

Honor recipient Milton A. Lee today. Earlier this year, I introduced H.R. 2559, which designates a portion of Interstate Highway 10 in Boerne, Texas, as PFC Milton A. Lee Medal of Honor Memorial Highway.

PFC Lee was born on February 28, 1949, in Shreveport, Louisiana. While he was not born in Texas, Lee entered the Army in San Antonio, served honorably in the Vietnam war, and was laid to rest at Fort Sam Houston, which is located in my district.

□ 1615

PFC Lee served as a radio telephone operator with the 3rd Platoon, Company B, during an intense, surprise hostile attack by North Vietnamese army fighters. The 3rd Platoon maneuvered to a position of cover to treat their wounded and reorganize. Meanwhile, PFC Lee moved through the heavy enemy fire to give lifesaving first aid to his wounded fellow soldiers. During the subsequent assault, PFC Lee continuously kept close radio contact with the company commander and relayed precise and understandable information to his platoon leader.

While advancing toward the objective, PFC Lee observed four North Vietnamese soldiers with automatic weapons and a rocket launcher lying in wait for his platoon. PFC Lee immediately, and with great risk to his own personal safety, passed his radio to another soldier and charged through the barrage of fire. Without hesitation, he continued his attack and successfully overran the enemy position, killing all occupants and capturing four automatic weapons and a rocket launcher.

PFC Lee continued his one-man assault on another enemy position through a heavy barrage of enemy automatic weapons fire. Although wounded, he continued to press the attack and crawled forward into a firing position to deliver accurate cover fire for his platoon. This enabled his platoon to maneuver and destroy the enemy position. Not until the position was overrun did PFC Lee falter in his steady volume of fire and succumb to his wounds.

PFC Lee's heroic actions saved the lives of many in his platoon and were instrumental in the destruction of a key position of the enemy's defense. PFC Lee's gallantry at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty epitomizes the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit on himself, the 502nd Infantry, and the U.S. Army.

So today, I urge my colleagues to support this bill in honor of an American hero. In giving his life for our country in such a selfless and heroic fashion, PFC Lee is deserving of our naming a portion of a Federal highway in his honor.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to urge my col-

leagues to support this bill. I think what we are trying to do here is very fitting.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2559.

The question was taken.

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

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URGING IRAN TO RELEASE ALL  
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DISAPPEARED WITHIN ITS BOR-  
DERS

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 233) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Iran should immediately release the three United States citizens that it holds, as well as provide all known information on any United States citizens that have disappeared within its borders.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 233

Whereas three United States citizens have been held captive in Iran, some of them for multiple years;

Whereas one United States citizen disappeared in Iran over eight years ago; and

Whereas Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has stated that his government wishes to engage in a constructive interaction with the world: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that Iran should release all detained United States citizens immediately and provide any information it possesses regarding any United States citizens that have disappeared within its borders.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this resolution.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, today, we consider H. Res. 233, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Iran should immediately release all detained U.S. citizens as well as provide all known information on any U.S. citizens who have disappeared within the borders of Iran.

As always, I appreciate the support of the ranking member, Mr. ENGEL of New York, in bringing this resolution to the floor. I also want to acknowledge the author of this measure, Congressman KILDEE of Michigan, as well as those Members who continue to stress how important it is that this body speak out on this issue. These citizens need to be allowed to come home now. They are U.S. citizens.

In particular, I want to thank Mr. DEUTCH, who is with us here today, who is a senior member of our committee. He has been consistently focused for many years on the case of his missing constituent.

Two weeks ago, the Foreign Affairs Committee held a hearing at which the family members of four Americans—three in prison and one missing in Iran for 8 years—testified. This was the first time all four of the families came together for such a hearing. We heard and saw the excruciating pain that they are living with day in and day out, not knowing if and when they will see their husband, their father, or their brother again. Each of these tragic cases underscores the complete lack of justice and, frankly, the brutal treatment that these Americans have faced in Iran.

Jason Rezaian is a journalist who was born and raised in California. He had hoped to use his position at The Washington Post to present a greater understanding of the Iranian people. Instead, he has been arrested on trumped-up charges and has been held for over 300 days at the infamous Evin Prison. Last week, a second closed hearing in his trial was held, which, like all other aspects of his case, was shrouded in secrecy.

In September of 2012, Iran arrested and later sentenced Pastor Saeed Abedini to 8 years in prison for gathering with others to study the Bible, which, as his wife told the committee, is, in fact, a lawful act, even under Iranian law, but one which the regime deemed a threat to national security. In jail, his guards have attempted to coerce him and torture him to get him to renounce his faith, telling him that otherwise he will serve an even longer time.

