

basis. I also know many people in Houston and throughout the state of Texas who were affected directly by the July 2009 raid on Camp Ashraf.

Late last year, three months after U.S. forces turned over control of Camp Ashraf, Iraqi Security Forces violated the human rights of the People's Mujahideen of Iran (PMOI). Camp Ashraf detains over 3,400 exiled Iranian political dissidents, who are members of the PMOI, including over 1,000 women. The PMOI opposes the current Iranian regime, and for their political beliefs they have been exiled from Iran and sequestered in Camp Ashraf. Several women detained at Camp Ashraf have reported acts of intimidation and threats of physical and sexual violence by members of the Iraqi security forces.

On July 28, 2009, Iraqi Security Forces conducted a raid on the detainees at Camp Ashraf. The raid occurred fewer than three months after the U.S. passed control of Camp Ashraf to the government of Iraq. The raid began on Tuesday, July 28th when Iraqi armored vehicles began attacks against the Iranian prisoners. The attacks continued for two full days and resulted in the death of 11 exiles and the injury of over 400 more. As a result of the raid on Camp Ashraf, 36 men were arrested under allegations of violent behavior. The 36 arrested Camp Ashraf residents have since been freed, but the United States has a continuing interest in ensuring that the events of July 28th never occur again.

Although most of the residents of Camp Ashraf were not religious minorities, the Iraqi government's treatment of the camp's residents sets a dangerous example. In recent years, there have been alarming numbers of religiously motivated killings, abductions, beatings, rapes, threats, intimidation, forced conversions, marriages, and displacement from homes and businesses, and attacks on religious leaders, pilgrims, and holy sites, in Iraq, with the smallest religious minorities in Iraq having been among the most vulnerable, although Iraqis from many religious communities, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, have suffered in this violence. In summary, members of small religious minority communities in Iraq do not have militia or tribal structures to defend them, do not receive adequate official protection, and are legally, politically, and economically marginalized.

This resolution will remind the Iraqi government that minorities of any type—be it race, religion, political affiliation, or difference of thought—are integral components of a robust civil society and a true democracy. I have faith that Iraq can and will achieve such a democracy, but we must remember that building democracy requires more than a constitution—it requires a commitment to democratic principles.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker. I rise tonight in support of H. Res. 44, a resolution expressing concern about the situation facing religious minorities in Iraq. I'd like to thank my colleague, Congressman PETERS, for introducing this resolution, and for being a persistent champion on this important issue.

I am proud to cosponsor this resolution, which encourages the United States government, the Iraqi government, and the international community to take positive steps to protect Iraqi religious minorities.

Nearly seven years after the U.S.-led invasion, Iraq faces one of the largest displace-

ment crises in the world. The country's religious minorities face a particularly desperate situation. Iraqi ethno-religious minorities, including Iraqi Jews as well as Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Syriac Christians, continue to face targeted killings, sexual assaults, abductions, and other forms of threats and violence. They comprise a disproportionately large percentage of the over 4 million Iraqis who have been displaced by the ongoing violence and instability.

Those who flee Iraq often encounter a life of crippling poverty. Many have great difficulty finding work in their new countries and often cannot support their families. They may bear physical and emotional scars as a result of years of trauma, tragedy, and abuse. Those who stay in Iraq, on the other hand, face a life of constant fear, intimidation, and outright violence.

I have a longstanding concern for Iraq's ethno-religious minorities. In particular, I have worked closely with Chicago's vibrant Assyrian community on efforts to protect Iraqi religious minorities and provide opportunities for refugees. In August of last year I wrote to Secretary Clinton, urging her to develop a comprehensive plan for protecting these groups. This critical issue is crying out for the attention it deserves.

That's why this resolution is so important. The protection of ethno-religious minorities must be a component of our overall strategy in Iraq, and the United States government must do more in partnership with the Iraqi government and the rest of the international community to ensure that all Iraqis, regardless of religious affiliation, can live free of fear and intimidation.

