

local level, I believe we need a well-thought-out plan for additional hurricane protection in this region of the gulf. It must be a comprehensive plan that also recognizes the navigation needs of one of America's great ports and waterways as well as the ecological importance of the coastal marshes.

I want to assure Mr. MELANCON that I will work in conference to make sure that the Corps of Engineers gets the authority it needs to provide the appropriate protection for coastal Louisiana and Mississippi.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, we were all horrified a year ago when New Orleans' levees broke under the force of the winds and storm surges caused by Hurricane Katrina. Katrina was at Category 3 strength when it made landfall that fateful day, yet it wrought destruction beyond our imagination. In the face of the devastation we witnessed, it borders on the absurd to consider authorizing levee funding for New Orleans at anything less than the Category 5 level. For that reason, I rise in strong support of the Melancon Motion to Instruct the WRDA conferees.

Mr. Speaker, past authorizations for hurricane protection took into account vast marshes and wetlands, as well as barrier islands that could absorb most of the force of tidal surges. Louisiana has lost 1.2 million acres of this land due to economic development in the past century, and stands to lose another 435,000 acres if measures to stop the loss aren't taken. Without this protective buffer, the people of Louisiana are that much more vulnerable to storm surges and other hurricane-related flooding.

Coastal and wetlands restoration combined with a strong levy system will offer the hurricane protection necessary to protect the lives of over 2 million residents and the nation's industries. However, we cannot rebuild all of the wetlands lost in the near term, so we must compensate with stronger, better levee protection. The Army Corps of Engineers has worked hard to bring levees back up to pre-Katrina standards, but we've already seen what that level of protection does—nothing. Anything less than Category 5 levee protection is totally inadequate and would be an insult to the memory of the more than 700 New Orleanians who lost their lives a year ago.

Mr. JEFFERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to request the conferees on the Water Development Resources Act guarantee levee protection at a Category 5 level. Hurricane Katrina served as a stark reminder that our levee system in south Louisiana is inadequate. We are responsible for ensuring the safety of its residents, and today we can make a commitment that they are not forgotten.

The economic and environmental benefits that south Louisiana provides to the nation are substantial. Coastal Louisiana produces over 30% of our nation's seafood, including 50% of our shrimp crop. Our wetlands are home to over 79 endangered species and serve as a vital habitat for migratory birds. The network of interconnected waterways and presence of several major port facilities are an important hub in our maritime industry. Over 70% of the grain produced in the United States travels through the area. 30% of our domestic crude oil and 34% of our natural gas is produced by or travels through south Louisiana, making us a centerpiece in America's Energy Coast. In

addition to transporting much of our domestic oil supply, coastal Louisiana also refines 16% of our petroleum products. Knowing this, we must ensure that this valuable part of our nation's infrastructure remains intact and its people remain protected.

Our current levee system in New Orleans dates back to the 1960s, and since then our whole environment has changed. The loss of coastal barrier islands and the erosion of our wetlands have led to a weakened first line of defense against hurricanes. These islands and wetlands help absorb the storm's tidal surge and weaken the strength of an approaching storm. We are losing our wetlands at a rate of 25 to 30 square miles per year, while we are making areas further inland more susceptible to flooding. We have seen hurricanes become more powerful and more frequent as the years go by. The risk of hurricanes will always be present in south Louisiana, it is up to us to decide how to best mitigate their destructive impacts.

Looking at this situation, I am reminded of what I saw firsthand in the Netherlands. After the devastating North Sea floods of 1953, that nation committed itself to a system of water management projects that would ensure such a flood never happened again. Although the cost was high, their determination to provide absolute protection was justified. As a result, the Netherlands now has a significant number of its citizens living and produces 70% of its \$480 billion GDP in areas that are fifteen to twenty feet below sea level, safely protected by flood control projects. By comparison, the lowest areas of New Orleans are only four and a half feet below sea level. Protecting the city is not beyond our technological capabilities, it is simply a matter of making the commitment necessary to do so. While the cost may seem substantial now, it pales in comparison to the cost we would face in human and economic losses should another hurricane strike south Louisiana directly.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to get it right. We must ensure the safety of the city of New Orleans and the rest of the Gulf Coast, because we have seen the horrible effects of sub-standard, poorly designed, inadequate levee protection in the face of a powerful storm. A working flood control system for south Louisiana begins with sound levees. I urge the conferees to support levee protection against a Category 5 storm surge.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support Congressman MELANCON's motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 2864. This motion would direct conferees to accept provisions that will protect coastal communities in Louisiana and Mississippi from the storm surge of a category 5 hurricane.

Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf on August 29, 2005, and was a category 3 hurricane that did not even directly hit the affected areas.

Yet, Katrina was able to inflict monstrous and unimaginable damage upon Louisiana and the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. One year after Hurricane Katrina, the area remains a terrible, twisted portrait of lives and families and whole communities washed away; home by home, block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood.

As a result of Hurricane Katrina:
More than 1,000 people died.

The total number of immediately displaced people has never been determined. Estimates range from the hundreds of thousands to the millions.

The Louisiana parishes of Orleans and St. Bernard were especially hard hit by flooding, with an estimated 77% of Orleans's population affected, and nearly all residents of St. Bernard.

In Mississippi, 55% of Hancock County's population is estimated to have been affected by flooding and/or structural damage.

In the greater New Orleans area alone, there were 160,000 homes and apartments destroyed or heavily damaged by the storm.

The metro New Orleans area has lost approximately 400,000 residents.

The National Flood Insurance Program has paid out \$17 billion in property damage claims in Louisiana alone, only a fraction of total damage.

Hospital capacity in Orleans parish dropped in half immediately after the storm. In St. Bernard, there are still no hospitals open.

The Army Corps of Engineers has only begun to raise sinking levees and deal with unfinished hurricane protection and flood prevention projects. But, they're only rebuilding the levees to withstand a Category 3 storm, Katrina's level. Prudent planning and common sense would dictate that they be raised to Category 5 levels to protect the more than two million residents along these coasts.

I urge my colleagues to support and vote for this motion to instruct.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MELANCON).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ACT

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 2784) to award a congressional gold medal to Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, in recognition of his many enduring and outstanding contributions to peace, non-violence, human rights, and religious understanding.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 2784

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 "Fourteenth Dalai Lama Congressional Gold Medal Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama—

(1) is recognized in the United States and throughout the world as a leading figure of moral and religious authority;

(2) is the unrivaled spiritual and cultural leader of the Tibetan people, and has used his leadership to promote democracy, freedom, and peace for the Tibetan people through a negotiated settlement of the Tibet issue, based on autonomy within the People's Republic of China;

(3) has led the effort to preserve the rich cultural, religious, and linguistic heritage of the Tibetan people and to promote the safeguarding of other endangered cultures throughout the world;

(4) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 for his efforts to promote peace and non-violence throughout the globe, and to find democratic reconciliation for the Tibetan people through his "Middle Way" approach;

(5) has significantly advanced the goal of greater understanding, tolerance, harmony, and respect among the different religious faiths of the world through interfaith dialogue and outreach to other religious leaders; and

(6) has used his moral authority to promote the concept of universal responsibility as a guiding tenet for how human beings should treat one another and the planet we share.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design, to Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, in recognition of his many enduring contributions to peace and religious understanding.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the "Secretary") shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the Secretary.

SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses, and the cost of the gold medal.

SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.

(a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursuant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

(b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.

(a) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be necessary to pay for the costs of the medals struck pursuant to this Act.

(b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section 4 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and insert extraneous material thereon.

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

There was no objection.

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

As the House author of this legislation, I rise in strong support of Senate bill 2784, the 14th Dalai Lama Congressional Gold Medal Act.

I would like to thank my dear friend and colleague, the ranking member of International Relations Committee, Congressman TOM LANTOS, for his dedicated work on this legislation as the Democratic lead of this House bill. I also would like to commend the Financial Services chairman, MICHAEL OXLEY, and his staff for their great work on this resolution as well as the House leadership and their staff for their assistance in bringing this important legislation to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the House International Relations Committee and as a member of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, I have had the opportunity to meet personally with the Dalai Lama on several occasions, most recently in November 2005, when he spoke to Congress on issues relating to democracy, human rights, and Tibet.

Born to a peasant family, His Holiness was recognized at the age of two, in accordance with the tradition of Tibet, as the reincarnation of his predecessor, the 13th Dalai Lama, and thus an incarnation of the Buddha of Compassion.

His enthronement ceremony took place in the capital of Tibet on February 22, 1940, at the tender age of five. A decade later, on November 17, 1950, His Holiness was called upon to assume the position of head of state for the people of Tibet.