In August of 2011, Amir Hekmati, who is a former United States marine, was sentenced to death for alleged espionage. This is someone who went to visit his grandparents. Upon appeal, his sentence was reduced, by the way, to 10 years. As his sister described to the committee, her family was told by Iranian officials not to go public with Amir's imprisonment or he would be put in even greater danger. Well, as she described to us through tears, despite

their silence, Amir suffered extensive and repeated torture: beaten on his feet with cables and tasered repeatedly in the kidneys. At home, his father is gravely ill. But locked up, Amir can't travel back to see his father.

In 2007, Robert Levinson went missing on Iran's Kish Island. Eight years later, Iran continues to refuse to assist the United States in locating him. As his son testified, his father is now the longest held hostage in American history.

Mr. Speaker, the House stands in solidarity with each of these families. Our hearts break for them, and we share their anger and frustration at the desperate position they are facing.

As we approach the deadline for negotiations on a nuclear agreement with Iran—one that, no matter the terms, will require us to have at least some trust in the regime—I have to ask the question: What do these four cases say about the regime we are dealing with? If a journalist can be suddenly imprisoned on bogus charges, what treatment can international inspectors expect?

But more fundamentally, if top Iranian officials can't be counted on to assist these wrongfully jailed American citizens, can they be counted on to honor the commitments they make at the negotiating table?

This, by the way, is why verification is such an important part of an agreement. But on the question of whether they can be counted on, call me a skeptic.

I also have to ask why the administration, on the brink of striking a deal in which we would give the Iranians tens of billions of dollars in sanctions relief, is failing here.

The bottom line expressed in this resolution today is that these four Americans must be allowed home now, and that is a sentiment that all of us can support.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of H. Res. 233, calling for the release of Americans held or missing in Iran.

First of all, I want to associate my feelings with the remarks of our chairman, Congressman ROYCE. I think he hit the nail right on the head several times with his statement. I agree with every word he uttered.

It is just ludicrous that at a time where we are weeks away from ostensibly completing an agreement with Iran, that our hostages—I can't think of any other word for them—are being treated so shabbily by the Iranian regime. As far as I am concerned, it casts a pall on any potential agreement that we have with Iran on June 30. If this is the way they are treating Americans, how can we rely on them or count on them to fulfill their obligations under any agreement we sign with them?

It is just ludicrous that here we are at the eleventh hour. You would think the Iranian regime would want to start acting favorably so that we in Congress

might favorably look upon any deal that could be reached. Instead, they are continuing their old ways and doing just the opposite. It just doesn't make any sense. It doesn't help us to trust them, it doesn't help us to believe them, and it only furthers all the things that we have seen and heard and questioned about this rogue regime in Tehran.

I want to thank Representative KILDEE for authoring this resolution. He has been a champion for these four Americans and their families. As I said at our hearing, he has been unrelenting in terms of fighting for his constituent and for the others who are held in Iranian prisons.

Representative DEUTCH, the ranking member of the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, who also has a constituent who is a hostage, has also been very vociferous. And Representative HUFFMAN is always talking to us about these issues and always looking to free all these Americans in prison. Also Representative LABRADOR, and Representative KILDEE has assured that these Americans are not forgotten in Congress.

As was mentioned, 2 weeks ago, our committee heard from the Hekmati, Rezaian, Levinson, and Abedini families. Their stories were heartbreaking, their pleas heartfelt, and as they made clear in their testimony, their cause is our cause. It is America's cause.

We are a few weeks away, as I said before, from an important deadline in the Iranian nuclear talks. It is ridiculous that our citizens languish in Iranian jails while we negotiate. At the same time, as the families of the Americans point out, these negotiations have given us the only opportunity to directly raise the cases of the four Americans with the Iranian Government, and we are assured by the administration that at every instance they raise these cases with the Iranian Government.

I am happy they raise the cases. I am grateful that they raise these cases. But, of course, if we don't get these people home, it is all for naught. I cannot imagine having an agreement with Iran that doesn't take into account these people, that doesn't release these people. It would just be a dereliction of our duties and responsibility to have an agreement with Iran while not bargaining or getting the freedom of these people. We don't want these people used as a bargaining chip, but on the other hand, we don't want these people to remain in jail after there is some kind of an agreement with Iran.