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 944. I commend Representative PETERS for his valuable work with the Caucus on Religious Minorities in the Middle East, which, together with my colleague Representative FRANK WOLF, I am proud to co-chair. The second anniversary of the kidnapping and brutal murder of the Chaldean Archbishop of Mosul is a fitting time to remember our responsibility to these vulnerable groups both during and in the aftermath of the war.

As an Assyrian American, I am deeply disturbed by the ongoing struggle Iraq's minorities face each day. There have been dozens of church burnings, kidnappings, and random acts of violence against Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syriacs, and numerous other minority groups and this Resolution calls on the Iraqi government to take meaningful action to address their plight.

Last year, we took an important step by appropriating \$10 million to assist Iraq's minorities in the Nineveh Plains region. I'm pleased that today's Resolution calls on the Iraqi government to protect the people in that area. Madam Speaker, for the sake of a free and pluralistic Iraq, I urge a "yes" vote on today's Resolution.

□ 1500

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

Mr. McMAHON. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the remainder of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from New York (Mr. McMAHON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 944, as amended.

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. McMAHON. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

#### COMMENDING THE U.S. NAVY FOR ITS WORK IN HAITI

Mr. McMAHON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1048) commending the efforts and honoring the work of the men and women of USNS *Comfort* and the United States Navy in the immediate response to those affected by the earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

#### H. RES. 1048

Whereas, on January 12, 2010, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck the country of Haiti;

Whereas casualty estimates, upwards of 150,000, as well as damage to roads, ports, hospitals, and homes, make this earthquake one of the worst catastrophes to hit Haiti in over two centuries;

Whereas an estimated 3,000,000 people have been directly affected by the disaster in Haiti, nearly one-third of the country's population, who are currently at risk of long-term displacement and vulnerability;

Whereas Haiti is the poorest, least developed country in the Western Hemisphere;

Whereas prior to the earthquake, Haiti was recovering from a terrible string of hurricanes and tropical storms, food shortages and rising commodity prices, and political instability, but was showing signs of improvement and resolve;

Whereas President Obama vowed the "unwavering support" of the United States and pledged a "swift, coordinated and aggressive effort to save lives and support the recovery in Haiti";

Whereas the people of Haiti have shown remarkable resilience and courage in the face of epic tragedy;

Whereas the United States Navy responded within hours of the earthquake to swiftly provide the Haitians with aid;

Whereas the USNS *Comfort* and its crew of more than 1,200 has provided 24-hour care for over 900 Haitians, ranging from newborns to critically ill patients;

Whereas the USNS *Comfort's* over 550-person medical staff includes trauma surgeons, orthopedic surgeons, head and neck surgeons, eye surgeons, and obstetricians and gynecologists;

Whereas the medical staff of the USNS *Comfort*, as of February 18, 2010, had performed over 755 surgeries;

Whereas the extraordinary USNS Comfort medical staff has saved countless lives;

Whereas the people of the United States empathize with the medical staff of the USNS Comfort who must make agonizing decisions about the use of scarce resources for critically ill patients;

Whereas prior to the arrival of the USNS Comfort, the USS Carl Vinson dutifully provided initial triage of patients; and

Whereas the USNS Comfort and the USS Carl Vinson have been aided in their efforts by other Navy vessels, including the crews of the USS Higgins, the USS Underwood, the USS Normandy, the USS Bunker Hill, the USS Bataan, the USS Carter Hall, the USS Gunston Hall, the USS Fort McHenry, the USNS Grasp, the Navy Underwater Construction Team One, and the Navy Mobile Diving Salvage Unit Two: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its deepest condolences and sympathy for the horrific loss of life and the physical and psychological damage caused by the earthquake of January 12, 2010;

(2) expresses solidarity with Haitians, Haitian-Americans, and all those who have lost loved ones or have otherwise been affected by the tragedy;

(3) commends the efforts of the people of the United States, including the Haitian-American community, to provide relief to families, friends, and unknown peoples suffering in the country; and

(4) commends the efforts and honors the work of the men and women of USNS Comfort and the United States Navy in the immediate response to those affected by this calamity.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCMAHON. Madam 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 resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCMAHON. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, this resolution recognizes the tireless, selfless, and heroic efforts of the men and women of the USNS Comfort and the entire United States Navy in responding to the tragic earthquake that rocked Haiti, the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, on January 12, 2010.

