only way to reach a just and lasting peace in the region. But peace will never be achieved with senseless terrorism or soaring speeches or military might. Only through direct, honest, and earnest negotiations will the dream of peace be realized.

That is why I believe that both sides must put aside their preconditions and come to the table immediately.

As former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert recently wrote, peace will only be achieved ''with the courage to take decisions that will change a reality which is increasingly creating a substantive threat on the State of Israel's stature, on the international support it receives, and on its future as a Jewish democratic state.''

Yet, I'm concerned this resolution—instead of rising to Olmert's noble challenge—is yet another missed opportunity for the U.S. to advance peace in the region.

Just last December this House passed unanimously a substantially similar resolution opposing the unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood. What are we accomplishing by restating our opposition?

Mr. Speaker, I worry that we have become too engrossed in the rhetorical debate of peace and are neglecting to fully pursue it. We could easily fill this Chamber with the words spoken over the years debating this conflict, but the room filled with actions taken to end it would sadly be much, much smaller.

This is a pivotal moment—a moment that demands bold, courageous leadership from Prime Minister Netanyahu, from President Abbas, and from President Obama. It is a moment that requires everyone—Israeli and Palestinian, friend and foe—to come together and resolve this crisis once and for all.

Congress can and should play a constructive role in this debate. But I'm concerned that repeatedly criticizing the Palestinians—and only the Palestinians—risks pushing Israelis and Palestinians further apart rather than bringing them closer together. Unfortunately, both Israelis and Palestinians are engaged in activities that are undermining peace efforts, and we must not ignore this mutual responsibility for the conflict.

And I'm also concerned that this resolution further isolates the United States and Israel and undermines our credibility as a serious broker for peace. There is no denying that both Israel and the United States are growing increasingly isolated in the international community. As President Obama said, ''the international community is tired of an endless process that never procures an outcome.'' This resolution does nothing to change that.

Rather than spending our time reiterating the already established position against a unilateral declaration of statehood, we should be focusing on concrete measures that advance peace.

We should be looking for ways to help Israel adapt to the new realities of the Arab Spring rather than simply reinforcing the status quo.

And we should be encouraging both the Palestinians and Israelis to negotiate rather than just criticizing the Palestinians for not doing so.

At this critical juncture, with so much uncertainty and unrest throughout the Middle East, the U.S. needs to engage in constructive dialogue with all parties and help them bring this tragic conflict to an end. The U.S. cannot make peace in the region, only the parties can. But the U.S. has always been an indispensable agent in brokering peace.

That is why it is imperative that we reclaim that constructive role and foster a negotiated settlement that ensures the security of Israel, recognizes the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, and promotes U.S. national security interests.

IN SUPPORT OF HOLDING THE 2016 DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION IN NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 7, 2011

Mr. ROTHMAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to propose that the 2016 Democratic Convention be held in Northern New Jersey. With easy access to a wide variety of transportation options, many local tourist attractions, and a proven record of successfully hosting large-scale events, Northern New Jersey is an ideal location and I urge my Democratic colleagues to join me in support of our bid to host the 2016 Convention.

Northern New Jersey has everything that a large-scale, high-profile event requires in order to go off without a hitch. Multiple airports provide access for visitors arriving from all across the country, while those traveling along the Eastern Seaboard have the option of taking Amtrak or one of several bus lines—all of which are particularly convenient to visitors from Washington, DC. Whether hosted in my district at the New Meadowlands Stadium in East Rutherford, at the Prudential Center in Newark, or both: our convention facilities are brand new, state-of-the-art, and well-equipped to host large events. Northern New Jersey boasts many hotels and tourist attractions for visitors, as well as proximity to other exciting locations; convention-goers would be just across the river from New York City and just up the Jersey shore from Atlantic City. Even as our national economy struggles to bounce back, tourism in Northern New Jersey has continued to flourish over the past few years, due in no small part to the infrastructure and facilities that our region has to offer visitors from across the Nation.

Most recently, the city of Newark hosted the 2011 NCAA East Regional Championship at the Prudential Center. Visitors, players, and league administrators alike were impressed and pleased with their newly chosen host city, with top NCAA officials noting that they are definitely on board with a future hosting bid. Looking toward the future, Super Bowl XLVII will be held at the New Meadowlands Stadium in 2014, and over 100,000 visitors from across the country are expected to travel to Northern New Jersey for this historic game. Both of these important events of national importance were brought to Northern New Jersey because of everything we have to offer, and I am confident that delegates and Convention participants alike would be pleased with the choice to hold our party's most important meeting here as well. A highly diverse region, Northern New Jersey is emblematic of the many cultures, ideas, and priorities that make up our great Nation, and I believe this is a fitting backdrop for the selection of our party's nominee for the 2016 Presidential race.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues to consider Northern New Jersey as the site for the 2016 Democratic Convention. I know that we would host a memorable and well-executed Convention and I urge the Democratic Party to explore this option for 2016.

