

In 2002, the Tibetan Policy Act was ushered through Congress under the leadership of former chairmen Lantos and Hyde, and signed into law. Amongst its components was a U.S. commitment to the economic and cultural preservation of Tibetans inside Tibet. I believe that this resolution reaffirms this commitment.

For decades, Beijing has oppressed the Tibetan people. As the State Department's most recent annual report on human rights found, tight control on religious expression and denial of other basic human rights are cause for serious concern. China's further crackdowns on peaceful protestors of the Olympic torch relay serve to further affirm the State Department's report.

At the center of international media coverage of China's crackdown on Tibetan Buddhism is Radio Free Asia, a non-profit broadcast corporation that provides alternative news sources in repressive countries. In addition to covering the abuses wrought against the Tibetans, Radio Free Asia has also documented the Chinese destruction of precious Tibetan religious relics and manuscripts. It is not just the ethnic discrimination against Tibetans that gives me pause, but also the efforts to erase their culture.

I commend Radio Free Asia on their tireless efforts to broadcast truth, and I commend you, Madam Speaker, on your work on this resolution.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, as the Chinese Government was repressing peaceful Tibetan protests last month, I visited Dharamshala, India—the recognized home of Tibetans in exile—with Speaker Pelosi and several of my colleagues.

I had the honor and privilege to meet His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, and I was moved by the infinite patience and courage he exudes in the face of overwhelming odds. I was touched by the large population of Tibetans in exile who worry about family members they have left behind. These are people who left their homeland due to repression of religion and language by the Chinese Government and the constant violations of basic human rights and dignity in their own land.

The Speaker, along with everyone else on our trip, was incensed at the atrocities conducted by China. Our first order of business upon returning to the United States was to draft this important resolution before the House today.

Through this resolution, we call on the Government of the People's Republic of China to end its crackdown on nonviolent Tibetan protestors and its continuing cultural, religious, economic, and linguistic repression inside Tibet and to begin a dialogue directly with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The freedom of press is something we take for granted in the United States but Tibetans unfortunately do not enjoy this privilege, as all press inside Tibet, and all of China in fact, is closely monitored and controlled by the state. This resolution calls on the Chinese Government to allow independent international monitors and journalists, free and unfettered access to Tibet.

It is clear by the conviction and sentencing of human rights activist Hu Jia, who has been an outspoken critic of the human rights record of the Chinese Government and called on the international community to hold Beijing responsible for the promises it made when bidding to host the Olympic games, that China

has no intention of unilaterally changing its human rights record. The government of China has been and continues to be an abuser of basic human rights despite the State Department decision to not include China in a list of countries that most systemically violate human rights. This resolution asks the United States Department of State to publicly issue a statement reconsidering its decision.

The cause of the Tibetan people is a desire for freedom of religion, freedom to speak their own language, and to express their unique identity. It is a cause every American can relate to. I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this resolution—to vote in support of Tibet.

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, we've read and seen on the news the accounting of numerous deaths following the anti-government protests in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa. The proindependence protests were initiated by ethnic Tibetans commemorating the 49th anniversary of the failed 1959 uprising that sent the Dalai Lama into exile. China is now facing mounting international pressure, including the U.S., to demonstrate restraint in dealing with the dissent.

I support the aspirations of the Tibetan people to peacefully protest for independence and safeguard their distinct identity by promoting the elimination of all forms of racial, religious, and linguistic discrimination against them. The People's Republic of China, PRC, has failed miserably to guarantee the preservation of these rights for the Tibetan people and as a result, Tibetans remain plagued by poverty, illiteracy, and a limited infrastructure.

I was privileged to participate in the Speaker's congressional delegation to India last month when we visited the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala. During our visit we discussed the tragic violence that has been taking place in Tibet with the Dalai Lama and we agreed that an open dialogue with the PRC and international pressure are the most effective methods at our disposal for ending the crisis.

This resolution was born out of those discussions with the Dalai Lama. It condemns the government of the PRC for its bloody suppression of the Tibetan people and calls on the government of the PRC to invite the Dalai Lama to China for the purpose of dialogue to resolve the root causes of unrest in the Tibetan areas of China.