While many have known about Haiti's long and trying history in the face of natural disaster, food shortage, volatile prices, and an unstable political system, this latest trial, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake has brought with it a sea of new challenges, directly affecting 3 million people, nearly one-third of the country's population.

Amid the catastrophic destruction of homes, roads, schools, hospitals, and infrastructure, and casualty estimates

being measured in the hundreds of thousands, there is a deep need for immediate material aid and medical support for survivors. Within hours of the quake, the United States Navy was on the scene in Port-au-Prince to swiftly administer aid to the Haitian people.

The USNS Comfort and its 1,200 crew members have since offered around-the-clock medical services for up to 900 Haitians facing a wide range of health issues and maladies, many of them critical. They have saved the lives of 98 percent of the ship's patients, a testament to the USNS Comfort's dedication and laudable medical capabilities.

The 550 medical personnel aboard the Comfort represent a wide array of specialties, including trauma surgeons, and have been working around the clock, since even before the Comfort reached Haiti, as patients began arriving by helicopter while they were en route. This vessel's brave crew has brought with it rays of hope, and is a symbol of the United States' and international outpouring of aid and sympathy.

In the wake of this terrible catastrophe, the Haitian people have once again called upon their reserves of courage and resilience, and the United States is proud to stand as a leader with them in their hour of need.

I believe it is fair to say that the USNS Comfort is aptly named. It has provided comfort in terms of health and saving lives to the victims of this terrible calamity. I therefore, Madam Speaker, urge my colleagues to strongly support this resolution.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
Washington, DC, February 22, 2010.

Hon. HOWARD L. BERMAN,  
Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs,  
Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: On January 27, 2010, the House Resolution 1048, "Commending the efforts and honoring the work of the men and women of USNS Comfort and the United States Navy in the immediate response to those affected by the earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010" was introduced in the House. This measure was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

Our Committee recognizes the importance of H. Res. 1048, and the need for the legislation to move expeditiously. Therefore, while we have a valid claim to jurisdiction over this legislation, the Committee on Armed Services will waive further consideration of H. Res. 1048. I do so with the understanding that by waiving further consideration of the resolution, the Committee does not waive any future jurisdictional claims over similar measures.

I would appreciate the inclusion of this letter and a copy of your response in the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor.

Very truly yours,

IKE SKELTON,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
Washington, DC, February 23, 2010.

Hon. IKE SKELTON,  
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services,  
Rayburn House Office Bldg., Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding House Resolution 1048, "Commending the efforts and honoring the work of the men and women of USNS Comfort and the United States Navy in the immediate response to those affected by the earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010." This measure was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

I agree that the Committee on Armed Services has certain valid jurisdictional claims to this resolution, and I appreciate your decision to waive further consideration of H. Res. 1048 in the interest of expediting consideration of this important measure. I understand that by agreeing to waive further consideration, the Committee on Armed Services is not waiving its jurisdictional claims over similar measures in the future.

During consideration of this measure on the House floor, I will ask that this exchange of letters be included in the Congressional Record.

Sincerely,

HOWARD L. BERMAN,  
Chairman.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise today as a proud cosponsor of the bill before us, House Resolution 1048, commending the efforts and honoring the work of the men and women of the USNS Comfort and the United States Navy in the immediate response to those affected by the earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010.

The tremendous impact of this natural disaster appeared almost insurmountable at one point. Six weeks later, however, we have seen remarkable achievements and great promise for the future. The swift and comprehensive response of the United States has helped to save countless lives. In particular, the men and women of the U.S. Navy, particularly those serving on the hospital ship Comfort, have provided vital medical and relief services.

Before it had even reached the shores of Haiti, the Comfort was receiving patients flown in from the USS Carl Vinson. They had nearly 100 new admissions on their first day on station. Within 2 weeks of arriving, the Comfort had performed over 500 surgeries and provided 24-hour care for countless others. And as of late last week, nearly 800 surgeries had been performed. I join my colleagues in commending this tremendous performance and recognizing the admirable service of the men and women of the U.S. Navy Ship Comfort, and the many other Navy vessels and crews who have contributed to the relief efforts in Haiti.