INTRODUCTION ON RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO THE MONTFORD POINT MARINES

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 7, 2011

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with many of my colleagues to introduce a resolution to grant the Montford Point Marines a Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor that can be bestowed for an outstanding deed or act of service to the security, prosperity, and national interest of the United States.

On June 25, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 8802 establishing the Fair Employment Practices Commission and opening the doors for the very first African Americans to enlist in the United States Marine Corps.

These African Americans, from all states, were not sent to the traditional boot camps of Parris Island, South Carolina, and San Diego, California. Instead, African American Marines were segregated—experiencing basic training at Camp Montford Point near the New River in Jacksonville, North Carolina. Approximately 20,000 African American Marines received basic training at Montford Point between 1942 and 1949.

On August 26, 1942, Howard P. Perry of Charlotte, North Carolina, was the first Black private to set foot on Montford Point.

During April 1943 the first African American Marine Drill Instructors took over as the senior Drill Instructors of the eight platoons then in training; the 16th Platoon (Edgar R. Huff), 17th (Thomas Brokaw), 18th (Charles E. Allen), 19th (Gilbert H. Johnson), 20th (Arnold R. Bostic), 21st (Mortimer A. Cox), 22nd (Edgar R. Davis, Jr.), and 23rd (George A. Jackson).

The initial intent was to discharge these African American Marines after the War, returning them to civilian life. Attitudes changed as the war progressed. Once given the chance to prove themselves, it became impossible to deny the fact that African American Marines were just as capable as all other Marines regardless of race, color, creed or National origin.

Black Marines of the 8th Ammunition Company and the 36th Depot Company landed on the island of Iwo Jima on D-day, February 19, 1945. The largest number of Black Marines to serve in combat during World War II took part in the seizure of Okinawa in the Ryuku Islands with some 2,000 Black Marines seeing action during the campaign. Overall 19,168 Blacks served in the Marine Corps in World War II.

On November 10, 1945, Frederick C. Branch was the first African American Marine to be commissioned as a second lieutenant, at the Marine Corps Base in Quantico, Virginia.

In July of 1948 President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981 ending segregation in the military. In September of 1949, Montford Marine Camp was deactivated—ending seven years of segregation.

I am honored to offer this resolution to recognize their service and sacrifice and acknowledge today's United States Marine Corps as an excellent opportunity for advancement of persons of all races due to the service and example of the original Montford Point Marines.

SUPREME COURT RECUSAL PROCESS IN NEED OF TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 7, 2011

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concern that justices of the Supreme Court are not required to explain their decisions to recuse—or not recuse themselves in a particular case before the Court, and that those decisions are final and unreviewable. Recusal decisions, left to each individual justice to make on his or her own and with no opportunity for review, require that each justice be a judge in their own case.

Questions of impartiality erode the integrity of the Court and threaten to undermine public trust in our judicial system. The recusal process for Supreme Court justices must be reformed to provide an open and reviewable process.

A SUPREME COURT JUSTICE'S RECUSAL DECISIONS SHOULD BE TRANSPARENT AND REVIEWABLE

(By the Alliance for Justice)

The recusal process for Supreme Court justices needs transparency and accountability. Although there is a statute governing recusal—28 U.S.C. §4551—that applies to Supreme Court justices, the statute does not require individual justices to explain their recusal decisions, and those decisions are final and unreviewable. This system violates the basic maxim that no one should be a judge in his own case. It also ignores the fact that the standard to be applied in recusal cases is the appearance of bias, which by necessity depends on the views of others, and not the justice's own views of his or her impartiality. Exacerbating this lack of accountability is a lack of transparency, as justices are not required to issue a written opinion explaining a recusal decision.

That's why over 100 law professors recently sent a letter calling on Congress to hold hearings and implement legislation to increase the transparency and accountability of recusal decisions.

A recent Supreme Court case, Caperton v. A.T. Massey Coal, Inc. provides an object lesson in the hazards of a self-policing judiciary, in which individual judges determine whether or not their impartiality can reasonably be questioned. In Caperton, West Virginia Justice Brent D. Benjamin received substantial campaign contributions made directly or indirectly from the president of a company with an outstanding $50 million judgment against it on appeal before the judge. Justice Benjamin denied three motions to recuse himself, and then voted in the 3–2 majority to reverse the judgment against the company. A public opinion poll indicated that 67% of West Virginians doubted Justice Benjamin would be fair and impartial.

The Supreme Court reversed Justice Benjamin's decisions not to recuse himself on the basis that the risk of actual bias was so high that it violated petitioners' constitutional due process rights. It did not matter what Justice Benjamin thought of his own potential for bias, the key was whether the appearance of impartiality was compromised, the Court held. The Court emphasized the need for an objective test to evaluate whether an interest rises to such a degree that the average judge might become biased, rather than relying on a judge's self-evaluation of actual bias. ''The difficulties of inquiring into actual bias and the fact that the inquiry is often a private one, simply underscore the need for objective rules,'' the Court added. The Court held that the need for an independent inquiry is particularly important ''where, as here, there is no procedure for judicial factfinding and the sole trier of fact is the one accused of bias.''

