

This is the park service that says, we want to wipe out this deer and elk herd because they're not native. They just want to do it because they've got the power to do it. They could easily accommodate our veterans.

COOPER: Is this the role of a national park? The national park service which runs this, basically would be subsidizing a hunting program. They say and critics say, look, there are other places for people with disabilities to hunt. We talked to the Paralyzed Veterans Association they say you know some states even allow those with disabilities to hunt from their cars.

HUNTER: Listen, the reason the national park people have their nice jobs and the reasons we as members of the American public get to enjoy national parks is because of people who wear uniforms who go out in dangerous parts of the world and secure our freedom. So let in some paralyzed veterans, many of whom have been injured in combat, to come have a small piece of this island that almost nobody goes to anyway, is a small repayment for their service to our country. I think the taxpayers would appreciate that.

COOPER: Congressman Hunter, appreciate you joining us, thanks.

Lastly, a letter provided by the Wounded Warrior Project reaffirms discussions and the intent to allow wounded and disabled veterans to enjoy Santa Rosa Island. The letter follows:

AUGUST 28, 2006.

Hon. DUNCAN L. HUNTER,
Chairman, House Committee on Armed Services,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HUNTER: On behalf of the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP), I am responding to your legislation that will cease the elimination of all elk and deer on Santa Rosa Island in California and could provide unrivaled hunting opportunities for severely wounded veterans.

The Wounded Warrior Project applauds any effort that supports our endeavors to assist severely injured military personnel. WWP has reached thousands of wounded service men and women, providing assistance in the transition from a hospital bed to an independent and productive life and we believe that Santa Rosa could offer the wounded another chance to participate in meaningful and enriching recreational activities such as fishing, hunting and camping.

This legislation is consistent with Wounded Warrior Project's adaptive sports and outdoors programs like hunting and fishing, snow and water skiing, canoeing and diving. For that reason we encourage the House of Representatives to pass this provision to potentially allow the use of the island for disabled service members.

We hope that together with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other federal organizations, a viable and sustainable daily operations system for the management of Santa Rosa Island can be developed and that our nation's wounded warriors will be able to enjoy the world class hunting that the island has to offer.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

JOHN MELLA,
Executive Director.

SUPPORT FOR H.R. 1678

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 14, 2007

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my support

for H.R. 1678, The Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2007. This legislation continues and improves a much needed and valuable safety net to help victims of torture recover from their trauma and rebuild successful lives.

Every member of this body knows that torture is a tool used to enforce a level of terror among preyed upon people. Not only can the physical scars of torture last forever, the emotional pain experienced by victims can last a lifetime. Frequently, the aim of brutal torture is not to kill the victim, but to break their will. Victims are humiliated, crippled, traumatized and then returned to their communities as a brutal message of intimidation to others. In many instances, doctors and medical personnel participate during torture sessions to ensure the victim will not die. Groups that sanction, sponsor and commit torture focus on inflicting terror, intimidation and fear on entire communities.

But through appropriate help, services and intervention, victims of torture can heal. The Torture Victims Relief Act provides critical funds to improve access to the health, legal and social services critical to victims and their families through domestic treatment centers for rehabilitation and research and training for health care providers. H.R. 1678 also makes grants available to foreign countries to carry out projects that work to treat the psychological and physical effects of torture.

Treatment is critical, but there is more that can be done. This legislation also creates a partnership by increasing funding for foreign treatment centers and strengthening our commitment to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. This bill sends a strong message to the international community that treating victims of torture is a priority for Congress, and that we welcome the support of our like-minded friends around the globe.

This issue is important in my district. Minnesota is a new home for a growing number of immigrants and refugees and the late Senator Wellstone was a true champion for victims of torture. In addition, Minnesota is proud to be home to the Center for Victims of Torture—a world renowned center for the treatment and healing of torture victims. When the center opened in 1985, it became the first of its kind in the United States and only the third treatment center in the entire world. Today, with centers in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Washington, DC, Sierra Leone and Liberia, CVT is helping thousands of torture survivors from 60 countries.

Madam Speaker, torture is a crime against humanity and unacceptable at any time, by any nation. Any nation that tortures or tolerates torture is truly not free. I strongly encourage all my colleagues to support this legislation and commend the gentleman from New Jersey for his commitment to this issue and his work on this bipartisan legislation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIM MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 14, 2007

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, on Thursday, May 10, 2007, my vote on the Motion to Recommit with Instructions to

H.R. 2082, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (rollcall vote 340) was recorded as a "yes" vote when I intended to cast a "no" vote. I wish to clarify on the record my miscast vote and my strong support for the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC).

