

Even under house arrest, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi demonstrated unwavering and determined political leadership, provided inspiration, and garnered respect from the people of Burma and democracy-loving people around the world.

As one of the world's only imprisoned recipients, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her nonviolent struggle against oppression, with the Norwegian Nobel Committee citing her as "one of the most extraordinary examples of civil courage in Asia in recent decades."

Today, however, we must not rejoice. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has called on all world leaders to stay focused on the plight of each one of the millions of Burmese struggling against the military rule, on the over two thousand two hundred political prisoners suffering unjustly in Burmese prisons, and the thousands of women and children being systematically raped and taken as sex slaves and porters for the military whose rule they suffer under.

Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded both of the highest civilian awards in the United States: the Presidential Medal of Honor in 2000 which recognizes those individuals who have made "an especially meritorious contribution to the security or national interests of the United States, world peace, cultural or other significant public or private endeavors" and, in 2008, the Congressional Medal of Honor for her "courageous and unwavering commitment to peace, nonviolence, human rights, and democracy in Burma."

In one of her most famous speeches, she poignantly conveyed: "It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it." Even Aung San Suu Kyi herself freely notes that her release does not constitute a change in the military junta regime's choices in leadership. Six days before her release were the highly-contested November 7th Burmese elections, which were clearly based on a fundamentally flawed process and demonstrated the regime's continued preference for repression and restriction.

Aung San Suu Kyi's freedom must not be restrained. She must be able to travel freely without fear of her recapture at any given moment. Furthermore, this resolution calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Burma, including Aung San Suu Kyi's supporters in the National League for Democracy and ordinary citizens of Burma, including ethnic minorities, who publicly and courageously speak out against the regime's many injustices.

The ruling junta in Burma must be denied hard currency to continue its campaign of repression and we can do that by working with governments around the world to strengthen sanction regimes against Burma. And, it is time for the Administration to appoint a United States Special Coordinator for Burma.

Madam Speaker, today the House of Representatives has the opportunity to celebrate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's freedom. And, yet, we celebrate with a heavy heart for all of the millions still suffering in Burma. I urge my colleagues to stand firmly in solidarity with Aung San Suu Kyi and the people of Burma with your support of the passage of this resolution, human rights, an end to the junta-imposed vio-

lence, democratic progress, and for the release of all prisoners of conscience in Burma.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ENACTMENT OF NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE

HON. CHELLIE PINGREE

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 15, 2010

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the District of Columbia for its recent enactment of the National Popular Vote bill, which would guarantee the Presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District.

Just a few weeks ago, Mayor Fenty signed this important legislation, which was passed by unanimous consent by the D.C. Council. National Popular Vote is now law in 7 jurisdictions, and has been passed by 30 legislative chambers in 21 states.

The shortcomings of the current system stem from the winner-take-all rule. Presidential candidates have no reason to pay attention to the concerns of voters in states where they are comfortably ahead or hopelessly behind. In 2008, candidates concentrated over two-thirds of their campaign visits and ad money in just six closely divided "battleground" states. A total of 98 percent of their resources went to just 15 states. Voters in two thirds of the states are essentially just spectators to presidential elections.

Under the National Popular Vote, all the electoral votes from the enacting states would be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and DC. The bill assures that every vote will matter in every state in every Presidential election.

I look forward to more states, all across the country passing this important piece of legislation.

PRIVATE ISAAC T. CORTES POST OFFICE

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 14, 2010

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6205, to honor Private Isaac T. Cortes, a Bronx native who was killed in combat in Iraq.

This legislation would rename the post office in his hometown in his honor.

Private Cortes was a son of the Bronx—he grew up in the Parkchester neighborhood, attending local public schools and Christopher Columbus High School.

His love for his hometown led him to work as a security guard at Yankee Stadium, a job that he was so proud to hold and that inspired him to a lifetime of service. While planning to become a New York City Police Officer, he decided to strengthen his skills and serve his country by joining the U.S. Army in 2006.

Private Cortes knew that this choice was dangerous. He also knew he would likely be sent to Iraq.

His family worried for him, but he knew what he had to do.

After training at Fort Benning and Fort Drum, Private Cortes was sent to Iraq in September of 2007. As a rifleman in the Infantry Squad with Charlie Troop, 1-71 Cavalry Squadron, Private Cortes performed weapons searches and humanitarian aid missions to help the local Iraqi people.

He loved the Army, and was prepared to make it his career. His family has described how proud he was to protect his country. He said the military was his "calling."

On November 27, 2007, just after Thanksgiving, Private Cortes was out on one of his combat patrols when an improvised explosive device was detonated near his vehicle in Amerli, Iraq—about 100 miles north of Baghdad.