In addition, I would like to recognize the ongoing selfless acts of the people

of the United States, including the Haitian American community, to provide relief to the people of Haiti. I have seen group after group from my own district in South Florida and across the country mobilize to provide medical assistance, humanitarian services, all kinds of goods to the Haitian people. I am confident, Madam Speaker, that with this type of ongoing support, Haiti will see a brighter future.

Again, I would like to commend and honor the work of the men and women of the United States Navy, and particularly those on the Navy Ship *Comfort* for the immediate response that they gave to the earthquake victims in Haiti. And I thank Congressman MURPHY for introducing this important measure.

Madam Speaker, if I may, I would like to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TIM MURPHY), the author of this resolution, a member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Thank you, Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for this opportunity to speak about this important issue of one of America's proud moments of how it helps when the world has need.

On January 12 of this year, we were shocked and saddened by the devastating earthquake in Haiti. More than 230,000 Haitians are dead, perhaps even more we will find, hundreds of thousands injured, a million left homeless. The world responded immediately with food, donations, and rescue workers, but among the first to respond were our military, particularly the crew of the USNS *Comfort*. This 894-foot-long floating Naval hospital set sail from Baltimore Harbor soon after the earthquake.

Members of the ship's crew, most of whom hailed from the Navy's hospitals in Maryland and Virginia, were soon on board and underway. By the 17th of January, the *Comfort* was making full speed towards Port-au-Prince. Before its arrival, the USS *Carl Vinson* aircraft carrier provided immediate relief to injured Haitians. Today, the 1,200-person *Comfort* crew, made up of over 550 civilian and uniformed doctors, nurses, and others, is providing the best possible care under very challenging circumstances.

With limited supplies but limitless compassion and skill, surgeons and nurses and a host of other specialties, obstetricians, pharmacists, pediatricians, and Navy personnel from the medical corps, the medical service corps, nursing corps and so many others were there to treat Haitians who came on board with wounds, fractures, and infections. The crew's superb performance is a testament to our Navy and our Marines who are confronting these very, very difficult challenges.

Even before the devastating earthquake of January 12 that took so many lives, Haiti was a country enduring many difficult problems. Nearly four-fifths of its people live in absolute pov-

erty. It has less than 50 hospitals, some of which are only staffed by a pair of nurses and medical interns. The country has fewer than three physicians for every 10,000 people. By comparison, our country has nearly 100 doctors for every 10,000 people.

The absence of a medical infrastructure made treating Haitians even more challenging, where doctors in the pediatric ward estimated that a fifth of the children in their care had untreated, and in many cases previously undiagnosed, medical conditions.

The USNS *Comfort* docked near Port-au-Prince on January 20 with 250 medical beds, but the crew quickly realized it would serve as the primary place of treatment for a country with hundreds of thousands of injured people. The *Comfort* transformed itself into a thousand-bed facility, with 880 ward beds, 80 intensive care units, 20 post-anesthesia care unit beds, 12 operating rooms.

On the second day of the *Comfort*'s mission, Lieutenant Commander Erika Beard-Irvine and Lieutenant Commander Shannon Lamb delivered a premature baby, a 4-pound, 5-ounce baby girl named Esther, whose mother during the earthquake, after a building collapsed upon her, had severe injuries. Her mother went without treatment, but surgeons couldn't repair her fractures without threatening the baby's life, so on that day they delivered a healthy baby. She was seven weeks early, but right on time for a ship that had never before witnessed an onboard delivery in its 22 years of service.

The *Comfort* already had infants aboard, brought to the ship by mothers unable to find post-natal care in Haiti. One of the ship's youngest male patients is Vinson, named for the aircraft carrier USS *Carl Vinson*, where his mother gave birth to him.

At the end of its second day, the *Comfort* had seen 184 patients, a third of whom saw surgery. Said Lieutenant Commander Don D'Aurora, director of the ship's receiving ward and division officer of the emergency department at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda to the Baltimore Sun, quote, "I saw more patients in six hours today than I would normally see in 24 hours back home. This is what we train for. This is what it is about for all of us."