His Holiness is the embodiment of serenity and understandings. His inner peace and calm demeanor give us hope that a resolution can be reached on the issue of Tibet. As the 14th Dalai Lama, he is the manifestation of compassion. To look at him is to understand the meaning of Dalai Lama, which is "Oceans of Wisdom."

By awarding the Dalai Lama with the Congressional Gold Medal, we are recognizing his lifelong advocacy on behalf of peace, tolerance, human rights, nonviolence, and religious understanding throughout the world. By definition, a Congressional Gold Medal is the highest expression by Congress of national appreciation for the most heroic, courageous, and outstanding individuals.

Given the overwhelming support of this legislation as evidenced by the bipartisan support of 312 cosponsors in

the House companion legislation, I am confident that Members of this Chamber deem that the Dalai Lama is indeed such an individual.

□ 2015

However, we are not the first to recognize the tremendous achievements of this humble man. In 1989, the 14th Dalai Lama received the Nobel Peace Prize for his work bringing democracy and freedom to his people. In the recommendation, the committee members of the Nobel Prize wrote: "The committee wants to emphasize the fact that the Dalai Lama in his struggle for the liberation of Tibet consistently has opposed the use of violence. He has instead advocated peaceful solutions based upon tolerance and mutual respect in order to preserve the historical and cultural heritage of his people."

The 14th Dalai Lama Congressional Gold Medal Act comes at a crucial and hopeful turning point in the ongoing negotiations between the Dalai Lama's representatives and the People's Republic of China.

In a speech delivered following His Holiness' acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize, he said, "It is my dream that the entire Tibetan plateau should become a free refuge where humanity and nature can live in peace and in harmonious balance. It would be a place," he continues, "where people from all over the world could come to seek the true meaning of peace within themselves, away from the tension and pressures that occur in much of the rest of the world. Tibet could indeed become a creative center for the promotion and development of peace," he concluded.

Join me, I ask my colleagues, in paying homage to this fearless leader who has led the efforts to preserve the rich cultural, spiritual, and linguistic heritage of the people of Tibet while also promoting the safeguarding of other endangered cultures throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in voting "yes" on the 14th Dalai Lama Congressional Gold Medal Act.

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

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, this is a very important piece of legislation recognizing one of the truly great advocates of human rights in our time, a man who in the face of enormous adversity generated by the People's Republic of China's oppression has really held forth the banner of human rights.

I therefore am delighted to yield as much time as he may consume to our champion of human rights here in the House of Representatives, the ranking member of the Committee on International Relations who has for his entire life been a very vigorous defender of the cause of freedom in a variety of also adverse circumstances, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS).

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of our legislation to

award the Congressional Gold Medal to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

I would first like to express my great appreciation to my dear friend Congressman BARNEY FRANK not only for yielding me some time, but, far more importantly, for being a tireless champion in advancing human rights. Let me also thank the chairman of the Financial Services Committee, my friend, Mr. OXLEY, for expediting consideration of this legislation, as well as my colleague from the International Relations Committee, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, and for her leadership on this legislation on behalf of the Tibetan people and all human rights issues.

Mr. Speaker, 19 years ago this month, His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the invitation of my wife, Annette, addressed the Congressional Human Rights Caucus that I cofounded and which I currently chair with our colleague FRANK WOLF. The historic speech His Holiness delivered was his first major policy address outside of India and the first time he had ever appeared before the Congress.

The Dalai Lama unveiled his Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet. We did not know it at the time, but what we heard was to become the foundation for the Dalai Lama's fight on behalf of the people of Tibet.

While we were welcoming His Holiness on Capitol Hill, the State Department and the White House refused to meet with him. The individuals responsible for crafting our foreign policy back then crouched under their desks unwilling to risk the ire of the Chinese Government by meeting with the true leader of the Tibetan people.

Nearly two decades later, His Holiness regularly meets with Presidents and Secretaries of State. During his last visit to Washington, this brave man, small of stature but with an infinite heart, was greeted by dozens of Members of Congress. Tens of thousands of Washington residents packed an auditorium for several nights to hear his words of wisdom.

His Holiness has used his international acclaim to speak out forcefully against the cultural and religious annihilation of the Tibetan people. Rather than resorting to force, the Dalai Lama has actively pursued a negotiated solution to the Tibetan issue with the Chinese Government. In five rounds of discussions, representatives of the Dalai Lama have argued with determination to the Chinese that the Tibetan people must have true religious, cultural, and economic autonomy, and that the current marginalization of the Tibetan people in their own land must end.

Awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to His Holiness the Dalai Lama will send a strong signal of congressional support for a negotiated settlement to the Tibetan issue that preserves Tibetan culture and promotes genuine autonomy for the long-suffering people of Tibet.

Through his words and through his deeds, the Dalai Lama has made an enduring contribution to peace, non-violence, human rights, and religious understanding. With our action here today, Mr. Speaker, His Holiness will join the ranks of Pope John Paul II, Elie Wiesel, Nelson Mandela, and Mother Teresa, all of whom have been awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, a pantheon of peacemakers. I strongly support passage of this legislation.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I now yield to another staunch defender of human rights throughout the world, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH), such time as he may consume.

Mr. KUCINICH. I want to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for his own commitment to human rights and thank Mr. LANTOS for the lifetime of work that characterizes not only himself but Mrs. Lantos as well.

This is an important moment for this Congress because through recognizing the Dalai Lama with the Congressional Gold Medal, we also recognize his lifetime of work which has been about elevating the human spirit. Because in that we transcend the little labels of Democrat and Republican, liberal and conservative, and we come to an understanding of human unity, those principles which unite us all. We learn through celebrating the Dalai Lama's life and his contributions the transformative power of love, the transformative power of compassion.

In his work, he has challenged us to look at those things in our lives which cause anger, to look at those things in our lives which relate to negativity, and to consciously work on those things so that we become more perfect. Wasn't that really the message of our Founders with respect to the creation of the United States itself, that the work of our government should ever be to form a more perfect Union?

So it is that the spiritual work of the Dalai Lama informs all of us that we can perfect ourselves, that we can practice daily, taking a walk down the path towards a more meaningful life. He teaches us patience. And certainly, in this great body, patience is something that lends us to understanding of each other, to having compassion for each other.

This is an important moment for this Congress, when we understand that the Dalai Lama's teachings involve karma, an understanding of the power and the consequences of every thought, word, and deed, knowing that for every action there might be another action that follows. The symmetry between Buddhism and some of the teachings of Christianity is instructive here. Buddhists talk, and the Dalai Lama talks, about the law of karma. Christianity, we know of teachings that say as you sow, so shall you reap. So much of our lives are penetrated by spiritual dimensions that we often don't pay much attention to. But in moments like this when we celebrate the life and the

work of a single person, we come to an understanding of not only his relationship to us and our relationship to him, but of our relationship to each other. And so when we celebrate him, we are celebrating ourselves, too, and our higher potential, not only as public servants but as human beings.

The Dalai Lama speaks about a path to tranquility. Is it possible in a public forum which is centered on such vigorous debate that we can find tranquility? His teachings would say, yes, because tranquility is an inner condition.

So, Mr. Speaker, the honorable ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, our leader Ms. PELOSI, this is an important moment for this Congress, and I am proud to play a small part in recognizing the great work and person of the Dalai Lama.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. And to close out our side here, and I think the debate, I yield such time as she may consume to a woman who has not only been a leader in human rights but was an early advocate and personal friend of the Dalai Lama.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, that a few years ago when he spoke at Brandeis University in the district of my colleague, Mr. MARKEY and I were there to meet him, and he had taken a stand that may have been a little controversial. And the first thing he said to me was, this was years before the gentlewoman from California had ascended to leadership. He said, "Congressman, please tell NANCY PELOSI not to be angry; I am going to explain this to her." So when the Dalai Lama is concerned about her opinion of him, I think that says a great deal about her own commitment and dedication. And, of course, he did explain; and, no, she was not angry. She respected him then, she respects him now, and I am delighted to yield to her such time as she may consume.

Ms. PELOSI. Well, at the time I think the message that I told myself was, we can't be holier than His Holiness. If it is okay with him, it was okay with me.

I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him for all of his leadership and assistance in bringing this important legislation to the floor. And I also commend Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for her leadership, not only on bringing the legislation, but her work on this important issue. TOM LANTOS, FRANK WOLF have just been relentless for His Holiness; and in the Senate, Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN who represents California in the U.S. Senate but is a close personal friend also of His Holiness.

The Congressional Gold Medal is the most distinguished award bestowed by the United States Congress. It is reserved for the most heroic, most courageous, most outstanding individuals who have made lasting contributions to society, individuals such as John Paul II, Mother Teresa, Elie Wiesel, and Nelson Mandela.

