement, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GOWDY:

H.R. 652. A bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to limit assistance to countries that engage in certain discriminatory religious, educational, or freedom of movement practices; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. AL GREEN of Texas (for himself and Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 653. A bill to direct the Election Assistance Commission to carry out a pilot program under which the Commission shall provide funds to local educational agencies for initiatives to provide voter registration information to secondary school students in the 12th grade; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. HARPER (for himself, Mr. MATHESON, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. JONES, Mr. NUNNELEE, Mr. FORTENBERRY, and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi):

H.R. 654. A bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to reauthorize technical assistance to small public water systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. JOYCE (for himself, Ms. FUDGE, and Ms. KAPTUR):

H.R. 655. A bill to authorize States to use assistance provided under the Hardest Hit Fund program of the Department of the Treasury to demolish blighted structures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. JOYCE (for himself, Ms. FUDGE, and Ms. KAPTUR):

H.R. 656. A bill to provide $4,000,000,000 in new funding through bonding to empower States to undertake significant residential and commercial structure demolition projects in urban and other targeted areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LABRADOR (for himself, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. COSTA, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. SIMPSON, and Mr. WALDEN):

H.R. 657. A bill to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to improve the management of grazing leases and permits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LATTA (for himself, Mr. JORDAN, and Ms. KAPTUR):

H.R. 658. A bill to authorize and request the President to award the Congressional Medal of Honor to Arthur Jibilian for actions behind enemy lines during World War II while a member of the United States Navy and the Office of Strategic Services; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. LATTA (for himself and Mr. PASCRELL):

H.R. 659. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to reform the provisions of law commonly referred to as the ''Hatch Act''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. LEE of California:

H.R. 660. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to create a National Neuromyelitis Optica Consortium to provide grants and coordinate research with respect to the causes of, and risk factors associated with, neuromyelitis optica, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. LEE of California (for herself, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. LOWEY, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. FARR, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. HONDA, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, and Mr. FATTAH):

H.R. 661. A bill to repeal certain impediments to the administration of the firearms laws; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LUETKEMEYER (for himself, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. LATTA, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. LONG, Mr. POSEY, Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. NUGENT, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. KINGSTON, Mr. MCKINLEY, and Mr. STOCKMAN):

H.R. 662. A bill to prohibit United States contributions to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico:

H.R. 663. A bill to adjust the boundary of the Carson National Forest, New Mexico; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. MAFFEI (for himself, Mr. HANNA, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. TONKO, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. MOORE, and Mr. CLAY):

H.R. 664. A bill to establish the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park in Auburn, New York, and the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park in Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot Counties, Maryland, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York (for herself, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Ms. BORDALLO, and Mr. HOLT):

H.R. 665. A bill to allow certain Indonesian citizens to file a motion to reopen their asylum claims; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. MOORE, Mr. BECERRA, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, and Ms. MCCOLLUM):

H.R. 666. A bill to amend the Act of June 18, 1934, to reaffirm the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to take land into trust for Indian tribes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. MCCARTHY of California (for himself, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. HALL, Mr. MCKEON, Mr. JORDAN, and Mr. SCHIFF):

H.R. 667. A bill to redesignate the Dryden Flight Research Center as the Neil A. Armstrong Flight Research Center and the Western Aeronautical Test Range as the Hugh L. Dryden Aeronautical Test Range; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. MESSER (for himself, Mr. YOUNG of Indiana, and Mr. MULVANEY):

H.R. 668. A bill to amend section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, to require that annual budget submissions of the President to Congress provide an estimate of the cost per taxpayer of the deficit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. PALLONE (for himself and Mr. KING of New York):

H.R. 669. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve the health of children and help better understand and enhance awareness about unexpected sudden death in early life; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. PIERLUISI (for himself, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, and Ms. NORTON):