Even with the crew sleeping in shifts, helicopters dropping supplies from dawn until dusk, and the crew running around-the-clock operations at everything from the barber shop to the mess hall, wave after wave of critically injured patients pushed the limits of the *Comfort*'s capabilities. Some were stories about senses of helplessness, physical pain, or feelings of despair and the loss of loved ones, but some provide inspiration.

Due to the work of a Port-au-Prince native, fireman Jean Rabel, a Navy translator aboard the *Comfort*, and Joe Fiscus of Rochester, Pennsylvania, near Pittsburgh, Haitian national Antonio Jeanite was reunited with his 3-month-old daughter, Christ-Yarah, on

February 2. He said, "I am very happy. It has been seven days since I sent my daughter to another hospital."

The *Comfort*'s crew knows that someday its mission will end, the ship will return to Baltimore Harbor, and the best medical care in the Caribbean Sea will depart with it. That is why the *Comfort* is making arrangements with a stateside hospital for continuing care to treat seriously burned patients who require months of medical attention.

The *Comfort* has cared for over 2,000 Haitians, and much work remains to be done. I know that the crew and its able commander, Captain Jim Ware, are up to the task. I commend them for their diligence, and call for us to honor their unbreakable spirit by passing this resolution.

I would also like to recognize the crews of the *Vinson* (CVN-70); the USS *Fort McHenry* (LSD 43), a dock landing ship; the USS *Bataan* (LHD 5), a Wasp-class amphibious assault ship; the USS *Carter Hall* (LSD 50), another dock landing ship; and several other ships, the *Higgins* (DDG-76), the *Underwood* (FFG-36), the *Normandy* (CG-60), the *Bunker Hill* (CG-52), the *Gunston Hall* (LSD-44), the *Grasp* (T-ARS-51), and so many other Navy personnel and Marines who worked around the clock providing care to so many.

You know, when one of us feels overcome with doubt or confusion, let us think about those fatigued corpsmen and doctors and nurses aboard the *Comfort* who carefully and skillfully bring their patients back, sometimes from the brink of death, hours after hours of work with very little sleep, pushing themselves to the limits. Let's remember those sailors and Marines and Air Force personnel and Army soldiers who went to Haiti, establishing the logistics, rescuing patients, taking them out of broken buildings.

And one final story for us to remember. Rico Duprevil spent 13 days buried alive in the rubble of a collapsed house. His legs were crushed, his pelvis dislocated. He could not move.

□ 1515

He said, "There was darkness all around, all of the time. I could not move inside. I could hear distant voices, but they could not hear mine."

With only a few sips of water available, he stayed alive. Almost 2 weeks later he was discovered. He said, "I was never scared because God was on my side. I survived by thinking of Him and praying. I thought about my family."

He was taken to a local hospital for basic triage. A day later he arrived at Port-au-Prince for evaluation and possible transfer to the *Comfort*. Due to the quick collection of information by Captain Richard Sharpe, an on-site medical commander, he was transferred within just an hour to the proper ward care above the *Comfort*.

All of us are proud of the great work that so many do in their armed services. We oftentimes talk about them, but this is a great moment of pride for

our Nation. In particular, I'd like to salute my colleagues in the Navy where I serve, also at the Bethesda National Naval Medical Center, but thank the Navy, the Marines, the Army, the Air Force, the Coast Guard and all the civilians who reached out and showed the compassion that is one of America's bright moments, and show the world what America is all about. When the world needs us, when tragedy strikes, Americans gather together and support them. And today, we salute those Americans who have helped so many of those in need in Haiti.

Mr. McMAHON. Madam Speaker, at this time I yield as much time as he shall consume to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RUPPERSBERGER).

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Madam Speaker, first, when it is not on one of its lifesaving missions, the USNS *Comfort*'s home is in the Port of Baltimore. The virtual floating hospital has provided humanitarian aid to hundreds of thousands of patients all over the world.