Today, by honoring His Holiness the Dalai Lama, we not only honor him, but we add luster to this Congressional Gold Medal. We honor our Nation and the American people by awarding it to His Holiness. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation.

His Holiness often described himself in the following way: "I am just a simple monk, no more, no less." But he represents much more to people throughout the world.

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Tibetan Buddhists believe that the Dalai Lama is the earthly manifestation of the living Buddha. On the world stage, he is seen as the head of state and the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people. For millions, he is seen as a source of spiritual refuge and a connection to inner peace and harmony, that my colleague Mr. KUCINICH was discussing.

His Holiness has traveled the world, building bridges between and among the different faiths. He has used his position to promote wisdom, compassion and nonviolence as a solution, not only in Tibet, but to other world conflicts.

His leadership is not only in the area of faith and harmony among people, but also in protecting the environment. I remember it was a great joy seeing him speak at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992.

The Dalai Lama has made the human rights situation in Tibet an issue of international concern. Indeed, the situation in Tibet is a challenge to the conscience of the world. Under Chinese occupation, hundreds of thousands of Tibetans have died. Freedom to practice their religion and political expression have been severely curtailed. So powerful is the image of the Dalai Lama that Tibetans are imprisoned for simply owning a picture of him.

As a new Member of Congress in 1987, I was in attendance, at the invitation of my colleague from San Francisco TOM LANTOS, when the Dalai Lama proposed the historic Five-Point Peace Plan toward resolving the future status of Tibet. The Dalai Lama proposed a "Middle Way Approach" that seeks genuine autonomy for Tibetans within the framework of the People's Republic of China. Autonomy, not independence.

In recent years, Tibetan envoys have traveled to China for five rounds of discussions on the status of Tibet. While open dialogue is a first step, it is clear that the Chinese government has been stalling all along.

The Chinese are missing an historic opportunity to negotiate with a partner who has the authority and the legitimacy to implement a comprehensive agreement. The Chinese are missing an opportunity for a solution that would ensure internal stability in Tibet and bolster China's reputation in the world.

The Dalai Lama has asked for international support for his efforts to engage the Chinese government. I am proud to say that the U.S. Congress has

been a bedrock of support for the Tibetan cause. By awarding the gold medal to the Dalai Lama, Congress is sending an important signal of support for going further.

This is not the first gift our country has given to His Holiness. Of course, for many years and decades, we have given the gift of respect, of reverence and appreciation for all that His Holiness is and does. But when he was a little boy, the special relationship he had with America was demonstrated when Franklin Roosevelt, as President of the United States, gave His Holiness one of his favorite gifts which was a gold watch which had the phases of the Moon on the watch. It was a wonderful thing, a gift from the President to this little boy who had been named the Dalai Lama.

When His Holiness was driven out of Tibet by the Chinese invasion, it was one of the few things that he carried with him. So he had the gold watch, and now all these many years later, out of respect and reverence for him, he will have the Congressional Gold Medal.

I urge my colleagues to support it and look forward to the day when we can present it to him in the halls of Congress.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I consume just to express to the government of the People's Republic of China, on behalf I think of this entire House, a plea that they understand that their desire to be recognized as a great Nation, their security in this world will be enhanced, not diminished, if they reach out to this great leader who has moved in a direction beyond what some would want him to go to try and reach a compromise involving autonomy for the people of Tibet.

It is simply unbecoming for a Nation with the economic might of China, with the potential military might of China to appear to be frightened of this gentle, loving advocate of human dignity.

So we urge the Chinese Government, the entire House does, to reconsider its unwillingness to meet halfway as the Dalai Lama has agreed to do, and to give him the ability to return to Tibet, to a people that yearns for him, to reconcile with the people of Tibet and with the Dalai Lama, and the Chinese Government will be the beneficiaries, not the victims.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the House is able to pass this bill, unanimously I believe we will be doing it.

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge support of S. 2784, the "Fourteenth Dalai Lama Congressional Gold Medal Act," and urge its immediate passage.

This legislation was introduced by the Senator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and is identical to H.R. 4562, introduced by the gentle lady from Florida, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. The House version currently has 312 co-sponsors, is compliant with all House and Financial Services Committee rules, and has been scored as budget-neutral by CBO.