I wish we knew more about the conditions of these four Americans, but in these cases, Iran isn't playing by the rules once again. Typically, if an American were detained in Iran, Switzerland, the U.S. "protecting power" in Iran, would have access to them for consular services. It is not the case here.

In the cases of these three Iranian Americans, Iran doesn't even acknowl-

edge their dual citizenship—only their Iranian citizenship. This position runs roughshod over long-established international law.

□ 1630

Without consular access, we cannot judge the health and welfare of our own American citizens. This is unacceptable. The United States respects this access for Iranian citizens held here. Reciprocal privileges are the least they could provide.

Sadly, Mr. DEUTCH's constituent—Robert Levinson's whereabouts are unknown. I simply don't believe the Iranians have been forthcoming at all about his status. If he is, indeed, still a hostage, he is now the longest held hostage in American history. We shouldn't stand for this. We shouldn't sit still while this continues.

I will weigh the nuclear deal carefully when it comes to us, but Iran's leaders could send the American people a gesture of goodwill by providing more information about Robert Levinson and by freeing Saeed Abedini, Amir Hekmati, and Jason Rezaian.

By the way, Mr. Rezaian is the bureau chief, the Tehran bureau chief of The Washington Post, unbelievable that he would be arrested for espionage, ludicrous, ridiculous.

This is a concern all of us share. It doesn't matter where you come from in this country or what your political affiliation is. These are Americans, and we all want to see these four Americans come home safely to their families.

I applaud this resolution, urge my colleagues to support it, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, Mr. ENGEL has shared with you that the government in Iran refuses to recognize the U.S. nationality for Jason Rezaian. Jason was born in California. He was born a U.S. citizen here in the United States, raised in California; and their position is that, no, he is an Iranian citizen.

He was over there to see his grandmother. No, he was over there reporting because he wanted to get an opportunity for greater understanding of the citizens in Iran.

The fact that we allow a situation like this to stand, when American citizens are being held like this and subjected to show trials, is appalling.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, and a longtime critic of the human rights abuses that have occurred in Iran.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank our distinguished chairman and thank both he and ELIOT ENGEL for the leadership that they have both shown.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for keeping that focus on all issues related to Iran and for doing it so effectively, including and especially the

human rights abuses that are occurring there each and every day.

Mr. Speaker, the most important duty of the President of the United States is to keep Americans safe from harm, whether they are at home or abroad. Three innocent Americans continue to be brutalized in Iran prisons and trapped in a system of sham trials. A fourth American, another innocent man, has been missing from Iran for more than 8 years and presumed to also be imprisoned in that country.

When Americans have been hostages in foreign lands or on foreign seas, Presidents from both parties have prioritized their rescue, sometimes even asking the finest from our fighting forces to risk their lives to save them.

It is an important question why the President has failed to make the release of our fellow Americans his top priority with the Iranian regime. How often have we heard the administration speak out, pressure being put to bear on the Iranian regime, even as the talks continue on the nuclear issue?

It seems to me I will never forget when Nagameh Abedini came and testified at one of Frank Wolf's hearings. She said they told her there was nothing they could do for her husband at the U.S. Department of State.

Thankfully, a call to John Kerry by Mr. Wolf, chairman of the Lantos committee at the time, did yield fruit; and they did begin to raise his name and his calls.

The President seems to think, however, that the Iranian regime can be trusted to keep a nuclear deal and no longer seek to develop and make nuclear weapons. I would suggest that a regime that continues to imprison our fellow citizens cannot be trusted.

A regime that so regularly and violently violates human rights and basic freedoms of its own people cannot be trusted. A regime that sponsors terrorism against other countries as a tool of foreign policy cannot be trusted.

H. Res. 233 makes very clear that Iran should release all detained U.S. citizens immediately and provide any information it possesses regarding any United States citizens that have disappeared within its borders.

Mr. Speaker, we must remember the husbands and fathers, sons and daughters, the families, in addition to those who are being exploited and cruelly mistreated.

I want to thank Chairman ROYCE for the hearing that he just convened a few days ago. We heard from the family members. Their plea was impassioned. It was heartbreaking, and it was very, very motivating.

Imprisoned since 2012, Pastor Abedini, 35 years old, husband of Nagameh Abedini—who testified several times before my subcommittee and has been an extraordinary champion for his release—father of two children, he had returned to Iran to build an orphanage. He had gotten prior

clearance, told that he could do it. Once he was there, they arrested him, and they have mistreated him ever since then.

Imprisoned since 2012, Amir Hekmati, 31 years old, a former sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps. He had returned to Iran to visit his grandmother and other relatives. They scooped him up, and he has been mistreated ever since.

