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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER. 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, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

HONORING INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, today, December 10, is International Human Rights Day. Sixty-five years ago in 1948 the first 58 members of the United Nations, fresh from the wounds and memories of World War II, adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They put aside profound disagreements about their political, economic, and social ideologies, their cultural and their religious differences.

Together they created a document remarkable for its breadth of human rights protections and outlined a bold vision of a world built on the premise that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." The Universal Declaration articulated mankind's greatest aspirations to respect and protect the dignity of every person, regardless of his or her race, ethnicity, beliefs, or social standing.

The Universal Declaration became the cornerstone for developing international standards for the protection of human rights and helped inform the

moral and legal basis for legislative action here in Congress. I am privileged to be the cochair of the bipartisan Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, dedicated to promoting human rights and educating our congressional colleagues on the importance of standing up for human rights.

Through hearings and initiatives, we have focused on some of the most critical human rights challenges around the world. This year we began the Defending Freedoms Project, where Members of Congress can adopt prisoners of conscience. I congratulate those Members who have adopted prisoners and boldly advocated for their release. I invite all my colleagues to join the Commission in its Defending Freedoms Project.

As my colleagues are aware, the U.S. Congress has a long history of standing up for the disenfranchised and the abused. It has stood on the side of immigrants and championed the rights of those whose governments forbid them to emigrate. It has worked on behalf of the disappeared and tortured in Chile and the gulags of the former Soviet Union. It has stood up for the rights of workers, journalists, and other human rights defenders. I hope this Congress and future Congresses will not abandon that history, but will continue to stand up for the rights of the disenfranchised, not just abroad but right here at home.

Along with my colleague FRANK WOLF, I am proud to carry on the tradition as the bipartisan sponsors of the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act, which Congress approved last year and the President signed into law. The Magnitsky Act responds to the ongoing pattern of brutality against those speaking out for truth and justice in Russia. It bans U.S. visas and freezes the assets of some of Russia's gross violators of human rights, and affirms our commitment to safeguarding human rights and fighting impunity regardless of where such transgressions occur.

In an increasingly interconnected world, the Universal Declaration challenges us to place our commitment to human rights firmly and uncompromisingly at the center of our foreign policy. Too often we fail this test. For example, despite China's relentless crackdown on the Tibetan people, we continue business as usual with China. The toll of this oppression on human dignity is seen in 19 self-immolations—Tibetans' desperate protest against China's policies and an appeal to the world for action.

The Universal Declaration also demands that we press our friends and allies when they are responsible for human rights abuses. In Bahrain, since the 2011 uprising, we have seen reports of torture, multiple cases of forced confession, and the unjust prosecution of medical personnel. Peaceful political and human rights leaders have been arbitrarily jailed to the detriment of political reform and stability. Instead of leveraging our good relations with Bahrain to achieve greater respect for human rights, we have chosen to renew military sales and abandon our past demands for increased human rights protections.

Finally, International Human Rights Day reminds us to recommit to respecting human rights in our own Nation. We must eliminate torture in all our policies. We must work harder to prevent human trafficking on our own soil, and we must protect and advance such basic rights as access to adequate food, a fundamental human right under article 25 of the Universal Declaration. Forty-eight million Americans, including 16 million children, don't have enough to eat in this country. Yet in September, we saw devastating cuts to our SNAP program, with maybe even more on the way in the final version of the farm bill. The Universal Declaration and our own American values demand that we do better.

With the passing of one of the greatest champions of human rights, Nelson

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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