Private Cortes was killed instantly, along with Specialist Benjamin Garrison, in the roadside attack. He was only 26 years old.

His awards and honors include the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the Army Service Ribbon.

The Bronx, the Congress and the Nation will always remember Private Cortes as a decorated soldier. But, I would also like to take a moment to ensure we forever remember Isaac, the man.

Isaac lived by the motto "Go big or go home." He was known for his big heart and his loving ways, which his family continues in his honor through blood donation events and clothing, food and toy drives.

He was known to his neighbors as a smiling face and a helpful hand, always willing to help carry groceries.

Even while overseas, his family was always in his heart, including his parents, grandparents, brother, nieces, aunts, uncles and cousins. And above all, he loved the little girl that he raised as his own daughter.

His family has kept his memory alive, and today we take the next step in honoring this Bronx native and his service to the United States.

Renaming the post office in the neighborhood where he grew up after him will serve as a reminder to us all of his courage, integrity and sacrifice. This legislation will ensure that his service and his spirit will never be forgotten.

WILL CHRISTIANITY SURVIVE IN IRAQ?

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 15, 2010

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I submit for the RECORD a letter I received from the Chaldean Assyrian Syriac Council of America regarding the plight of Iraq's ancient Christian community, which is increasingly under assault and facing near extinction from the lands they have inhabited for centuries. The Wall Street Journal just yesterday noted on its editorial page that "some still speak the Aramaic, the ancient language of Jesus Christ."

The Journal further noted that of "the 100,000 Christians who once lived in Mosul, Iraq, only some 5,000 are still there."

While the situation in Iraq is perhaps the most glaring, it is but representative of a larger trend in the Middle East where religious minorities face growing discrimination, repression and outright persecution. The Journal continued, "In Egypt, Coptic Christians have been brutalized. Assaults on churches increase around Easter or Christmas, as worshipers attempt to observe holy days."

During this season of Advent as millions around the world anticipate Christmas, let us be mindful of the fear gripping these communities and commit ourselves to prioritizing their protection and preservation throughout the Middle East. We have a moral obligation to do nothing less. For as the famed abolitionist William Wilberforce once said, "Having heard all this, you may choose to look the other way, but you can never again say that you did not know."

I close with the solemn warning of the Chaldean Assyrian Syriac Council of America to President Obama, in a letter sent this November, in which they noted that the current situation in Iraq "promises more innocent Christian blood in Iraq, more turmoil in that country, and more shame for America."

CHALDEAN ASSYRIAN SYRIAC
COUNCIL
OF AMERICA,

Southfield, MI, December 6, 2010.

Congressman FRANK WOLF,
House of Representatives, Cannon Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN WOLF: We are witnessing a tragic and historic event: The end of Iraq's native Christian community. And, even more tragically, this has happened due in part because of failed U.S. Policy, with the majority of congressional members taking little or no notice of the destruction of an ethnic and religious identity few know about.

The Christians of Iraq are also known as Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syriacs or Arameans (or even ChaldoAssyrians or Chaldean Syriac Assyrians). They are the heirs of the ancient and pre-Christian civilization of Mesopotamia, the descents of the Assyrians and Babylonians of old. They are also the descents of the first Semitic-speaking Christians, whose churches spanned the entire Middle East and reached China and Japan. At one time, what is today known as the Assyrian Church of the East had more adherents than the Catholic and Protestant Churches combined. Their language is Aramaic, the language of Jesus Christ.

Mesopotamia holds a special place in Biblical history. It is the land from which Abraham left his home, 'Ur of the Chaldees,' where the Hebrew people lived their captivity and survived into the modern era; where the fall of Nineveh was foreseen by the Prophet Nahum, whose grave lies in Alqush, in Nineveh, the ancient capital of Assyria visited by the Prophet Jonah; where Nebuchadnezzar rebuilt the glorious Babylon where the Prophet Daniel lived.

During the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad (758-1258 AD), Mesopotamia's Christians contributed greatly to the advancement of Islamic civilization through their literary and scientific accomplishments, including the translations of important Greek works into Syriac (Aramaic) and Arabic. It was through such accomplishments that the West came to know of the "Golden Age" of Islamic civilization and the Caliphate of Baghdad. Indeed, the very existence of the "House of Wisdom," an institution dedicated to the translation and documentation of all knowledge on philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and other sciences into Arabic at the time owes itself to the Christians of Iraq.

As a result of the turbulence caused by a pattern of religious persecution and ethnic intolerance, the Christians of Iraq maintained themselves in the area of northern Mesopotamia or Assyria, also known as the Nineveh Plain. Here, and in the surrounding areas, they maintained their religious and ethnic identity and lived in hundreds of villages that dotted the landscape around the Tigris River until the coming modernity, at which time they suffered massacres and genocides at the hands of the Ottomans and their supporters. The First World War saw the uprooting and destruction of hundreds of Aramaic-speaking Christian villages in what is today Southeastern Turkey, Northwestern Iran, and Northern Iraq. Still, the Christian population survived, with its ethnic and religious identity intact.