The *Comfort* was deployed after Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast, and has supported Operation Iraqi Freedom, and was activated on September 11, 2001, to provide meals, housing, medical, and psychological services to volunteer and relief workers at Ground Zero.

It was once again called into service after the devastating earthquake in Haiti in January that, at the most recent count, has claimed 150,000 lives.

As the representative of the Port of Baltimore, I have always been especially proud of the *Comfort* and its critical missions. I felt especially privileged to have the chance to board the *Comfort* to send off the men and women the night before they departed for Haiti.

It was a humbling experience to climb the steps aboard the *Comfort* and witness doctors and nurses training for what would help them on the shores of Haiti. I saw seamen practicing security drills, volunteers distributing blankets and pillows, and sterilizing medical equipment, and toured the operating rooms where so many lives would be saved by the military personnel of our U.S. Navy.

Huge cranes were loading truckloads of medical supplies onto its deck. In what should have been chaos, I saw the focus and precision perhaps capable only by our United States military.

Once in Haiti, these men and women faced choices unimaginable to those of us back here watching it all on TV. On their first day they felt tremendous frustration when the helicopter that would carry patients aboard had no place to land on shore.

They have delivered babies, treated patients who are paralyzed, missing limbs, and suffering from infections made worse by neglect. They have performed more than 600 surgeries in Haiti so far.

When the *Comfort* left, the Navy said they would be here as long as it took.

One month later, these military personnel still remain in Haiti, away from their families, treating hundreds of patients each day. Because the ship is now over capacity, the workers are sleeping in shifts. And I know that most of them wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

Amid the horror, the USNS *Comfort*, a mile out into the bay, is a beacon of hope for those still injured and untreated.

My heart goes out to the people of Haiti and their relatives throughout the United States. We are proud of the men and women aboard Baltimore's own *Comfort* who are saving lives with the vigor and skill, again, perhaps only capable of the United States military.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the teams for the world-renowned University of Maryland Shock Trauma who have also traveled to Haiti. My life was saved at Maryland Shock Trauma many years ago, and now the people of Haiti are benefiting from the skills and expertise of the world's top medical professionals.

The teams at Shock Trauma set up operating rooms on open ground, under tents, and are committed to remaining there until they can deliver health care on an ongoing basis.

I've heard stories from the team, and I know the conditions take an emotional toll, but their determination in the face of what may be, or what could be, considered a hopeless situation is a testimony to the American spirit.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude for the commitment of both the men and women of the USNS *Comfort* and Maryland Shock Trauma, and wish them luck at their missions.

And I also would like to say, this is the United States putting out to people in need throughout the world. We are all Americans. We have debates here on the floor, health care, all issues involving jobs, but we still have to remember we're all Americans, and we all can say that we should be very proud of what the United States military is doing with the USNS *Comfort* and the United States Navy and all the men working in that regard.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 1048. This resolution commends the efforts and honors the work of the men and women of USNS *Comfort* and the United States Navy in the immediate response to those affected by the earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010.

As you know, on Tuesday, January 12, a massive, 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti near the capital of Port-au-Prince. There is still no official estimate of death or destruction but the damage to buildings is extensive and the number of injured or dead is estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands.

America is responding, and will continue to respond with immediate humanitarian assistance to help the people of this struggling island nation rebuild their livelihoods. I send my condolences to the people and government of Haiti as they grieve once again in the after-

math of a natural disaster. As Haiti's neighbor, I believe it is the United States' responsibility to help Haiti recover, and build the capacity to mitigate against future disasters.

To date the United States Government has contributed over \$402 million in earthquake response funding for Haiti. It has also deployed approximately 17,000 military personnel in support of the relief effort. Subsequently, as part of the new Government of Haiti-led effort, the U.N. World Food Program will provide commodities, non-governmental organizations will manage distributions, and the U.S. military will provide security escorts.

American and her allies have already initiated a comprehensive, interagency response to the earthquake. The State Department, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, Coast Guard, USAID—all worked overnight to ensure critical resources were positioned to support the response and recovery effort, including efforts to find and assist American citizens in Haiti.