The opacity and lack of accountability of the recusal process erodes public confidence in the integrity of the Court and the sense that justice is being administered fairly. For example:

In 2003, a prominent legal ethicist argued that Justice Breyer should have recused from Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America v. Walsh, in which an association of drug manufacturers, including three in which Justice Breyer held stock, brought suit challenging the constitutionality of state regulations aimed at keeping drug costs down for consumers. Justice Breyer chose not to recuse himself, despite his potential financial conflict of interest.

In 2004, just weeks after the Supreme Court granted certiorari in a public records case brought by the Sierra Club against then-Vice President Dick Cheney, Justice Scalia went duck hunting with Cheney and accepted a free ride on the Vice President's plane. Despite widespread public criticism questioning his appearance of bias in the case, Justice Scalia refused to recuse himself. In a memorandum opinion denying the Sierra Club's motion to recuse, Justice Scalia wrote that he ''would have been pleased to demonstrate [his] integrity'' by disqualifying himself from the case, but nonetheless decided there was no basis for recusal. He then cast his vote in support of Vice President Cheney's position.

This year, the advocacy organization Common Cause filed a petition with the Department of Justice, requesting that it file a Rule 60(b) motion seeking the invalidation of last year's Citizens United v. FEC ruling on the basis that Justices Scalia and Thomas should have recused themselves. The petition alleged the impartiality of both justices could reasonably be questioned under 18 U.S.C. §455(a) due to their alleged attendance at a closed-door retreat hosted by Koch Industries, a politically active corporation that supported and has benefited from Citizen United's dismantling of campaign finance laws. Common Cause also alleges that Justice Thomas had an obligation to recuse himself under 18 U.S.C. §455(b), due to a financial conflict of interest created by his wife's employment at a conservative political organization that stood to benefit from unrestricted corporate donations made possible by Citizens United.

Also this year, Representative Anthony Weiner (D–NY) and 73 other members of the House of Representatives have asked Justice Thomas to recuse himself from any upcoming review of the Affordable Care Act due to his wife's ties to organizations lobbying to repeal the Act. Rep. Weiner asserts that IRS records show that between 2003 and 2007, Virginia (''Ginni'') Thomas was paid $686,589 by the conservative Heritage Foundation, which at the time opposed health care reform. He adds that in 2009, Ms. Thomas became the CEO of a nonprofit, Liberty Central, which also opposed health care reform, and that earlier this year, Ms. Thomas announced that she had formed a lobbying firm, ''Liberty Consulting,'' to advance various Tea Party legislative initiatives, including the repeal or nullification of the Affordable Care Act. Rep. Weiner alleges that these connections give rise to an appearance of partiality, and a potential financial conflict of interest that require Justice Thomas to recuse himself, if the Affordable Care Act reaches the Court. While a judge's spouse is not prohibited from engaging in political activities, Judicial Conference Advisory Opinions interpreting the Code of Conduct make clear that a spouse's political activities may increase the likelihood that a judge must recuse from a particular case.

These examples highlight the need for transparency and review of recusal issues that arise for Supreme Court justices. The impartiality of specific justices, and thereby the integrity of the Court, has come under question because the recusal statute fails to provide an open and reviewable process. This needs to change, either through Congressional legislation, or by the Court itself adopting new recusal policies.

REAFFIRMING COMMITMENT TO NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

SPEECH OF

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 6, 2011

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, the effort to establish a lasting peace in the Middle East does not lend itself to a simple up or down vote on a resolution in Congress, and so I rise to offer my thoughts on the resolution before us today.

While I voted in favor of H. Res. 268, because it reinforces the importance of direct talks for a two-state solution, I was disappointed with the resolution regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that was brought to the floor today. The fact is that this resolution was made possible because of the absence of a viable peace process.

I am disappointed with the resolution not so much because of the general contents of the resolution, but because this resolution does not treat the issue with the serious and careful consideration that it deserves. It is simply one in a series of votes in the House that fail to address the entirety of the conflict and take instead political shots at one side of the conflict.

Israel is and has always been a close friend and ally of the United States, and rightfully so. We share many goals and values, including a strong commitment to a vibrant democracy and diverse economy. Too often, however, Congress uses resolutions regarding the Middle East as referenda on whether or not a particular Member supports or does not support Israel, even though such support is not in question. That is unfortunate and does a disservice to the effort to establish peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

The Obama Administration, like its predecessors, has been working to keep the two parties at the table and to try to ensure that they can make the necessary compromises to ensure that type of lasting peace. Here in Congress, we should be supporting these important efforts, rather than playing political games, given the real-life consequences that this conflict is having on millions of people's lives and on our own country's security interests.