Imprisoned since 2011, Jason Rezaian, 39 years old, Tehran's bureau chief for The Washington Post, a reporter who publishes what is going on in that regime, he now is facing a trial, a show trial, a sham trial.

Imprisoned since 2014, Robert Levinson, 67 years old, husband, father, grandfather, he has been missing in Iran since the year 2007.

Mr. Speaker, Pastor Abedini, Mr. Hekmati, Mr. Rezaian, and Mr. LEVINSON are all Americans, and they are being, right today, subjected to abuse and cruelty. They are all prisoners or missing in Iran.

We call on the administration to re-triple its efforts to secure their release.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), who has been the staunchest supporter of getting these people free, who has raised this issue so many times, and who is the author of this resolution.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking Chairman ROYCE for his efforts on this resolution and my friend Ranking Member ENGEL, as well, for his efforts, along with the 201 Members of this body who have cosponsored this, most particularly Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. HUFFMAN, and Mr. LABRADOR, who have worked with me and my staff in preparing this resolution.

I want to speak briefly about Amir Hekmati, my constituent, a young man who is an American citizen, born in the United States, raised in my hometown of Flint, Michigan, served in the United States Marine Corps. He is a brother; he is a son; he is a Michigander.

Back in 2011, for the first time, he traveled to Iran to visit his grandmother, as has been said. He notified the Iranian Government that he was going to Iran. He traveled under his own name. He disclosed his history as a member of the United States Marine Corps.

He was in Iran for almost 3 weeks when he was apprehended. Initially tried and convicted and sentenced to death for espionage, that sentence was later set aside, but he continues to languish in Evin Prison, serving a 10-year sentence.

I want the world to know about Amir. I want people to know his name, just as we want the world to know the names of Jason Rezaian, Saeed Abedini, and Bob Levinson. These are real people. Amir is a real person. He grew up in my hometown of Flint, like me, played high school hockey.

It is important that we remember these names. These are individuals.

They are not just pawns in a geopolitical struggle between Iran and the rest of the world. They are individuals. They are people. They have families. They feel pain. They suffer.

Amir Hekmati has been in Evin Prison for 1,386 days. It is long past time for him to be reunited with his family. He has committed no crime; yet he continues to sit in that prison, in a dark cell.

If Iran is serious about rejoining the community of nations, about being a member of the international community, they will release—immediately release—Amir Hekmati and the other Americans that they hold.

That is why it is so important that this House pass this resolution and speak for the American people with one voice. We have lots of disagreements in this place.

There should be no question here in the United States, across the world, but especially within the Iranian Government and among the Iranian people, there should be no question that this body, this House of Representatives, which often disagrees, has no disagreement on the question of these Americans.

If Iran wants to be taken seriously, if anything they do, if any engagement that they have with the world, whether it is a nuclear agreement or economic engagement, if any of that is to be legitimate, they cannot hold political prisoners; and they need to take action to release Amir Hekmati and the other Americans that they hold.

Now, the fact that the P5+1 negotiations are underway does give us space for something that we haven't had in 35 years, and that is bilateral discussion on the sidelines of those nuclear agreements, but while it does provide the moment, there is one point that I do want to make, and others have spoken to this.

It is difficult to imagine taking any agreement with them seriously as long as Iran holds these Americans, but it is also important that we keep in mind that we never want to be in a position where, as part of a transaction with Iran, we exchange the freedom of these Americans for a concession at the nuclear negotiating table, a concession that may make the world a less safe place.

We don't want that, and I know that Amir Hekmati, through his family, has communicated to us that he does not want to be exchanged for anything.

I think it is fair, as Members have said, that Congress considers all of Iran's behavior when considering any engagement with them, whether it is a nuclear agreement or anything else.

When I have spoken to the President and the Vice President or Wendy Sherman or Samantha Power, our U.N. representative, I have made it clear to them that, while it is important that we get our Americans home, we don't want to see the world become a less safe place in exchange for the freedom of innocent people. They have agreed

with that, and they have shared that with the Iranian Government at every opportunity.

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. KILDEE. I thank my friend.

Simple point, Congress, today, will speak with one voice and say to the Iranian people, say to the world, that these Americans—this resolution will say, with absolute clarity, that if Iran expects to be treated as a member of the international community, they will unilaterally release these Americans.

It would advance their cause, presumably, of joining the global community. It would send a strong message to the rest of the world and to the United States and to this Congress that they can and should be taken seriously, but it is very difficult to imagine doing that if they continue to hold Amir Hekmati and the other Americans they hold.