As the Nation's principal center for strategic domestic counterdrug intelligence, the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) in Johnstown, PA, provides critical information on national drug trafficking and abuse trends in the United States. I was pleased to support funding for the NDIC in the Intelligence Authorization bills in both the 108th and 109th Congress.

Not only does the NDIC serve a vital role in our nationwide effort to combat drug trafficking, this center is critically important to the southwestern Pennsylvania region. Having these resources readily available in close proximity to the district I represent in Congress is a tremendous benefit to my constituents. NDIC field representatives on average have more than 30 years' experience in Federal, State, or local drug law enforcement and stand ready to assist my local law enforcement agencies and provide necessary intelligence and training. We are fortunate to have the Center in our backyard and look forward to benefiting from its work in the future.

The NDIC's comprehensive annual report on national drug trafficking and abuse trends within the United States is one of the key tools for the Federal Government to respond to the threat posed by drugs to our families, schools and communities. Formulated in partnership with Federal, State, and local agencies with information from more than 3,400 State and local law enforcement agencies as well as thousands of personal interviews with law enforcement and public health officials, this report is one of the most comprehensive and detailed reports that our Federal Government receives on both domestic and foreign drug threats to our country.

I look forward to continuing my support of the critical intelligence work of the NDIC to protect our families and the Nation.

CONGRATULATING THE DEVOLUTION OF GOVERNMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 14, 2007

Mr. WALSH of New York. Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to join my colleagues here in the House in congratulating the people of Northern Ireland on the formation of their own duly elected government.

This remarkable achievement, the formal implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, sends a message of hope to the entire world. In Martin McGuinness's words, "This marks an end to 800 years of conflict." Surely if the Irish can reach a peaceful conclusion to their differences other troubled places around the world should celebrate the possibilities for themselves.

Much credit goes to the political leadership of Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party. Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness showed great courage in leading their Nationalist side. Rev. Ian Paisley, noted for saying no, said yes to an agreement he helped construct. British Prime Minister Blair and Irish

Prime Minister Ahern never lost focus or patience.

For America it was a wonderful foreign policy success. President Bush and Clinton played important and constructive roles. In the Congress, both houses linked arms and worked together. It was a case of everyone sticking together with one purpose.

But the most credit should go to the people of Northern Ireland who expressed their hope for the future, first by supporting (as did the Republic) the Good Friday Agreement and most recently by giving Sinn Fein and DUP leaders a mandate to proceed. Optimism was expressed in the vote and the leaders need to move forward and do the hard work of governing.

I know all Americans join together with our Irish friends in celebrating this miraculous achievement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 14, 2007

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, on May 7, 2007, due to a family illness, I missed the following recorded votes: rollcall vote No. 302, on H.R. 407—The Columbia Pacific National Heritage Area Study Act. Had I been present, I would have voted “aye”; rollcall vote No. 303, on H.R. 1025—The Lower Republican River Basin Study Act. Had I been present, I would have voted “aye”; and rollcall vote No. 304, on H. Res. 371—In Observance of National Physical Education and Sports Week. Had I been present, I would have voted “aye.”

VIETNAMESE HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 14, 2007

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I rise because May 11 is Vietnamese Human Rights Day, and my conscience will not let me stay quiet on this very troubling issue. I also rise today to applaud the efforts of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom on their recent report on the status of religious freedom in the world.

I am deeply troubled by the findings of the Commission, but I can't say that I'm surprised. The Commission made the same recommendation last year: Vietnam should be placed on the State Department's list of Countries of Particular Concern because of government repression towards many religious believers.

The Vietnamese government's campaign to force people to renounce their faith, their detainment of dozens of religious prisoners, and the harassment and physical mistreatment of some believers and their families amounts to inexcusable human rights violations.

In Vietnam's quest to gain Permanent Normal Trade Relations with the United States, and access to the WTO, the Vietnamese embarked on a disingenuous public relations campaign to cleanse its image as a human rights violator.

Secretary Rice caved in to the campaign of their communist government and removed Vietnam from the Countries of Particular Concern list.

But some of us in Congress were not fooled by this advertising campaign.