Free expression and the right to dissent are defining elements of a democracy. That's why it is essential for us to speak out in condemnation of China's repression of religion, its complicity in the Sudanese atrocities in Darfur and its oppression of Tibet.

I urge my colleagues to pass this important resolution.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, today, the 2008 Olympic torch arrives for the first time on American soil. It almost didn't make it. After violence erupted in Paris and London between police and demonstrators protesting Chinese human rights abuses, there were serious discussions about ending the torch's journey across the world before it arrived in the United States.

Despite ongoing complaints by the international community about China's human rights abuses—and its restrictions on freedoms of speech—China refuses to take corrective action.

This resolution is an attempt to pressure the Chinese Government to address international concerns of human rights abuses in that coun-

try. This resolution is also a reaction to six decades of cultural and religious repression of the Tibetan people. Now is the time to bring the suffering of the Tibetan people to an end. I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution to encourage the People's Republic of China to enter into discussions with the Dalai Lama and respect the human rights of all its citizens.

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, 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. BERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1077.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. BERMAN. Madam 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.

□ 2030

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

NEWBORN SCREENING SAVES LIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, this week the Nation is celebrating National Public Health Week, and I can think of no better way for this House to have begun the celebration than by the passage of today's packet of critical bipartisan public health legislation.

I commend Chairman DINGELL and Chairman PALLONE for their leadership in helping to pass this group of bills which will make a significant contribution to improving our environment and the quality of our Nation's health.

Regrettably, I was unable to return from Los Angeles in time to be a part of today's floor discussion. I am particularly pleased, however, that the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act, S. 1858, as amended by my bill, H.R. 3825, was one of the public health bills that passed today.

I extend my sincere thanks to my colleagues, Congressman MICHAEL SIMPSON, TOM REYNOLDS, and HENRY WAXMAN for their original cosponsorship of H.R. 3825, the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act. Their commitment and steadfast efforts have helped

make possible the passage of this significant piece of legislation.

In addition, I thank Senators DODD, ORRIN HATCH, HILLARY CLINTON, and EDWARD KENNEDY for championing the Senate companion bill, S. 1858.

I also thank the coalition of public health groups, especially the March of Dimes, for working with us over the last 4 years on this critical issue.

Madam Speaker, approximately 5,000 babies are born each year with detectable and treatable disorders. Forty years ago, these disorders would have gone undetected until symptoms appeared. This resulted in otherwise preventable deaths or lifelong suffering from disabling consequences such as mental retardation and cerebral palsy.

Today we have the ability to give a newborn baby a simple blood test that can identify many life-threatening genetic illnesses before symptoms occur. Fortunately, this early identification makes it possible to treat babies in time to prevent severe disorders, serious complications and even death.

Yet tragically in the United States, approximately 1,000 infants a year die or are permanently disabled from these treatable disorders. These preventable tragedies are largely due to the fact that our country lacks a national newborn screening standard. Without a national standard, our States have great disparity and variation in the quality and number of newborn screening tests an infant may receive.

Today's passage of Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act is a major step toward correcting these disparities because it encourages States to uniformly test for and keep updated a scientifically recommended panel of disorders. And it makes available the resources States need to expand and improve their newborn screening programs.

The Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act also has the potential to save millions of dollars in health care costs for families and States because it empowers parents and health care professionals with knowledge about the importance of newborn screening and follow-up care.

In addition, the bill requires the Centers for Disease Control to ensure the quality of laboratories involved in newborn screening and it establishes a system for collecting and analyzing data to help researchers develop better detection, prevention, and treatment tragedies.

Madam Speaker, by passing the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act, this Congress seized an opportunity to protect vulnerable babies from undue suffering and death and to give them a chance for a long and healthy life. Once again, I thank my colleagues for voting to pass this critical piece of public health legislation.