H.R. 670. A bill to amend part B of the title XVIII of the Social Security Act to apply deemed enrollment to residents of Puerto Rico and to provide a special enrollment period and a reduction in the late enrollment penalties for certain residents of Puerto Rico; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. PINGREE of Maine (for herself, Mr. MICHAUD, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. RUSH, Mr. HONDA, Mr. LEWIS, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, and Ms. SHEA-PORTER):

H.R. 671. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the disability compensation evaluation procedure of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for veterans with mental health conditions related to military sexual trauma, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. RAHALL:

H.R. 672. A bill to provide for increased Federal oversight of prescription opioid treatment and assistance to States in reducing opioid abuse, diversion, and deaths; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. LANCE, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. WEBER of Texas, and Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina):

H.R. 673. A bill to continue restrictions against and prohibit diplomatic recognition of the Government of North Korea, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SABLAN (for himself, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. BORDALLO, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, and Mr. MARKEY):

H.R. 674. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating prehistoric, historic, and limestone forest sites on Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, as a unit of the National Park System; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. SCHAKOWSKY:

H.R. 675. A bill to extend protections to part-time workers in the areas of employer-provided health insurance, family and medical leave, and pension plans; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, House Administration, and Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CONYERS (for himself, Mr. NADLER, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. NORTON, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. MOORE, Ms. CHU, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. FARR, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. WELCH, Ms. CLARKE, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. POCAN, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. COHEN, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. CLAY, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. HONDA, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, and Mr. RUSH):

H.R. 676. A bill to provide for comprehensive health insurance coverage for all United States residents, improved health care delivery, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. STIVERS (for himself, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. MOORE, Mr. GIBSON, and Mr. SCHWEIKERT):

H.R. 677. A bill to exempt inter-affiliate swaps from certain regulatory requirements put in place by the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. TIPTON (for himself, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. COSTA, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. LUMMIS, and Mr. COFFMAN):

H.R. 678. A bill to authorize all Bureau of Reclamation conduit facilities for hydropower development under Federal Reclamation law, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. WALZ (for himself, Mr. RUNYAN, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. LATHAM, Mr. MATHESON, and Mr. RAHALL):

H.R. 679. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to recognize the service in the reserve components of certain persons by honoring them with status as veterans under law; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. WILSON of Florida (for herself, Mr. GARAMENDI, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. CHU, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. WATERS, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. RUSH, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. MORAN, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. PETERS of Michigan, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Ms. BASS, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. CONNOLLY, Ms. HAHN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. HOLT, Mr. COOPER, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. GRIMM, Mr. CLAY, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. ROONEY, Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD, Ms. MOORE, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. HONDA, Mr. FATTAH, and Ms. NORTON):

H.R. 680. A bill to require State child welfare agencies to promptly report information on missing or abducted children to law enforcement authorities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WOLF (for himself, Mr. HURT, and Mr. CONNOLLY):

H.R. 681. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that Washington's Birthday be observed on February 22, rather than the third Monday in February, of each year; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. BENTIVOLIO:

H.J. Res. 27. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States prohibiting the Federal Government from using the power of taxation to compel someone to engage in commercial activity; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PALAZZO:

H.J. Res. 28. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to limit the power of Congress to impose a tax on a failure to purchase goods or services; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. CHRISTENSEN:

H. Con. Res. 13. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States Fish and Wildlife Service should incorporate consideration of global warming and sea-level rise into the comprehensive conservation plans for coastal national wildlife refuges, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. GRIMM (for himself, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. WAXMAN, and Mr. ISRAEL):

H. Con. Res. 14. Concurrent resolution permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. BECERRA:

H. Res. 64. A resolution electing Members to certain standing committees of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. ROYCE (for himself and Mr. ENGEL):

H. Res. 65. A resolution condemning the Government of North Korea for its flagrant and repeated violations of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions, for its repeated provocations that threaten international peace and stability, and for its February 12, 2013, test of a nuclear device; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mrs. CHRISTENSEN:

H. Res. 67. A resolution expressing the need to raise awareness and promote capacity building to strategically address the lionfish invasion in the Atlantic Ocean; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mrs. CHRISTENSEN:

H. Res. 68. A resolution expressing support for the goals and ideals of National Marine Awareness Day; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

PRIVATE BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

Mr. UPTON introduced a bill (H.R. 682) for the relief of Ibrahim Parlak; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. ROGERS of Michigan:

H.R. 624.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress to make all laws necessary and proper for executing powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. PALLONE:

H.R. 626.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. PAULSEN:

H.R. 627.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8. ''The Congress shall have Power . . . to coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;''

By Mrs. NAPOLITANO:

H.R. 628.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States; but all duties, imposts and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

By Ms. SCHAKOWSKY:

H.R. 629.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. DEFAZIO:

H.R. 630.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 7 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. FLORES:

H.R. 631.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. PETRI:

H.R. 632.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution

By Mr. CHAFFETZ:

H.R. 633.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clauses 4 and 18 to the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. GRIMM:

H.R. 634.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. PEARCE:

H.R. 635.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution of the United States grants Congress the power to enact this law.

By Mr. CONNOLLY:

H.R. 636.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 8 of Article 1

By Mr. POE of Texas:

H.R. 637.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution

By Mr. FLEMING:

H.R. 638.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority of Congress to enact this legislation is provided by Article 4, Section 3, Clause 2 of the U.S. Constitution, which states ''The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.''

By Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD:

H.R. 639.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. BILIRAKIS:

H.R. 640.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution of the United States, which grants Congress the power to provide for the common Defense of the United States, and Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution of the United States, which provides Congress the power to make ''all Laws which shall be necessary and proper'' for carrying out the constitutional powers vested in the Government of the United States.

By Ms. BORDALLO:

H.R. 641.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, clause 16

By Mr. BURGESS:

H.R. 642.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The attached legislation falls within the authority of Congress to pass legislation related to interstate commerce, an enumerated power given to the legislative branch pursuant to Article I, Section 8, clause 3, which states that Congress shall have the Power . . . ''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.'' Moreover, Congress' authority to pass legislation related to the federal employees hired to carry out laws passed pursuant to an enumerated power is found in the Necessary and Proper Clause, Article I, Section 8, clause 18, which grants Congress the Power ''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. BURGESS:

H.R. 643.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The attached legislation falls within the authority of Congress to pass legislation related to interstate commerce, an enumerated power given to the legislative branch pursuant to Article I, Section 8, clause 3, which states that Congress shall have the Power . . . ''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Mr. CARNEY:

H.R. 644.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 and Article IV, section 3 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 645.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 (relating to the power to regulate foreign and interstate commerce) of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 646.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, clause 4 of the Constitution

