

top five economies in the world, despite its Socialist Marxist ideology that puts a limitation on greater freedom for its citizens and transparency in government. Beijing is doing its best to feed more than 1 billion people, and we must also credit Beijing for bringing North Korea to the negotiating table, thwarting North Korea's efforts to produce nuclear weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Speaker, do we want to build on the positive? Do we want to avert a crisis? Or, do we want to add fuel to the fire? I submit that H. Res. 626 tilts favorably towards Taiwan, and I suggest to my colleagues that we ought not to pursue this course of action anymore than we should adopt legislation or resolutions that favor China over Taiwan.

Having said this, I will not oppose this resolution but I will again ask if it is necessary and, in closing, I will suggest that it is not. I will also suggest that it is in our interest to work collectively and bilaterally with both Taiwan and China to prevent another standoff in the Taiwan Straits.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today in support of our continued support and defense of Taiwan. The United States has stood on the forefront of making the World safe and as a protector of democratic freedoms. To that end, Taiwan has emerged as flag bearer of not only democratic principles but as a strong economic partner.

Although Taiwan enjoys a robust economy and has a strong trade-relationship with countries within Asia they do not have the ability to defend themselves militarily if the need arises. The United States has played a major part in the development of Taiwan's economy over the past 40 years. In order to continue this relationship, we should help to guarantee their safety.

On a recent trip to Taiwan, I was pleased to learn of the great strides they have made in a short period of time to become such a powerful economic power. Although they have an aggressive economy, they have also developed a society built on the safety and health of its citizens. A first class government funded healthcare system that provides service to over 90 percent of its people, speaks to their commitment to its citizens. A bustling industrial sector where the creation of new innovations for an ever increasing technological world is a top priority. They are also fulfilling their commitment to a secure international port with 21st century safeguards to ensure that all shipments are properly inspected and tracked before transshipment to other parts of the world.

Recently, I participated in a ceremony in the Capitol where agreements Taiwan has made to purchase billions of dollars in U.S. agricultural goods over the next several years were signed. I was a signatory to several of them as a witness.

Taiwan's continued commitment to trade in good faith with the United States should not be one sided and we should do our part in upholding our agreement with them as it pertains to the Taiwan Relations Act. I am in full support of H. Res. 676 and ask my colleagues to support the resolution and Taiwan.

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

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and 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. SHERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 676.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FOREIGN SERVICE VICTIMS OF TERRORISM ACT OF 2007

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2828) to provide compensation to relatives of United States citizens who were killed as a result of the bombings of United States Embassies in East Africa on August 7, 1998, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2828

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 "Foreign Service Victims of Terrorism Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. DEATH GRATUITY.

Section 413 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 3973) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), in the first sentence, by striking "at the time of death" and inserting "at level II of the Executive Schedule at the time of death, except that in the case of foreign national employees, foreign nationals appointed under section 303, and locally employed staff the amount shall be equal to one year's basic salary at the highest step of the highest grade on the local compensation plan of the country in which the foreign national or locally employed staffer was being paid";

(2) by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (e); and

(3) by inserting after subsection (c) the following new subsection:

"(d) In addition to a death gratuity payment under subsection (a), the Secretary or the head of the relevant United States Government agency is authorized to provide for payment to the surviving dependents of a Foreign Service employee or a Government executive branch employee, if such Foreign Service employee or Government executive branch employee is subject to the authority of the chief of mission pursuant to section 207, of an amount equal to a maximum of eight times the salary of such Foreign Service employee or Government executive branch employee if such Foreign Service employee or Government executive branch employee is killed as a result of an act of international terrorism. Such payment shall be accorded the same treatment as a payment made under subsection (a). For purposes of this subsection, the term 'act of international terrorism' has the meaning given such term in section 2331(1) of title 18, United States Code."

SEC. 3. PAYMENTS TO FAMILIES OF CERTAIN VICTIMS OF TERRORISM.