RAPE OF A LITTLE GIRL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, in the early morning hours of March 2, 1998, 10 years ago, Patrick Kennedy of Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, called 911 to report that his 8-year-old stepdaughter had been dragged from her garage to the side yard and raped by two neighborhood boys. Kennedy told the 911 operator that he saw one of the boys riding away from the house on a bicycle, so a sheriff's deputy that was immediately in the area responded to the complaint and started looking for the culprit, but he did not find the individual.

The deputy noticed that the crime scene in the backyard was somehow inconsistent with rape, and he noticed that the dog was still sleeping undisturbed in the grass. Be that as it may, Kennedy led the deputy to the victim, his stepdaughter's bedroom, where she was lying on the bed wearing a T-shirt and wrapped in a filthy, bloody cargo blanket.

Kennedy informed the deputy that he had carried his stepdaughter like an infant from the yard and placed her in a bathtub to clean her. But the deputy noticed there was no blood on Kennedy's clothes.

When the deputy tried to question the victim, Kennedy constantly interrupted and answered the questions for his stepdaughter. The victim said that she was trying to sell Girl Scout cookies when the two neighborhood boys dragged her from the garage and raped her on the grass nearby.

The victim was taken to Children's Hospital for emergency surgery to repair serious injuries to her body. At the hospital, the victim told hospital personnel and a psychologist that the two neighborhood boys had raped her, but she finally told a family member that Patrick Kennedy, her stepfather, had assaulted her.

The investigation began to focus on Kennedy because his story did not make any sense to the investigators. And then the police learned more about Patrick Kennedy and who he was. Before he called 911, Kennedy called his boss at a local moving company to say he wasn't going to work that morning and he asked a co-worker how to get blood out of a carpet. The co-worker later indicated at trial that Kennedy sounded nervous, and he said his stepdaughter had "just become a young lady."

Kennedy also called B&B Carpet Cleaning at 7:30, 2 hours before the 911 call, and he asked how to clean and remove blood stains from a carpet. Police then found a 1-gallon jug of carpet cleaner and the bloody towels Kennedy used to clean up his crime and hide the evidence.

A forensic lab confirmed that the victim had no grass or soil stains on her clothes so she could not have been assaulted in the grass. The victim later told her mother that Kennedy had raped her. At the trial, she testified

that when she woke up that morning, he was on top of her, covering her eyes with his hands, and that he raped her in her own bed. The victim said she fainted and later threw up.

A jury convicted Patrick Kennedy of aggravated rape of his own 8-year-old stepdaughter and sentenced him to death in Louisiana. Under Louisiana law, a person who commits sexual assault of a child under the age of 12 is subject to the death penalty. Kennedy has appealed to the Supreme Court, and next week in Kennedy v. Louisiana, the Supreme Court will hear the case and decide if rape of a child is constitutional under the eighth amendment and whether it violates the cruel and unusual punishment provision of the eighth amendment.

No one has been executed in the United States for a crime other than murder since 1964. Of 3,000 inmates on death row, only two face the death penalty for nonhomicide, and one is Patrick Kennedy.

In addition to Louisiana, Georgia, Montana, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Texas have laws allowing death penalty for rape of a child. In 1977, the Supreme Court decided that the death sentence for rape of an adult woman was unconstitutional, but they never ruled on the issue of sexual assault and rape of a child. Thus, this case appears before the Supreme Court.

Louisiana has interpreted the Supreme Court's previous rulings not to apply in Louisiana because the sexual assault was of a child and that is why this case appears before the Supreme Court to make this decision.

Madam Speaker, this crime is senseless. We can sometimes understand why people commit the crime of theft, we can understand why sometimes people commit the crime of burglary, and even sometimes commit the crime of murder, but there can never be a time in our culture when we understand why a person rapes an 8-year-old girl. It is the ultimate crime of degradation. It is the ultimate type of torture, and it is the ultimate crime against little girls and their identity. It is worse than murder. And in this instance, the victim has a daily reminder of the crime that has ruined her life. It is an attempt to destroy not the life but the soul of this victim. So justice must be pronounced in this case. Society will be judged and the Supreme Court will be judged by the way it treats the innocent among us. Hopefully this case will be upheld by the Supreme Court.

And that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)