Under the legislation, the Speaker and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate are authorized to present, on behalf of Congress, a gold medal to Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, or spiritual, cultural and, in effect, governmental leader of Tibet, who has lived in exile from his native country since 1959, when he fled the power of the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Speaker, the Dalai Lama has spent the 47 years of his exile peacefully seeking to establish a form of autonomous self rule for Tibet. In doing so, he has earned the great respect of the world community for the quiet, disciplined and non-violent way he has chosen to lead his struggle—in fact, the respect is so great that in 1989, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The Nobel Committee said the award came "for his consistent resistance to the use of violence in his people's struggle to regain their liberty . . . He has instead advocated peaceful solutions based upon tolerance and mutual respect in order to preserve the historical and cultural heritage of his people."

Mr. Speaker, Tibet is a long way from the United States, and a far different land about which most Americans know little. But the Dalai Lama's basic beliefs—peace, human rights, preservation of culture and of the environment, and the promotion of harmony and respect among religions—are so familiar to all of us that we may feel we know this quiet man in some special way, and he us. In fact, at a ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda in 1991, the Dalai Lama said of his childhood view of the United States: "What truly inspired me were your ideas of freedom and democracy. I felt that your principles were identical to my own, the Buddhist belief in fundamental human rights, freedom, equality, tolerance and compassion for all."

Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian honor the Congress can bestow. Previous recipients have included Pope John Paul II, Mother Teresa and Elie Wiesel. His Holiness, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, stands with them in his beliefs, and in the way his life embodies them. It is appropriate and, perhaps, overdue that we confer upon him this medal, this mark of respect and admiration. I urge immediate passage of this bill.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, with great sadness I must rise to oppose this measure granting a congressional gold medal to the 14th Dalai Lama. While I greatly admire and respect His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and fully recognize his tremendous status both as a Buddhist leader and international advocate for peace, I must object to the manner in which this body chooses to honor him.

I wonder if my colleagues see the irony in honoring a devout Buddhist monk with a material gift of gold. The Buddhist tradition, of course, eschews worldly possessions in favor of purity of thought and action. Buddhism urges its practitioners to alleviate the suffering of others whenever possible. I'm sure His Holiness the Dalai Lama would rather see \$30,000 spent to help those less fortunate, rather than for a feel-good congressional gesture.

We cannot forget that Congress has no authority under the Constitution to spend taxpayer money on medals and awards, no matter how richly deserved. And I reiterate my offer of \$100 from my own pocket to pay for this medal—if members wish to honor the

Dalai Lama, all we need to do is pay for it ourselves. If all 435 of us contribute, the cost will be roughly \$70 each. So while a gold medal sounds like a great idea, it becomes a bit strange when we see the actual cost involved.

If Congress truly wishes to honor the Dalai Lama, it could instead start by showing more respect for his views in the areas of foreign policy, war, and terrorism. The bellicosity often demonstrated on the floor of this institution toward entire nations and their people conflicts sharply with the peaceful teachings of the Dalai Lama.

Consider the following words of His Holiness:

"When September 11 happened, the next day I wrote a letter to President Bush as a friend—because I know him personally. I wrote this letter and expressed, besides my condolences and sadness, a countermeasure to this tragedy: a nonviolent response because that would have been more effective. So this is my stance. And then just before the Iraq crisis started, millions of people from countries like Australia and America expressed their opposition to violence. I really admired and appreciated this."

"When the war started, some people immediately asked me if it was justified or not, whether it was right or wrong. In principle, any resort to violence is wrong."

Consider also these thoughts from the Dalai Lama regarding the terrible pointlessness of war:

"We have seen that we cannot solve human problems by fighting. Problems resulting from differences in opinion must be resolved through the gradual process of dialogue. Undoubtedly, wars produce victors and losers; but only temporarily. Victory or defeat resulting from wars cannot be long-lasting. Secondly, our world has become so interdependent that the defeat of one country must impact the rest of the world, or cause all of us to suffer losses either directly or indirectly."

"Today, the world is so small and so interdependent that the concept of war has become anachronistic, an outmoded approach. As a rule, we always talk about reform and changes. Among the old traditions, there are many aspects that are either ill-suited to our present reality or are counterproductive due to their shortsightedness. These, we have consigned to the dustbin of history. War too should be relegated to the dustbin of history."