By Mr. CRENSHAW:
H.R. 647.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution
By Mr. DEUTCH:
H.R. 648.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 4, Clause 1 of the US Constitution
The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but Congress may at any time make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Place of choosing Senators.
By Mr. DEUTCH:
H.R. 649.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 as interpreted by Steward Machine Company v. Davis and by Helvering v. Davis (''general welfare'' and general taxation).
By Ms. EDWARDS:
H.R. 650.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article. I. Section 1.
All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.
By Mr. ELLISON:
H.R. 651.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 4 of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments.
By Mr. GOWDY:
H.R. 652.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1: ''Congress shall have power to . . . provide for the common defense and general welfare of he United States. . .''
By Mr. AL GREEN of Texas:
H.R. 653.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The Constitutional authority to enact this legislation can be found in:
Commerce Clause (Art. 1 sec. 8 cl. 3)
Necessary and Proper Clause (Art. 1 sec. 8 cl. 18)
By Mr. HARPER:
H.R. 654.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. JOYCE:
H.R. 655.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.
By Mr. JOYCE:
H.R. 656.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, of the United States Constitution.
By Mr. LABRADOR:
H.R. 657.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 4, Section 3, Clause 2
By Mr. LATTA:
H.R. 658.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 13 and 14
The Congress shall have the Power To provide and maintain a Navy; and to make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces.
By Mr. LATTA:
H.R. 659.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Amendment I to the United States Constitution, which states ''Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.
By Ms. LEE of California:
H.R. 660.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.
By Ms. LEE of California:
H.R. 661.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.
By Mr. LUETKEMEYER:
H.R. 662.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The constitutional authority on which this bill is based is Congress's power under the Spending Clause in Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution.
By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico:
H.R. 663.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8
By Mr. MAFFEI:
H.R. 664.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Section 1 and Clause 18 of Section 8 of Article 1 of the United States Constitution.
By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York:
H.R. 665.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 4, which reads: To establish a uniform rule of naturalization, and uniform laws on the subject of bankruptcies throughout the United States.
By Mr. MARKEY:
H.R. 666.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, section 8 and Article IV, section 3 of the Constitution of the United States grant Congress the authority to enact this bill.
By Mr. McCARTHY of California:
H.R. 667.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the Constitution.
By Mr. MESSER:
H.R. 668.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1, which provides that, ''The Congress shall have the Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States,'' and Article 1, Section 9, Clause 7, which provides that, ''No money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time.''
Section 1105(a) of Title 31, United States Code, requires the President to submit to Congress the Administration's annual budget request and stipulates the contents of that submission. It is within the Constitutional Authority of Congress to provide oversight and guidance on these requirements.
By Mr. PALLONE:
H.R. 669.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
The Congress shall have power to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.
By Mr. PIERLUISI:
H.R. 670.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of the Congress to provide for the general welfare of the United States, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution; to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution such power, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution; and to make rules and regulations respecting the U.S. territories, as enumerated in Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the Constitution.
By Ms. PINGREE of Maine:
H.R. 671.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution
By Mr. RAHALL:
H.R. 672.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article I of Constitution
By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN:
H.R. 673.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution
By Mr. SABLAN:
H.R. 674.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Under Article I, section 8, clause 3 and Article IV, section 3, clause 2 of the Constitution.
By Ms. SCHAKOWSKY:
H.R. 675.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8
By Mr. CONYERS:
H.R. 676.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8
By Mr. STIVERS:
H.R. 677.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. TIPTON:

H.R. 678.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, clause 2, U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. WALZ:

H.R. 679.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 14

To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces.

By Ms. WILSON of Florida:

H.R. 680.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

By Mr. WOLF:

H.R. 681.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof.

Mr. UPTON:

H.R. 682.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 4 of the United States Constitution: The Congress shall have Power to establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States.

By Mr. BENTIVOLIO:

H.J. Res. 27.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article. V.

The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress; Provided that no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year One thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth Clauses in the Ninth Section of the first Article; and that no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate.

By Mr. PALAZZO:

H.J. Res. 28.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The legislation would limit the power of Congress to tax as stated in Article 1 Section 8:

The Congress shall have the power to lay and collect taxes''

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added ts public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 11: Mr. RUIZ, Mr. VELA, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. VISCLOSKY, Mr. COOPER, and Mr. CUELLAR.

H.R. 35: Mr. BENISHEK and Mr. GOHMERT.

H.R. 36: Mr. HECK of Nevada, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. LONG, Mr. WALDEN, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, and Mr. MARCHANT.

H.R. 45: Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. BARR, and Mr. BROUN of Georgia.

H.R. 54: Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 89: Mr. SABLAN.

H.R. 107: Mr. NUNNELEE.

H.R. 129: Ms. SLAUGHTER and Mrs. DAVIS of California.

H.R. 147: Mr. BARR.

H.R. 149: Mr. GOODLATTE.

H.R. 163: Mr. PETERS of Michigan.