Subject to the availability of appropriations specifically for the purpose specified in this section as provided in appropriations Acts enacted on or after October 1, 2007, and notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of State shall pay the maximum amount of payment under section

413(d) of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (as amended by section 2(3) of this Act) to an individual described in such section 413(d) or to an individual who was otherwise serving at a United States diplomatic or consular mission abroad without a regular salary who was killed as a result of an act of international terrorism (as such term is defined in section 2331(1) of title 18, United States Code) that occurred between January 1, 1998, and the date of the enactment of this Act, including the victims of the bombing of August 7, 1998, in Nairobi, Kenya. Such a payment shall be deemed to be a payment under section 413(d) of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, except that for purposes of this section, such payment shall, with respect to a United States citizen receiving payment under this section, be in an amount equal to ten times the salary specified in this section. For purposes of this section and section 413(d) of such Act, with respect to a United States citizen receiving payment under this section, the salary to be used for purposes of determining such payment shall be \$94,000.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days 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 New Jersey?

There was no objection.

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

I rise in strong support of this bill. The legislation before us recognizes one of the most tragic and unfortunate incidents in the history of the Department of State. It has been more than 9 years since the brutal bombings of our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania occurred. Twelve Americans perished in these terrorist attacks, and many other foreign nationals did in both of the attacks. These murders marked the true beginning of the war on terror, when al Qaeda targeted innocent Americans abroad merely because of their association with our great country.

Of those twelve victims, five were foreign service officers including Julian Bartley, Sr., the Deputy Chief of Mission, and his young son who was interning at the Embassy when al Qaeda struck. I had visited the Embassy just several weeks before and had a conversation with Julian and knew him personally even as he worked here on the Hill before going to Kenya.

It was later determined in an official accountability report that the security arrangements at the Nairobi Embassy were inadequate, as were the State Department's risk assessment procedures. The Nairobi Embassy was not classified as a hardship post. It was maddening to learn that the Ambassador in Nairobi had pleaded with the Department for additional security measures, but to no

avail. Worse, upon returning to the United States, many of the relatives of those killed were treated dismissively by the Department of State. The expression “pouring salt on a wound” does not do justice to the bureaucratic manner in which the government addressed the relatives’ claims. It was truly a disgrace.

The families of the victims are still awaiting sufficient compensation. The fact that this tragedy occurred so far away should not undermine the care given to the victims’ families, whose lives will be forever altered by this incident. No amount of money will bring back those loved ones. However, in cooperation with Representative JACKSON, our committee is making an effort to ensure that the families have some added degree of comfort.

The bill is also intended to send a message to the State Department: protect your employees; and God forbid, if incidents like this occur again, be attentive and sensitive to the families.

This legislation will create a new program whereby the Secretary of State or the head of a relevant agency may compensate the relatives of a U.S. Government employee killed in an act of international terrorism up to eight times the individual’s salary. The program would include foreign service nationals. It will also require the Secretary of State to retroactively compensate those U.S. Government employees killed in an act of terrorism since 1998, which would include the 12 victims in the Nairobi attack. Those victims will receive an award commensurate with the total aid package available to a victim of terror today under this amendment.

It saddens me that such legislation is necessary, but I am heartened that perhaps this legislative act will bring some small degree of closure to the families of the Nairobi bombing victims.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, on August 7, 1998, American embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania were the target of almost simultaneous terrorist bombings, killing hundreds and wounding thousands of people.

Among those killed were 12 American Embassy employees and dozens of foreign service nationals. These public servants paid with their lives while performing their duties, and it is our responsibility to ensure that their families receive proper compensation.

I strongly support H.R. 2828, introduced by my distinguished colleagues Congressman JACKSON and our Republican whip, ROY BLUNT, which provides compensation to the families of the United States Embassy employees who perished due to acts of international terrorism.