"Of course, the militaristic tradition may not end easily. But, let us think of this. If there were bloodshed, people in positions of power, or those who are responsible, will find safe places; they will escape the consequent hardship. They will find safety for themselves, one way or the other. But what about the poor people, the defenseless people, the children, the old and infirm. They are the ones who will have to bear the brunt of devastation. When weapons are fired, the result will be death and destruction. Weapons will not discriminate between the innocent and guilty. A missile, once fired, will show no respect to the innocent, poor, defenseless, or those worthy of compassion. Therefore, the real losers will be the poor and defenseless, ones who are completely innocent, and those who lead a hand-to-mouth existence."

Mr. Speaker, in closing let me join my colleagues in stating my tremendous respect for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. While I cannot agree with forcible taxation to pay for gold

medals, I certainly hope Congress takes the teaching of His Holiness to heart and begins to rethink our aggressive, interventionist foreign policy.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 2784.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXTENDING THANKS TO DEFENSE POW/MISSING PERSONNEL OFFICE FOR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE ACCOUNTING OF ALL AMERICANS UNACCOUNTED FOR AS A RESULT OF THE VIETNAM WAR

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 444) extending the thanks of Congress and the Nation to the Defense POW/Missing Personnel office, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command of the Department of Defense, the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory, the Air Force Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory, and the military departments and to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for their efforts to achieve the fullest possible accounting of all Americans unaccounted for as a result of the Vietnam War, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 444

Whereas the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), an element of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, exercises policy, control and oversight within the Department of Defense of the process of investigation, analysis, recovery, and fullest possible accounting of Americans missing as a result of the Nation's previous wars and conflicts;

Whereas the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), located on the island of Oahu in Hawaii, is charged with the mission of conducting investigations, analysis, recovery, and identifications to achieve the fullest possible accounting of all Americans missing as a result of the Nation's wars and conflicts;

Whereas the laboratory portion of that command, referred to as the Central Identification Laboratory, is the largest forensic anthropology laboratory in the world;

Whereas the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL), located in Rockville, Maryland, is one of the leading laboratories in the world for processing degraded skeletal remains and family references for mitochondrial DNA;

Whereas the Air Force Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory (LSEL), located in San Antonio, Texas, houses the most comprehensive technical library and collection of life sciences equipment used by the Armed Forces, to include analysts for artifact identification;

Whereas National POW/MIA Recognition Day is one of the six days specified in section 902 of title 36, United States Code, as days on which the National League of Families POW/MIA flag is to be flown over specified Federal facilities and national cemeteries, post offices, and military installations;

Whereas as of September 15, 2006, the remains of 60 Americans unaccounted for from the Korean War have been recovered, and these remains have been repatriated, identified, and returned to their families;

Whereas as of September 15, 2006, the remains of more than 375 Americans unaccounted for from World War II, the Cold War, and other conflicts fought by the United States have been recovered throughout the world, and these remains have been repatriated, identified, and returned to their families;

Whereas the improved access of representatives of the United States to information in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and the Kingdom of Cambodia has resulted in the recovery and repatriation of the remains of Americans unaccounted for from the Vietnam War;

Whereas as of September 15, 2006, 216 Joint Field Actions have been conducted in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, which has resulted in the recovery of the remains of 841 Americans unaccounted for from the Vietnam War, and these remains have been repatriated, identified, and returned to their families;

Whereas the United States has a historic commitment to the recovery of, and the fullest accounting of, Americans who are missing as a result of the Nation's wars and conflicts; and

Whereas every member of the United States Armed Forces who is unaccounted for as a result of service to the Nation is equally important, regardless of the time or place of the war or conflict: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) recognizes that National POW/MIA Recognition Day is one of the six days specified by section 902 of title 36, United States Code, as days on which the National League of Families POW/MIA flag is to be flown over specified Federal facilities and national cemeteries, military installations, and post offices;

(2) applauds the personnel of the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command of the Department of Defense, the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory, the Air Force Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory, and the military departments for continuing their mission of achieving the fullest possible accounting of all Americans unaccounted for as a result of the Nation's previous wars and conflicts;

(3) extends its appreciation and the appreciation of the people of the United States to the personnel of those offices, commands, and laboratories in the United States, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and the Kingdom of Cambodia for their efforts to achieve the fullest possible accounting of all Americans who remain unaccounted for as a result of the Vietnam War;

(4) encourages the United States Government to use all available means to continue the mission described in paragraph (2) at current or greater levels until the fullest possible accounting of missing Americans is achieved;

(5) recognizes that the efforts and involvement of POW/MIA families and veterans contribute significantly to the fullest possible accounting of missing Americans;