H.R. 164: Mr. AMODEI, Mr. BENTIVOLIO, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. WITTMAN, and Mr. POSEY.

H.R. 176: Mrs. ROBY

H.R. 180: Mr. LOBIONDO.

H.R. 183: Mr. BUCSHON.

H.R. 185: Mr. HINOJOSA and Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas.

H.R. 227: Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD and Mr. GUTIERREZ.

H.R. 239: Mr. YOUNG of Indiana, Mr. RIBBLE, and Mr. WITTMAN.

H.R. 258: Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. BUCHANAN, and Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 261: Mr. CICILLINE.

H.R. 262: Ms. HAHN.

H.R. 273: Mr. MCCLINTOCK.

H.R. 282: Mr. GARDNER, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. BENTIVOLIO, Mr. COLE, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. LAMBORN, and Mr. LAMALFA.

H.R. 301: Mr. BRIDENSTINE and Mr. POE of Texas.

H.R. 320: Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. WATERS, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. MICHAUD, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. HINOJOSA, and Mr. SIRES.

H.R. 332: Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. COURTNEY, and Ms. BONAMICI.

H.R. 333: Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. COHEN, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. NUGENT, Mr. BACHUS, and Mr. LOBIONDO.

H.R. 334: Mr. LUCAS.

H.R. 366: Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. SCHOCK, Mr. RUNYAN, Mr. OWENS, Mr. TIPTON, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. PETERS of Michigan, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. ROSS, Mr. KLINE, Ms. TITUS, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, and Mr. BARLETTA.

H.R. 370: Mr. NUNNELEE.

H.R. 383: Mr. SCHRADER and Mr. YOHO.

H.R. 404: Mr. VAN HOLLEN and Ms. BASS.

H.R. 411: Ms. LEE of California, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, and Mr. JONES.

H.R. 427: Mr. FARR, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. ELLISON, and Mr. POCAN.

H.R. 445: Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. MCKINLEY, Ms. SCHWARTZ, and Mr. MARINO.

H.R. 460: Mr. DEUTCH and Mr. HOLT.

H.R. 483: Mr. BARR, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. ELLMERS, Mr. PITTS, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. YODER, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, and Mr. JOYCE.

H.R. 492: Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. GOSAR, and Mr. BUCSHON.

H.R. 497: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 501: Mr. MORAN and Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.

H.R. 512: Ms. NORTON, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 518: Mr. POCAN, Ms. MCCOLLUM, and Ms. BROWNLEY of California.

H.R. 519: Ms. DELAURO, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. TONKO, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. FARR, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. PASCRELL, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. MICHAUD, and Ms. CHU.

H.R. 523: Mr. AMODEI and Mr. WITTMAN.

H.R. 540: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio and Mr. RANGEL.

H.R. 543: Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. RIBBLE, and Mr. MAFFEI.

H.R. 557: Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. WALDEN, Mr. NUNNELEE, and Mr. GOSAR.

H.R. 569: Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. HANNA, Mr. MICHAUD, and Mr. JONES.

H.R. 570: Mr. LOBIONDO.

H.R. 574: Mr. TONKO, Mr. ENYART, and Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia.

H.R. 578: Mr. LUCAS and Mr. PALAZZO.

H.R. 580: Mr. COLE and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.

H.R. 581: Mr. TIBERI.

H.R. 582: Mr. JORDAN, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. GOSAR, and Mr. SENSENBRENNER.

H.R. 607: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. MCKEON, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. WITTMAN.

H.R. 609: Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California and Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 612: Mr. WESTMORELAND.

H.R. 621: Mr. OLSON.

H.J. Res. 25: Mr. POCAN.

H.J. Res. 26: Mr. MASSIE.

H. Res. 19: Mrs. LOWEY and Ms. HAHN.

H. Res. 30: Mr. NADLER, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CLAY, Mr. VELA, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Ms. DEGETTE, and Mr. WELCH.

H. Res. 47: Mr. HONDA and Mr. HOLT.