This bill increases the death gratuity for foreign service officers and foreign

national employees. It also authorizes additional compensation to family members of foreign service employees or government executive branch employees killed as a result of an act of international terrorism. It also requires the Secretary of State to provide compensation to foreign service employees killed in an act of international terrorism that occurred from 1998 to the date of the enactment of this act, including the victims of the Nairobi bombing.

I urge all my colleagues to support this bill and provide proper compensation to the families of the United States Embassy employees killed by brutal acts of international terrorism.

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the majority whip, JIM CLYBURN, who assisted greatly in helping to move this bill forward through the Congress; and others, SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, who had a very strong interest in this legislation. We had been dealing with this for some time, ever since the tragedy occurred; and we have been looking forward to a vehicle that we could bring this very important legislation forward.

□ 1230

And so we really are appreciative of the fine work of Mr. CLYBURN and the principal sponsor of the legislation in the Appropriations Committee, Representative JESSE L. JACKSON, Jr., Second District of Illinois, a member of the Appropriations Committee, who put in tireless effort to bring this legislation forward.

Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. I thank you, Chairman PAYNE, for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2828, a bill to compensate relatives of U.S. citizens killed in the 1998 embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania.

I introduced this bill with Republican Whip ROY BLUNT, and it has solid bipartisan support, including 19 members of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

On August 7, 1998, an al Qaeda truck bomb exploded at the American embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and in Nairobi, Kenya. The embassy bombing in Nairobi killed 12 Americans serving their government. The Americans killed in the embassy bombings were, and Mr. BLUNT will now join me in calling their names, Sergeant Nathan Aliganga, United States Marine Corps; Consul General Julian Bartley; his son, Jay Bartley; Jean Rose Dalizu; Molly Huckaby Hardy; Staff Sergeant Kenneth Hobson II.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the sponsor of the bill for not only allowing me to co-sponsor it with him, but for allowing me today to assist and recognize the 12 individuals whose lives were lost in this terrible attack on our embassies. And let me do that now.

First of all, Prabhi Kavaler, Arlene Kirk, Dr. Louise Martin, Michelle O’Connor, Master Sergeant Sherry Lynn Olds from the Air Force, and Tom Shah.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. The State Department was negligent in not responding to concerns raised about the danger and exposure of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi to a vehicle bomb attack. The U.S. intelligence community had been surveilling several al Qaeda associates in Nairobi for 2 years, yet that information was not shared with the diplomats bidding on assignments in Nairobi, Kenya. Prior to the attack, then-U.S. Ambassador Prudence Bushnell warned the State Department about the vulnerability of the Nairobi Embassy and requested more security.

Members of al Qaeda were convicted of the bombing in New York Federal District Court in 2001. Government witnesses at the trial testified that intelligence and security reports from several different sources had confirmed the presence of an al Qaeda cell in Nairobi and the likelihood that the location of the embassy exposed the employees to an attack given the proximity of the street, but the State Department failed to act on these intelligence reports.

The Accountability Review Board, established to examine the facts and circumstances surrounding the embassy bombings, found that the bombings were the result of a “collective failure of several administrations and Congresses over the past decade to invest adequate efforts and resources to reduce the vulnerability of U.S. diplomatic missions around the world to terrorist attacks.”

Like the families of those killed on 9/11, the families compensated in H.R. 2828 also suffer a similar heartache and pain from an al Qaeda attack on U.S. soil. Several of the victims’ children still suffer from serious emotional problems. However, unlike quick action taken by Congress and the executive branch to respond to the needs of families of 9/11, these families have waited more than 9 years without any meaningful compensation.

Former Secretary of State Albright has stated publicly that her administration failed to help the families because the attacks happened thousands of miles away and because the Department failed to respond to the pre-attack intelligence report of the serious threat of the al Qaeda organization in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. Mr. Speaker, this bill is the very least that a grateful Nation can do.