I just want to reiterate my gratitude to Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL and the whole committee, the Foreign Affairs Committee, and the whole House for their support of this. The families of these individuals, I know, appreciate it very deeply, and I do as well.

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN), a Member who has also been fighting for his constituent, who has brought this issue up with us so many times, who has been unyielding in trying to get freedom for all the hostages.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I do want to start by thanking Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for moving this bill forward; and a huge thanks to my great colleague from Michigan, Representative KILDEE, he has been described as tireless and courageous and relentless. He is all of that and more in working to highlight the injustice that these American detainees are facing in Iran.

□ 1645

One of these detainees, Jason Rezaian, has been mentioned as having grown up in California. He actually grew up in my district. I have gotten to know his family. And in some way, I feel like I have gotten to know Jason—at least a little bit—through this tragic situation. So I know something about the terrible hardship that he and his family have been going through for this past year.

It is with that unconscionable level of hardship in mind that I am proud to join with my colleagues in working to make sure that Congress does everything that it can to secure Jason's safe release and also the safe release of these other unjustly detained Americans.

Passing this resolution on a bipartisan basis is one of the most impor-

tant things that we can do to reaffirm to the Iranian regime that the whole world is watching.

Jason Rezaian was The Washington Post Tehran bureau chief when he was arrested in Tehran on July 22 last year. He has now been held twice as long as any previous western journalist in Iran.

The circumstances under which he has been held are an absolute mockery of justice. There has never been any evidence brought against him. For 9 months, there were no charges brought against him publicly. Jason was denied the most basic rights: denied access to a lawyer for months, denied bail after he was charged, and held in solitary confinement after his investigation ended.

Jason's family members and his fellow journalists have been fierce advocates for his freedom. I hope that the passage of this resolution today will make the sentiment of Congress very clear: that Iran should immediately release Jason Rezaian and the other detained Americans.

Whatever issues or disagreements that we may have about broader issues involving Iran, it is important that we are able to speak today with one voice for the Americans who are unjustly detained and for their families. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I will continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is now my great pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH), one of the senior members of our Foreign Affairs Committee, the ranking member on the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, and someone whom I turn to very often for advice and counsel, who has been a clear and effective voice in trying to bring our hostages home.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the ranking member, for yielding. I thank the chairman. I especially went to thank my friend and colleague from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) for spearheading this resolution and for his tireless efforts to bring back his constituent. And I want to thank the fellow original cosponsors, Mr. HUFFMAN and Mr. LABRADOR.

Each of us here has the solemn responsibility to represent the families of these American citizens—in this case, our constituents who are missing or held in Iran. Each of us has seen the suffering of these families firsthand. We have also seen a remarkable strength of purpose as they live this real-life nightmare and do everything they can to bring their loved ones home.

For the family of Robert Levinson, my constituent, 8 years is 8 years too long not to have their husband, their father, and their grandfather home.

Bob Levinson went missing on Iran's Kish Island on March 9, 2007. Since his disappearance, the Levinson family has received proof of life in the form of pic-

tures and videos. Iran's leaders have never provided any information about Bob's disappearance, despite repeated pledges to aid in the investigation.

As negotiations with Iran have taken place over the past year and a half, many of us have doubts about the ability to trust Iran to follow through on the terms of any nuclear deal. We distrust because we have seen this regime time and again lie to the international community, support the world's worst actors and terrorists, destabilize the region, deny history, and chant "death to America." So if Iran wants to be taken seriously by the international community, then it must start by dropping the bogus charges and releasing Amir Hekmati, Saeed Abedini, and Jason Rezaian; and immediately assist in locating and returning Bob Levinson.

Mr. Speaker, we are just weeks away from the June 30 deadline for a nuclear deal. We are grateful that the Secretary and the other negotiators have raised this issue inside meetings.

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

Mr. ENGEL. I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. DEUTCH. But we have enormous leverage right now, and we must use it for Jason Rezaian, for Saeed Abedini, for Amir Hekmati, and for my constituent Bob Levinson.

If Iran wants the world to believe what it says at the negotiating table, if it expects the world to trust any of the commitments that it will make or promises to make in a nuclear deal, then it should send these Americans home.

By passing this bipartisan resolution today, we will show the world that this is an issue that transcends politics. We gather here today in the United States House of Representatives, the people's House, to show that Members of Congress and the American people are united in demanding the safe return of these four Americans. Mr. Speaker, it is time to bring them home.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I, again, urge my colleagues to support this resolution at this critical time.