The formation of the Kingdom Iraq resulted in further tragedy for Christians, with the most infamous being the Semele Massacre; where thousands of women, children, and unarmed men were slaughtered in cold blood, after being given assurances of protection by the Iraqi government. Crowds in Baghdad streets jubilantly welcomed Iraqi soldiers in what may be one of the most shameful displays in Iraqi history.

Despite the tragedies, the Christian population recovered and helped usher in an age of education and enlightenment for Iraq. Christians made up the most prominent doctors, engineers and scientists in Iraq. As any knowledgeable Iraqi would attest, they constituted, as a group, the most valuable human asset Iraq had. And despite the regime of Saddam Hussein, though politically repressed, Christians excelled in business and science.

Today, this minority may not be so lucky. The massacre that took place in the Lady of Salvation Church on Sunday, October 31, 2010, and the subsequent targeted killings afterwards, has many Christian leaders speaking of leaving Iraq for good. Recently, Archbishop Athanasios Dawood of the Syriac Orthodox Church is saying, "I say clearly and now—the Christian people should leave their beloved land of our ancestors and escape the premeditated ethnic cleansing," he told BBC. "This is better than having them killed one by one."

Scholars Eden Naby and Jamsheed Chosky recently wrote in Foreign Policy that the end of Christianity in Iraq is near. In a letter to President Obama, the Chaldean Assyrian Syriac Council of America, an organization serving this community in the United States, noted that the current situation "promises more innocent Christian blood in Iraq, more turmoil in that country, and more shame for America."

As members of the world community, and as Americans, we bear a responsibility not to allow the disintegration and destruction of this community. Clearly, our entry into Iraq has caused consequences that we cannot walk away from.

Iraq's Christians have a unique heritage whose loss will be mourned by not only Iraq, but the United States and the World. Some have proposed a wholesale evacuation of this community in order to save it. Yet, there are other viable options; such as the recognition of an autonomous zone to be protected and monitored by the United Nations and the United States. It is time to consider the plight of this community seriously and propose action.

Regards,

ISMAT KARMO,
Chairman.

H.R. 4173, THE DODD-FRANK WALL STREET REFORM AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT—CLARIFICATION OF INTENT WITH RESPECT TO TITLE V, SUBTITLE B

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 15, 2010

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, as a House conferee for H.R. 4173, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act ("Dodd-Frank Act"), and the chief sponsor of the Nonadmitted and Reinsurance Reform Act (NRRA) that was included as Title V, Subtitle B of the Dodd-Frank Act, I rise to reaffirm these important provisions. The President signed the Dodd-Frank Act into law earlier this year (P.L. 111-203).

The NRRA seeks to address an issue that most people have never heard of. But it is an issue that we in this House have successfully addressed a number of times in the past few years, and one that affects the lives of millions of Americans, individuals and businesses large and small.

Non-admitted insurance, or surplus lines, is specialty insurance you cannot purchase in the traditional, admitted market. Often called the "safety net" of the insurance market, surplus lines provides for coverage when the traditional market is not available. This is insurance for satellites, toxic chemicals, new inventions, or insurance on homes and businesses in a scarce market.

With my distinguished colleague from New Jersey, Mr. GARRETT, I sponsored the Non-admitted and Reinsurance Reform Act to fix the fragmented, cumbersome regulation of this important marketplace. The goal of the NRRA was not to eliminate regulatory protections, but to streamline the regulatory regime to enable insurers and brokers to more easily and efficiently comply with state rules and provide much-needed insurance protections to consumers. The law accomplishes this by giving sole regulatory authority over a surplus lines transaction—including the authority to collect premium taxes—to the home state of the insured.

The NRRA passed the House four times—three times as a stand-alone measure and, finally, as part of the Dodd-Frank Act. With the law's enactment, the responsibility for implementation moves to the states. I'm told that the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) is moving swiftly to draft a model agreement and statutory language to enable the states to collect and share surplus lines premium taxes. This sounds like a promising start, but only if the agreement and authorizing legislation are in keeping with the letter and spirit of the NRRA: to provide a simpler, uniform tax reporting and payment process with a single payment, to the insured's home state, for each transaction.

Premium tax simplification, while important, is but one part of the NRRA's goals. The broader intent of the law is to provide a comprehensive, uniform solution to the current regulatory mess by addressing the full spectrum of surplus lines regulation: declination and reporting requirements, broker licensing requirements and electronic processing, insurer eligibility standards, and treatment of sophisticated commercial purchasers. Most of