I would like to thank Republican Whip ROY BLUNT and his staff member, Brian Diffl, for working with us on this bill. I would also like to thank CBC Chairwoman KILPATRICK and her staff member, James Williams; DAN BURTON and his staff member, Brian Fauls, as well as the committee staff of Chairman LANTOS, Chairman PAYNE and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for all the work they did on this bill.

I want to recognize the work of Karen Williams, counsel for the Nairobi Embassy families, and especially Consul General Bartley's daughter, Edith, who has brought this issue to the attention of the Congress and has worked tirelessly to get us to where we are today.

Mr. Speaker, present with us today in the House are members of the Bartley family, members of Ms. Kavalier's family, and members of the Kirk family. And I understand that it's not appropriate or within House rules to acknowledge specifically their location in the House Chamber, but they are here today on this momentous occasion.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time. I urge an "aye" vote on H.R. 2828.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished minority whip, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the original cosponsor of this legislation.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank Mr. POE for the good work he has done on this legislation and the recognition today to be allowed to speak for a few minutes.

On August 7 of 1998, al Qaeda launched a devastating and meticulously coordinated attack on American people residing in foreign countries, but on American soil because they were at our embassies. On that day, 12 Americans and 200 Kenyans were killed at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, and another 11 lives were taken at Dar es Salaam, the former capital of Tanzania.

Though other indications existed, these bombings represented the clearest signs to date that Osama bin Laden had declared war on our country and its people. It was a declaration that fell largely on deaf ears, as my good friend, Mr. JACKSON, just pointed out and has been acknowledged by our government. Had we been paying closer attention to that declaration, it's possible that we could have been more prepared for the terrible attacks that day and those attacks that came just 3 years later.

The legislation before us today speaks to an issue I've been working on since 2002 when, at the time, I introduced and the House passed the Embassy Victims Compensation Act. At that time, my good friend MAXINE WATERS was my cosponsor and an active advocate in dealing with this issue, and the House as a whole stepped forward and dealt with this issue, now 5 years ago. It was our first effort at that time to recognize the profound sacrifices made by those Americans that have been mentioned here today, and just as important, that their families made and continue to make.

Today, we take a step toward completing the work this House started 5 years ago. The families of those who lost so much at the hands of al Qaeda deserve this bill, and I'm proud to have been involved in it.

I would also like to especially thank Congressman JESSE JACKSON, Jr., who has helped make this bill happen this

year. He took up the mantle of the hard work that needed to be done; he was tireless in insisting that our Nation deal with this issue and deal with it now.

Along with JESSE JACKSON, I would like to recognize the incredible and patient work of Edith Bartley, who lost her father and her brother in the Nairobi attack. For almost a decade now, she has worked to point out the sacrifices made by our State Department personnel, as well as some of the shortcomings of that agency's treatment of her family and others both before and after the attacks.

Obviously, nothing we do today can replace those who were lost nearly a decade ago, but I'm hopeful that this effort, if nothing else, will demonstrate that we have not forgotten those who died in this horrific attack. And we will never forget the enduring lessons that we've learned from it.

Mr. PAYNE. I yield as much time as she may consume to the gentlelady from the 35th District of California, chairperson of the Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity, Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS.

Ms. WATERS. Thank you very much for yielding this time to me, Congressman PAYNE.

I rushed from my last appointment to be here because this is a day that we have waited for far too long. And I certainly appreciate all of the work that you have done, and certainly the work of Congressman JESSE JACKSON, Jr., and the work of Members on both sides of the aisle. And Congressman BLUNT is correct; we did coauthor this legislation I think some 6 years ago, but we have only been able to stick with this legislation because of one person, in my estimation, and that is Edith Bartley. She has walked these halls. She has lobbied. She has educated us. She has always been pleasant. She has been patient and cooperative. You couldn't have a better daughter. You couldn't have a better child. You couldn't have a better family member not only looking out for the family, but for all of the families who have not yet been treated fairly and compensated for what happened to them.

