

DACA ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, this week we marked 3 years since President Obama created the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA. He did this in response to Congress' failure to pass the DREAM Act and help children of undocumented immigrants stay here and help build a better future for America.

For children who probably know no language other than English and know no country other than America, for many of these immigrants brought here as children through no fault of their own, America is the only home they have ever known. They love this country, and they deserve a chance to stay and contribute to our Nation's future.

President Obama announced an expanded DACA last year, along with the program that deals with parents of such children to help the immigrant parents of American citizens and legal residents. Unfortunately, a partisan lawsuit has held up their implementation, and Republicans have now voted three times to end this opportunity for children of immigrants. They would split families apart.

If my Republican friends wish to change our immigration policies, they have a perfect vehicle, Mr. Speaker, for doing so: a comprehensive immigration reform bill supported, in my opinion, by a majority of the House of Representatives. Let's bring such a bill to the floor so that we can fix our broken immigration system and create a pathway to citizenship for these DREAMers and others who have been living and working here for almost all their lives.

OUR DOCUMENTS OF FREEDOM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LOUDERMILK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, quite often, as others have already done today, when I have come before this body, it has been to recognize someone who has done something significant in my district or to speak about a bill, whether I was for it or against it, or a piece of policy or an issue. But today I don't have pre-prepared remarks. I just wanted to remind those of us who are here of why we are here. Why do we attend sessions here in this body day in and day out? What is the purpose for our being here?

Before I begin remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would like to personally extend my thoughts and prayers on behalf of myself and my family, as well as those of the 11th Congressional District in Georgia, to those victims of the horrific attack that happened last evening in Charleston, South Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, I am a member of the Committee on Homeland Security as well as the special task force on foreign fighters, and as part of that, we spend a lot of time studying terrorism and the terrorist attacks against this Nation. One thing that I have seen that is consistent about these terrorist attacks is that they are attacking us not because of who we are. Most of them don't even know our names. They may not know our families or what we believe, and it may well be the case in Charleston, as I know it was in Garland, Texas, in the attacks there, they didn't even know their victims. But what I have seen with these attacks of terrorism is they are attacks about what we stand for, and that is freedom.

In Garland, Texas, it was an attack on the First Amendment, our freedom of speech. Last night, it was an attack on the most fundamental right that our Founding Fathers gave to us, and that is our freedom of religion, a right that, as they said, was given to us by God and cannot be taken away.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity since being in Congress a short amount of time—and it is more than an opportunity, it is really a privilege—to take constituents as they come to the Capitol here on tours. As I walk down the Halls of this building and I point out the statue of Thomas Jefferson that we have right outside the Chamber, or even as I stand here, the image of Moses is looking at me as he is looking over the Chamber, as I see the statues of our Founding Fathers, they have left us reminders of why we are here.

Mr. Speaker, as we are getting close to the great anniversary festival of the birth of this Nation, I think it is imperative and important that we as a body are reminded of why we are here. I just want to speak briefly about two phrases that you can find in Washington, D.C., that remind us not only of why we are here, but what it takes to preserve the freedom that we have been given.

Mr. Speaker, as I walked down the aisle to come to this podium, I just glanced up above the rostrum where you are standing, and I see four words, "In God We Trust." That is one of the phrases that my eyes often go to as I am sitting in this Chamber as we are debating bills. I reflect back on why do we have that phrase here?

Well, it also goes back to another phrase that I have seen recently as I was taking a tour of The Mall outside this building, where we have the museums of the heritage of this Nation. There is also a building there, the National Archives. Inside that building are the documents of freedom, the most hallowed of all of our documents: the Constitution; the Bill of Rights; and then the one that we hold the most sacred, the one that is most requested by visitors to this Nation's Capital to see, and that is the Declaration of Independence.

In that Declaration, our Founding Fathers expressed what they believed

that this Nation would be one day. It was their vision, it was their faith, and it was their philosophy about this new Nation. They were revolutionary ideas that they brought forth because it was the first time in the history of mankind that a government existed with emphasis on the freedom of individual, empowering the individual. Every other government on the face of the Earth before this had focused its attention upon a group, a collective, whether it was by their race or their religion or aristocracy or their family line. But our Founding Fathers sensed something different: if we empower the individual, if we recognize the rights that God has given them and we give them the freedom to excel and exceed, then our Nation, as a whole, would excel.

They believed that these rights were important to be protected: the right to speak freely, the right to have ideas, the right to pursue happiness, the right to pursue commerce, and the right to worship without fear of oppression from the government. These were revolutionary ideas.

They also knew that they had a challenge. Because of these revolutionary ideas, they knew that they would not be well accepted by other governments because it threatened the power base of those governments. In fact, they knew they would have to take on the most powerful military force in the history of the entire world if they were ever going to see these ideas come to fruition.

Now, think about that. This ragtag rabble of Washington's soldiers would have to take on the most powerful military force in the history of the world. It was an impossible task, and they understood that. But, Mr. Speaker, that phrase that is in marble above the rostrum reflects one of those two key phrases, because in the last line of the Declaration of Independence, our Founding Fathers wrote these words: "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor."

You see, "In God We Trust" was the first element that they identified that we must have if we were going to preserve this freedom that they were fighting for.

Now, outside the National Archives, where that Declaration is still on display, are the words, "Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom."

"Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom."

You see, that is the second phrase that I think we must be reminded of today. The second part of that last line of the Declaration of Independence says, "we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor." You see, freedom is not free, and it is held and it is protected at a price.

Just recently, I was given the opportunity to travel to the beaches of Normandy. As I stood upon the sands of