My constituent, Cong Thanh Do, a United States citizen, was unjustly arrested in Vietnam last August while on a family vacation. Mr. Do is no criminal. He is nothing more than a peaceful democracy and human rights activist who wrote articles that he then posted on the internet while he was living in the United States.

Vietnam held Cong Thanh Do imprisoned for over a month before he was released after we pressured the Vietnamese government.

Because of the evidence suggesting that Vietnam made little progress on human rights—especially given the detention of my constituent, Cong Thanh Do—I told the administration it would be a mistake to grant Permanent Normal Trade Relations with Vietnam and I voted against it.

Three of Mr. Do's supporters in Vietnam were tried and sentenced yesterday for 3 to 5 years of prison each. Their crime? Promoting a multi-party democratic system in Vietnam through peaceful means and sending email communication to my constituent.

After Vietnam joined the WTO, I think it is obvious that the conditions of religious freedom in Vietnam did not improve. They have worsened severely.

The Vietnamese government removed Father Nguyen Van Ly from his parish and on March 30th sentenced him to 8 years in prison for allegedly conducting propaganda activities to harm the security of the state. His sentence is an outrage.

Vietnamese police, on March 6, 2007, arrested a pair of human-rights lawyers, Nguyen Van Dai (“Die”) and Le Thi Cong Nhan (pronounced “Lay Tee Kohng Nhun”), for organizing training sessions for political activists in the capital. There are many other dissidents who have been imprisoned simply for expressing their thoughts and attempting to practice their faith freely and openly. Nguyen Van Dai has since been charged with disseminating propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and faces up to 20 years in prison if convicted. Their trials and sentencing are scheduled for this Friday in Vietnam.

Le Quoc Quan (“Lay Kwook Kwun”) and his law colleague Tran Thuy Trang (“Truhn Twee Trahng”) were arrested on the day Mr. Quan returned to Vietnam from his congressionally-sponsored National Endowment for Democracy fellowship in the United States. His arrest is not only a human rights violation, it is a calculated insult to America and specifically to the United States Congress.

With all of the human rights problems in Vietnam, the question we must ask is, “What can we do to help?” The United States has the power to influence Vietnam on these important moral issues through the use of our many diplomatic and economic tools—if only we have the political will and moral courage to use these tools.

One tool is the Countries of Particular Concern list.

I believe it was a mistake to take Vietnam off the list. I agree with the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom that Secretary Rice should redesignate Vietnam a Country of Particular Concern.

I believe the U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, Michael Marine, should provide financial support to the loved ones of the political detainees, using the Human Rights Defender's fund. The wives of many of these political prisoners are left without any financial support. We have a moral commitment not just to these people who have been imprisoned unjustly; we have a moral obligation to relieve the financial burden that these arrests have caused for the families of the brave.

Vietnam claims it has made significant progress in allowing more freedom of religion under its Ordinance on Belief and Religion, but this is simply untrue. Under this law, affiliated organizations of recognized churches may “register for religious operation.” In practice, however, only 2.5 percent of all house churches have been approved for registration. And of the one hundred house churches that actually have been registered, only five have been registered for religious operation. No real progress has been made.

Until Vietnam makes real progress on religious freedoms and human rights, instead of paying lip service in order to get trade agreements, I will continue to press this administration to stand up for the rights of the Vietnamese people to speak their minds and practice their faith.

SUPPORT FOR H.R. 1429, IMPROVING HEAD START ACT

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 14, 2007

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1429, the Improving Head Start Act. Having had the opportunity to serve on the Education and Workforce committee for 6 years, I am very pleased to have the opportunity today to finally vote for a Head Start reauthorization bill that will improve on the success of this critical program.

Head Start is one of the most successful programs funded by Congress. Research shows that children who attend Head Start enter school better prepared, are less likely to need special education services, and are more likely to graduate. The Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank reported a few years ago that there is actually a 16 percent rate of return on investment in quality early education. In my opinion, funding education for our youngest children is the most efficient and important investment we can make.

The biggest challenge facing Head Start has been lack of resources. In Minnesota, less than half the children eligible for Head Start are served due to funding shortages. And nationwide, only 2 percent of children eligible for Early Head Start receive services. We can do better. Increasing access to Head Start is good for children, for families, for communities and for the federal budget.

The Improving Head Start Act will expand and improve Head Start. It will allow access for 10,000 more children and prioritize expanding Early Head Start. It increases teacher qualifications and helps to attract quality teachers by improving salaries. It will also improve coordination with other early education programs, ensure that parents continue to play