Mr. Speaker, as it was said, 9 years ago, on August 7, 1998, terrorists affiliated with al Qaeda bombed United States Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. These terrorist attacks were one of the first warnings of the threat posed by al Qaeda, the international terrorist organization that hijacked American airplanes and attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 9/11 6 years ago.

The embassy bombings in Nairobi killed over 200 United States Embassy employees, 12 of whom were United States citizens, and injured thousands more. The embassy bombing in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania killed 11 employees and injured over 80 people. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 killed nearly 3,000 innocent people.

The United States Government provided compensation to the families of the victims of the 9/11 attacks. It is, therefore, entirely appropriate that the United States be consistent and provide compensation to the families of the victims of the embassy bombings in East Africa 3 years earlier.

So, I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill. I offer my apology and the apology of many others because it has taken so long. My sympathies to the families of the victims of those embassy bombings, as well as all of the victims of al Qaeda's acts of terror. Let us move forward so that we can finally do the right thing.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, let me once again commend the combined effort on both sides of the aisle.

As you know, this has been lingering ever since it occurred. I recall meeting with the family, very devastated by the event, but I do recall, too, that the manner in which the Department of State dealt with the issue was in very poor taste.

The family persisted. And all of the families that suffered I'm sure today are pleased that the recognition for what their family members, those who joined the Foreign Service, those who said that they wanted to contribute their careers to serving the United States of America on foreign soils in diplomatic ways. And so we are extremely pleased that this bill has finally come to fruition.

Once again, I, too, commend Ms. Bartley, who has been in my office year in and year out in a pleasant and very persistent manner. As Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS said, she is just a gem for anyone to have as their daughter.

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2828, to provide compensation to relatives of United States citizens who were killed as a result of the bombings of United States embassies in East Africa on August 7, 1998. I would like to commend my colleague, Congressman JESSE JACKSON, JR., for introducing this important and long-overdue legislation, and I would like to thank the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Congressman LANTOS, for his leadership on this important issue.

I have been pleased to work with Congressman JACKSON, and to cosponsor this bill, because I strongly believe that the relatives of the victims of the 1998 East Africa bombings have gone too long without the recognition and the compensation they need and deserve. I was also pleased to work with the Chairman of the Committee, Congressman LANTOS, to ensure that these families receive what they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware, in 1998 simultaneous bombs exploded at United States embassies in the East African capital cities of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya. These attacks, which killed hundreds of people, first brought international attention to Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda terrorist network, and stand out as one of the worst anti-American terrorist attacks preceding September 11, 2001.

Mr. Speaker, nearly a decade later, the families of those victims who died in these bombings still have not been compensated. In contrast, after the catastrophic events of September 11, Congress acted relatively quickly to set up the September 11 Victim Compensation Fund, which paid out nearly \$6 billion to 2,880 families of those injured on that catastrophic day. We have shown compassion toward those affected by terrorism, and we have shown that we can act with purpose and haste. It is now time to finally act to compensate the families of those who died in East Africa.

In the case of the Kenya bombings, a 2001 bipartisan review panel found no negligence per se, but did find that there was an "institutional failure . . . to recognize threats posed by transnational terrorism and vehicle bombs worldwide." The intelligence community had been monitoring several Al Qaeda associates in Nairobi for 2 years. That information was not shared with the diplomats bidding on assignments in Nairobi. Prior to the attack, then-Ambassador Prudence Bushnell warned the State Department about the vulnerability of the embassy and requested more security. Instead of properly addressing Bushnell's concerns, State replied: "go back to Nairobi, don't send any more cables about this or we are going to place a statement in your personnel file."

After this cavalier treatment of embassy officials in Africa, many of the relatives of those killed were treated dismissively by the State Department upon returning to the United States. Instead of compassion they found bureaucracy, and instead of recompense they found only red tape. Now, 9 years later, those families are still awaiting sufficient compensation. While no amount of money can bring back loved ones or heal the wounds this act of terrorism caused, we must make an effort to ensure that the families receive some degree of comfort.