Within days of last week's devastating earthquake, U.S. Southern Command deployed a team of 30 people to Haiti to support U.S. relief efforts in the aftermath of one of the largest natural disasters in the western hemisphere. The team included U.S. military engineers, operational planners, and a command and control group and communication specialists arriving on two C-130 Hercules aircraft. Since, there has been a tremendous interagency response with support and partnering with U.S. Embassy personnel as well as Haitian, United Nations and international officials to assess the situation and facilitate follow-on U.S. military support.

Within hours of the earthquake, the United States mobilized a multi-agency response that included our armed forces and civil service. With their hospitals reduced to rubble, Port-au-Prince was unable to treat the hundreds of thousands of injured people seeking help. In response, the U.S. efforts included the hospital ship USNS *Comfort* as well as naval helicopter ships such as the USS *Carl Vinson*. Arriving on station less than 72 hours after the quake, *Carl Vinson* immediately rendered assistance. Over two weeks, *Vinson* and its embarked 19 helicopters flew more than 2,200 sorties, delivering more than 166 tons of food, 89,000 gallons of water and 38,700 pounds of medical supplies to earthquake victims. Additionally, *Vinson*'s helicopters conducted 476 medical evacuations, MEDEVACs, and the ship's doctors and corpsmen treated 60 patients in its medical ward.

The USNS *Comfort*, a floating hospital, brought to Haiti a 550-person medical staff that included trauma surgeons, orthopedic surgeons, head and neck surgeons, eye surgeons, and obstetricians and gynecologists. The USNS *Comfort* and its crew of 1,200 have provided 24-hour care for nearly 500 Haitians, ranging from newborns to critically ill patients. As of January 24, 2010, the medical staff of the USNS *Comfort* had performed over 100 surgeries.

The skill and perseverance displayed by these men and women are extraordinary. The USNS *Comfort* medical staff has saved the lives of 98 percent of the ship's patient population as of January 25, 2010.

Madam Speaker, over a month has passed since the earthquake, the search and rescue missions have ended, and Haiti has transitioned to long-term reconstruction and

development. Because our Navy cannot remain off of Haiti's coast forever, we must work with the Haitian government to rebuild the capacity of Haiti's medical system. Although this mission will take time, I am confident that Haiti will build their health care system back to be more comprehensive and robust than before the earthquake. This will be an especially critical part of the Haitian government because the thousands injured by the earthquake will need long-term medical care.

Recently, I proposed a plan that would increase the ability of the U.S. to assist Haiti in its efforts toward reconstruction and stabilization to Dr. Rajiv Shah, the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

This plan would create an oversight position within the USAID that would coordinate and regulate faith-based and non-profit organizations operating in the reconstruction efforts in Haiti. I also recommended the creation of a U.S. civilian corps, an extension of the American Peace Corps, that would be tasked the specific mission of assisting reconstruction efforts in Haiti. This civilian entity would serve as a supplemental contingent which could be incrementally dispatched as needed by U.S. Government agencies or nongovernment organizations.

Once again I stand in solidarity with the people of Haiti and will do everything in my power to assist them with rebuilding their country and livelihoods. I am proud of our first responders, and pledge that America's long-term commitment to Haiti will live up to the standard that the first responders set.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 1048, which would commend the efforts and honor the work of the men and women of the USNS *Comfort* and the United States Navy who assisted those affected by the earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010.

Madam Speaker, in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake that wrought devastation upon our friends and neighbors in impoverished Haiti, President Obama pledged the "unwavering support" of the United States and a "swift, coordinated and aggressive effort to save lives and support the recovery."

Today we recognize some of those who have worked tirelessly to fulfill that pledge.

The USNS *Comfort*, a *Mercy*-class hospital ship, has previously been deployed to support Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Operation Sea Signal, Operation Uphold Democracy, Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Joint Task Force Katrina, Operation Continuing Promise, and now Operation Unified Response to support relief efforts in Haiti.