I thank my colleague, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), for his work on this.

We are in the final days of the nuclear negotiations, as has been mentioned before, with Iran. And as the families of these Americans point out, when these negotiations are over, if we do nothing, so too may be the chance of the United States to engage directly with Iran over the fate of their family members. So we must not let this opportunity go to waste.

We call on Iran to release Amir Hekmati, Jason Rezaian, Saeed Abedini, and Robert Levinson; to live up to their pledge to provide further information about Robert Levinson; and

to bring these men home to their families.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

As I have made clear before, I have serious reservations about the direction of our negotiations with Iran, and this is based in no small part on its treatment of the four Americans we are speaking about today and what that predicts going forward.

Let's not forget, this is a regime—and we can turn on the set and watch their rallies—where regularly the chant “death to America” is used to rouse the most fervent supporters of the Supreme Leader. This is a regime that has killed its own citizens outright or convicted and imprisoned them based on confessions obtained by torture. This is a regime that takes U.S. citizens into captivity, tortures them, and then denies them medical treatment, denies them basic legal representation, denies them due process.

Last month, just prior to Jason's so-called trial, Washington Post editor Martin Baron issued a compelling statement, and I will read part of it:

“It's worth recalling what kind of system we're dealing with. Jason was arrested without charges. He was imprisoned in Iran's worst prison. He was placed in isolation for many months and denied medical care he needed. His case was assigned to a judge internationally notorious for human rights violations. He could not select the lawyer of his choosing. He was given only an hour and a half to meet with a lawyer approved by the court. No evidence has ever been produced by prosecutors or the court to support these absurd charges. The trial date was only disclosed to Jason's lawyer last week. And now, unsurprisingly but unforgivably, it turns out the trial will be closed.”

Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow ourselves to lose sight of these facts. Faced with this, those making the case that Iran will be transparent with the international community on inspections that will be part of any nuclear deal seem to be thinking about the Iran they want, not the one in actuality, the one that is brutalizing Americans.

Nuclear deal or not, these Americans deserve to be back with their families today.

I urge all Members to support this resolution.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 233.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for a period of less than 15 minutes.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 55 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1705

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LOUDERMILK) at 5 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.

#### FLORESVILLE VETERANS POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 891) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 141 Paloma Drive in Floresville, Texas, as the “Floresville Veterans Post Office Building”.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 891

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

#### SECTION 1. FLORESVILLE VETERANS POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 141 Paloma Drive in Floresville, Texas, shall be known and designated as the “Floresville Veterans Post Office Building”.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the “Floresville Veterans Post Office Building”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WALKER) and the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in support of H.R. 891, introduced by Representative HENRY CUELLAR.

H.R. 891 designates the post office located at 141 Paloma Drive in

Floresville, Texas, as the Floresville Veterans Post Office Building.

This excellent bill honors the men and women of Floresville, Texas, who served our country. We are grateful for their service and for the service of all of our veterans and their sacrifices in the service to our great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues in supporting H.R. 891, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 141 Paloma Drive in Floresville, Texas, as the Floresville Veterans Post Office Building.

This legislation commemorates the sacrifices made by the servicemen and -women of Floresville, Texas. Whether they served abroad or at home, our military men and women have courageously given their time and energy to defend the many freedoms we Americans hold so dear. Recognizing the loyalty and bravery of our veterans by naming this post office in their honor is the least we can do.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill that would recognize the honorable service and countless sacrifices made by our veterans and their families. I urge the passage of H.R. 891, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR).

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Delegate PLASKETT for yielding the time to me, and thank you so much also to the majority manager for speaking in favor of this bill. And certainly I also want to thank Chairman CHAFFETZ and Ranking Member CUMMINGS for their leadership and support, along with the committee members, for bringing this bill to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 891, which designates the facility of the United States Postal Service, located at 141 Paloma Drive in Floresville, Texas, as the Floresville Veterans Post Office Building.

Floresville is the county seat of Wilson County, Texas, which has 4,636 veterans currently residing there. Just across the street from this postal facility is the Frank M. Tejada Texas State Veterans Home, which currently houses about 154 of our American veterans. It is fitting that we provide this acknowledgement to our Floresville veterans directly across the street from where many of them live now.

There are many stories from veterans all across Wilson County that have served, but I want to highlight a few of those from Floresville. Let me start first with Frank Villarreal, who is a veteran who served in Vietnam with the U.S. Navy Seawolves helicopter squadron, which provided support for