This legislation would amend the Foreign Service Act to provide a death benefit to all U.S. Government employees abroad in U.S. diplomatic facilities who are killed in an act of international terrorism. It would retroactively require the Secretary of State to compensate those killed since 1998, including the Nairobi families, at ten times the salary of the highest paid employee in the embassy.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation recognizes one of the most tragic and unfortunate incidents in the history of the Department of State. We have waited too long to bring recognition and compensation to the families of those who perished in these tragic bombings. I am pleased to have worked with these brave families to bring this legislation, with a full compensation package, before the Committee today.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2828, as amended.

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

Mr. PAYNE. 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 motion will be postponed.

□ 1245

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Natural Resources:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 2, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI: This letter serves as my intent to resign from the House Natural Resources Committee, effective today. I appreciated the opportunity to serve on this important committee and its jurisdictional prerogatives that affect the resources on Federal lands across our nation.

Sincerely,

KEVIN McCARTHY,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Agriculture:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 2, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI: This letter serves as my intent to resign from the House Agriculture Committee, effective today. I appreciated the opportunity to serve on this important committee and its jurisdictional prerogatives that affect the farmers, ranchers, and consumers of our nation.

Sincerely,

KEVIN McCARTHY,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

ETHIOPIA DEMOCRACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2007

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2003) to encourage and facilitate the consolidation of peace and security, respect for human rights, democracy, and economic freedom in Ethiopia, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2003

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 "Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States to—

(1) support the advancement of human rights, democracy, independence of the judiciary, freedom of the press, peacekeeping capacity building, and economic development in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia;

(2) seek the unconditional release of all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Ethiopia;

(3) foster stability, democracy, and economic development in the region;

(4) support humanitarian assistance efforts, especially in the Ogaden region;

(5) collaborate with Ethiopia in the Global War on Terror; and

(6) strengthen United States-Ethiopian relations based on the policy objectives specified in paragraphs (1) through (5).

SEC. 3. SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN ETHIOPIA.

The Secretary of State shall—

(1) provide financial support to local and national human rights groups and other relevant civil society organizations to help strengthen human rights monitoring and regular reporting on human rights conditions in Ethiopia;

(2) provide legal support, as needed, for political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Ethiopia and assist local, national, and international groups that are active in monitoring the status of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Ethiopia;

(3) seek to promote and bolster the independence of the Ethiopian judiciary through—

(A) facilitation of joint discussions between court personnel, officials from the Ethiopian Ministry of Justice, relevant members of the legislature, and civil society representatives on international human rights standards; and

(B) encouraging exchanges between Ethiopian and United States jurists, law schools, law professors, and law students, especially in legal fields such as constitutional law, role of the judiciary, due process, political and voting rights, criminal law and procedure, and discrimination;

(4) establish a program, in consultation with Ethiopian civil society, to provide for a judicial monitoring process, consisting of indigenous organizations, international organizations, or both, to monitor judicial proceedings throughout Ethiopia, with special focus on unwarranted government intervention on matters that are strictly judicial in nature, and to report on actions needed to strengthen an independent judiciary;

(5) establish a program, in consultation with Ethiopian civil society, and provide support to other programs, to strengthen independent media in Ethiopia, including training, and technical support;

(6) expand the Voice of America's Ethiopia program;

(7) support efforts of the international community to gain full and unfettered access to the Ogaden region for—

(A) humanitarian assistance organizations; and

(B) independent human rights experts; and

(8) work with appropriate departments and agencies of the Government of the United States and appropriate officials of foreign governments—

(A) to identify members of the Mengistu Haile Mariam regime and officials of the current Government of Ethiopia who were engaged in gross human rights violations, including those individuals who may be residing in the United States; and