The *Comfort's* 550-person medical staff includes trauma surgeons, orthopedic surgeons, head and neck surgeons, eye surgeons, obstetricians and gynecologists. As of January 24, 2010, the medical staff had performed over 100 surgeries. By January 25, the ship's staff had saved the lives of 98 percent of the ship's patient population.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, which expresses our deepest condolences to the victims of the tragic earthquake; our solidarity with Haitians, Haitian-Americans, and all those who have been affected by this natural disaster; our commendation of all who have contributed to relief efforts; and, in particular, and our recognition of the invaluable efforts of those life-

savers on the USNS *Comfort* and in the United States Navy who have provided critical immediate assistance to those suffering as a result of the earthquake.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I strongly support H. Res. 1048, a resolution commending the efforts and honoring the work of the men and women of USNS *Comfort* and the United States Navy in response to those affected by the earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010. I would also like to thank Representative TIM MURPHY for introducing this piece of legislation.

Before the earthquake hit Haiti, the country was already in recovery from a string of hurricanes and tropical storms, food shortages and rising commodity prices, and political instability. These problems were compounded when a 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit the country of Haiti, erasing any recovery efforts done prior to this catastrophe.

Estimated casualties were reported to be over 150,000 and Haiti withstood millions in damages to the country's infrastructure. It has been reported that 3,000,000 of Haiti's population were directly affected by the disaster, and as a result, one third of the existing population is displaced.

Immediately following this tragedy, President Barack Obama vowed the "unwavering support" of the United States and pledged a "swift, coordinated and aggressive effort to save lives and support the recovery in Haiti." Days after the earthquake, the United States Navy responded to President Obama's request and delivered aid. The crew of the USNS *Comfort* provided 24-hour service to hundreds of critically ill men, women and children patients. Our Navy medical personnel on USNS *Comfort* saved the lives of 98 percent of the ship's patient population, which holds a capacity of 1,000 patients, and successfully performed 100 surgeries as of January 24, 2010.

Due to the limited resources for critically ill patients, the USNS *Comfort* medical staff often find themselves making grave decisions in terms of the use of their existing resources. President Obama's pledged support of \$100 million in humanitarian aid will go a long way toward supporting their efforts.

I commit my full support to H. Res 1048 and urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this piece of legislation.

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

Mr. MCMAHON. Madam 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 New York (Mr. MCMAHON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1048, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was commu-

nicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

#### BILLY'S LAW

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3695) to authorize funding for, and increase accessibility to, the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, to facilitate data sharing between such system and the National Crime Information Center database of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to provide incentive grants to help facilitate reporting to such systems, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3695

*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 "Help Find the Missing Act" or "Billy's Law".*

#### SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF THE NATIONAL MISSING AND UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS SYSTEM.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—The Attorney General, through the Director of the National Institute of Justice, is authorized to maintain public databases, known as the "National Missing and Unidentified Persons System" or "NamUs", to contain missing persons records and unidentified remains cases for purposes of assisting to identify missing people and solve cases of unidentified human remains. All functions, personnel, assets, liabilities, and administrative actions applicable to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System carried out by the National Institute of Justice on the date before the date of the enactment of this Act shall be transferred to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System authorized under this section as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) *AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.*—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$2,400,000 for each of the fiscal years 2011 through 2016.

#### SEC. 3. SHARING OF INFORMATION BETWEEN NCIC AND NAMUS.

(a) *SHARING OF INFORMATION.*—Not later than the end of the 30-day period beginning on the date the online data entry format is updated under subsection (c), the Attorney General shall, in accordance with this section, provide for information on missing persons and unidentified human remains contained in the NCIC database (as defined in section 7) to be transmitted to, entered in, and otherwise shared with the NamUs databases (as defined in such section) and for such information contained in the NamUs databases to be transmitted to, entered in, and otherwise shared with the NCIC database.

#### (b) RULES ON CONFIDENTIALITY.—

(1) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Attorney General, in consultation with the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (in this Act referred to as the "FBI"), shall promulgate rules pursuant to notice and comment that specify the information the Attorney General may provide from the NCIC files to the NamUs databases for purposes of this Act. Such rules shall—

(A) provide for the protection of law enforcement sensitive, confidential, and private information contained in the NCIC files;

(B) be promulgated only after the Director approves recommendations by the Advisory Policy Board of the Criminal Justice Information Services Division of the FBI;