

boating trips for children with physical or mental challenges, and give multi-million dollar donations to charities. Among the recipients of their generous gifts are Texoma Medical Center, Wilson N. Jones Medical Center, and Abilene Christian University. Recently, the couple helped buy a wheelchair and seek assistance for a handicapped teacher.

The Harbers routinely deflect attention from themselves with an humble attitude, stating that they merely enjoy helping others, adopting a “live to give” philosophy as they choose to share their good fortune with others. Their selfless giving is an inspiration to live a humble life in service to others. Mr. Speaker, I ask those here today to rise in honor of this most generous couple who represent the best values of philanthropy, Lacy and Dorothy Harber.

ON THE STATUS OF THE
EGYPTIAN COPTIC COMMUNITY

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 2, 2011

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the ongoing violence in Egypt being carried out against religious minorities. While the end of the Mubarak regime has brought about the promise for democratic reform, it has also given rise to instability and acts of violence against religious minorities. Coptic Christians have lived peacefully in this part of the world for millennia, but sadly in recent months Coptic churches and protestors have been targeted for violence.

I am grateful to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission, for holding a hearing recently on the plight of the Coptic people. I was concerned to learn of reports that young women and under-aged girls fear for their safety because of the threat of violence by Muslim extremists. As a member of the Religious Minorities in the Middle East Caucus, I strongly believe U.S. policymakers need to do more to raise awareness of this issue so that the innocent Christians of Egypt are no longer targeted for violence.

I am proud to represent a vibrant Coptic community in southeast Michigan and am privileged to consider the clergy of St. Mark's Church in Troy, Michigan as my friends. Many of my constituents have relatives in Egypt and I know that they are deeply concerned about the security of their loved ones. I share their concerns—and the concerns of Copts across our nation—about the future of their community and the desire to preserve their right to continue to live peacefully in their ancestral homeland.

While we are hopeful for democratic change in Egypt, it is imperative that we maintain support for religious minority communities such as the Copts and seek to preserve and allow for the continuity of their community. I ask my colleagues to join me in raising awareness for the plight of the Copts, demanding an end to extremist violence, ensuring that all Egyptian political parties practice the values of pluralism and tolerance, and encouraging a democratic Egypt to fully respect the rights of all its citizens.

HONORABLE DISTINCTION

HON. HENRY C. “HANK” JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 2, 2011

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, Whereas, our lives have been touched by the life of this one man who has given of himself in order for others to stand; and

Whereas, Mr. Ladeadrick “Bob” Jackson's work is present throughout Meadowcreek High School for all to see, being the Principal of Meadowcreek High School, Lilburn, Gwinnett County, Georgia from 2006 to 2011, he did much to aid in the achievements of the school; and

Whereas, this giant of a man taught academics to young scholars, managed administrators, inspired elected officials, motivated the young and the old, as he accomplished so much during his time on this earth; and

Whereas, this remarkable man gave of himself, his time, his talent and his life; he never asked for fame or fortune; he just wanted to uplift those in need, he just wanted to make a difference by educating others and building up a community; Mr. Jackson inspired others to do the same by witnessing him walk the walk and talk the talk; and

Whereas, Mr. Jackson led by doing behind the scenes and on the front lines for many; Mr. Jackson was a husband, a father, an educator and a friend; he was our warrior, our patriarch, a man of great integrity who remained true to the uplifting of the community until his end; and

Whereas, the U.S. Representative of the Fourth District of Georgia has set aside this day to bestow an honorable distinction and recognition on Mr. Ladeadrick “Bob” Jackson for his leadership, friendship and service to all of the citizens of Georgia and throughout the Nation; as a citizen of great worth and so noted distinction;

Now therefore, I, HENRY C. “HANK” JOHNSON, Jr. do hereby attest to the 112th Congress that Mr. Ladeadrick “Bob” Jackson of Georgia is deemed worthy and deserving of this “Congressional Honorable Distinction:”

Mr. Ladeadrick “Bob” Jackson—U.S. Citizen of Distinction—in the 4th Congressional District of Georgia.

Proclaimed, this 29th day of July, 2011.

SUSPENDING IMMIGRATION STATUS PETITION AND INTERVIEW TIME REQUIREMENT FOR MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, August 1, 2011

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 398, “To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to toll, during active-duty service abroad in the Armed Forces, the periods of time to file a petition and appear for an interview to remove the conditional basis for permanent resident status, and for other purposes.” As a Senior member of the Judiciary Committee and a member of the Subcommittee on Immigration

Policy and Enforcement, I am proud to support this legislation because in many ways the current immigration system is flawed, and in need of reform.

Furthermore, I want to commend my colleague, Rep. ZOE LOFGREN for her leadership on immigration issues, especially in her former role as Chairwoman of the Immigration Subcommittee. The debate surrounding how to mend our broken immigration system continues to be polarized, with many differing opinions about how to best address the issues of unauthorized persons in our country. I would also like to commend Rep. LOFGREN for introducing this bill, H.R. 398, which addresses one of the many loopholes, oversights, and shortcomings in our current immigration system. This bill makes a simple change that helps our immigration process make more sense—it tolls time period to file a petition and appear for an interview to remove the conditional basis for permanent resident status while a petitioner is serving in active duty with the armed forces. It allows those men and women serving our country abroad to focus on protecting America, and not worry about their spouse's immigration status.

Under current law, when either a U.S. citizen or lawful U.S. Permanent Resident sponsors an alien spouse, the alien spouse is granted conditional permanent resident status. After two years, the alien spouse and the U.S. citizen or permanent U.S. resident spouse must jointly file a petition with the Department of Homeland Security for the removal of the conditional status. If the petition is successful, the alien spouse becomes a full permanent resident. The petition must be filed during the 90-day period before the second anniversary of the spouse's becoming a conditional permanent resident, unless the alien establishes to the satisfaction of DHS good cause and extenuating circumstances for failure to file on time. Upon the filing of the petition, DHS interviews the spouses to ascertain whether there was any possible marriage fraud. The interview is conducted within 90 days of the submission of the petition, unless DHS waives the deadline for the interview or the requirement for the interview.

As you can see, the 90-day joint filing deadline and the interview that follows, which requires the participation of the U.S. citizen or permanent resident spouse who is serving overseas in active duty status with the Armed Forces would, without a doubt, place undue hardship on the active duty petitioner. It would clearly be a disruption to the U.S. military to have to facilitate a member of the Armed Forces deployed overseas filing a petition and traveling for a personal interview with DHS. While DHS can choose to delay this process in appropriate circumstances, a blanket tolling of the time periods while a spouse is serving abroad in the U.S. Armed Forces is appropriate.

H.R. 398 tolls the time periods of time to file the petition and have an interview for removal of condition during any period of time in which a spouse is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States and serving abroad in active-duty status. The spouses do retain the right to be able to file a petition within the normal time period and DHS retains the right to waive the interview requirement in appropriate circumstances.

Let's help our military service member by giving them the peace of mind. The tolling of

dates would lift the burden on the petitioning military spouse serving abroad from (i) having to establish to the satisfaction of DHS, good cause and extenuating circumstances for failure to file on time and (ii) obtaining a waiver

of the deadline for the interview. Lifting the burden on the petitioning military spouse will allow those men and women serving our country abroad to focus on protecting Amer-

ica, and not worry about their spouse's immigration status.

I urge all members to join me in supporting passage of this landmark legislation.