

Tonight the House will consider S. 1280, the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011, which will enhance existing procedures for victims of physical and sexual assault in the Peace Corps and establish clear protocols for handling and reporting confidential information within the agency.

Specifically, this legislation requires the Peace Corps to provide enhanced sexual assault risk reduction and response training to all volunteers and integrate that knowledge with safety and security protocols at every Peace Corps post. Volunteers in training will receive an in-depth analysis of the particular risks they face in a given country and be provided with clear, written guidelines regarding whom to contact and what steps to take in the event of a sexual assault.

S. 1280 creates an anonymous hotline for reporting sexual assaults and sets up response teams that will be deployed the moment an incident is reported. A certified victim's advocate who answers to the Director of the Peace Corps will be required on staff to oversee the initiative and manage data collection for further studies analyzing safety and security trends.

Mr. Speaker, the Peace Corps has sent over 200,000 Americans to live and work in 139 developing countries since it was established by an executive order from President John F. Kennedy on March 1, 1961. Now in its 50th year, the agency continues to fill the gaps left behind by conflict, strife, and environmental degradation around the globe. For 2 years they develop partnerships, gain valuable knowledge, and help their communities meet local development goals. In the process, they build lifelong bonds and gain a greater understanding of America's place in the world.

The world in which Peace Corps Volunteers work is the real world, Mr. Speaker. It can be dangerous and uncertain. Therefore, issues of health and safety are of critical concern, especially during those first few months it takes a volunteer to adjust to the realities of his or her new life.

The provisions of this legislation were developed with extensive input from affected individuals and their families, victims' rights groups, Peace Corps senior staff, and the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) community. Kate's memory, embodied in her family, friends, and supporters, moved the process forward.

Peace Corps Director Aaron Williams testified on May 11, 2011 at a hearing before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and affirmed that he is committed to meeting the goals espoused by Kate's Voice and First Response Action.

"The Peace Corps has not always been sufficiently responsive or sensitive to victims of crime and their families," he admitted. He went on to offer a public apology and described how such attitudes are changing on his watch.

Indeed, much of the substance of S. 1280 is already being implemented within the agency. Director Williams created the Victim's Advocate position and signed a memorandum of understanding with the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN), the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization, to collaborate and share resources on sexual assault prevention and response.

Mr. Speaker, based on the Peace Corps receptivity to these reforms and the bipartisan

nature of this legislation, I am confident that S. 1280 is an enlightened response to the pressing concerns of Peace Corps Volunteers and their families.

As a committed friend of the Peace Corps and its mission, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and provide the resources necessary to implement it without threatening the operational capacity of the agency.

The remarkable collaboration that conceived the Kate Puzey Act was an unparalleled labor of love. It was an earnest push to strengthen the program and prepare it for the future. It was not meant to hurt or punish the agency.

One of the witnesses at the May 11th hearing put it bluntly: "I would be devastated if my testimony were used to stop Peace Corps funding, cut funding, or eliminate the Peace Corps."

I strongly encourage my colleagues to keep that thought in mind as we consider this bipartisan legislation, which is the legacy of many extraordinary Americans, some of whom never returned from their missions abroad.

To honor the memories of fallen Volunteers, respect the survivors who courageously shared their stories, and encourage the next generation which recognizes the power of service, I will vote for this legislation in its current form, and I urge my colleagues to do likewise.

WELCOMING AND HONORING THE VETERANS OF THE NOVEMBER 3, 2011 QUAD CITIES, IOWA HONOR FLIGHT

HON. DAVID LOESACK

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Mr. LOESACK. Mr. Speaker, today I have the great honor of welcoming to our Nation's capital eighty-nine Iowa veterans of the Greatest Generation. Accompanied by seventy volunteer guardians, these veterans have travelled to Washington, DC to visit the monument that was built in their honor.

For many if not all of these veterans, today will be the first time they have seen the National World War II Memorial. I can think of no greater honor than to be there when they see their memorial for the first time and to personally thank Iowa's—and our Nation's—heroes.

I proudly have in my office a piece of marble from the quarry that supplied the marble which was used to build the World War II Memorial. That piece of marble, just like the memorial that it built, reminds me of the sacrifices of a generation that, when our country was threatened, rose to defend not just our Nation but the freedoms, democracy, and values that we hold so dear. They did so as one people and one country. Their sacrifices and determination in the face of great threats to our way of life are both humbling and inspiring.

The sheer magnitude of what they accomplished, not just in war but in the peace that followed has stood as an inspiration to every generation since. The Greatest Generation did not seek to be tested both abroad by a war that fundamentally challenged our way of life and at home by the Great Depression and the rebuilding of our economy that followed. But, when called upon to do so, they defended and then rebuilt our Nation. Their patriotism, serv-

ice, and great sacrifice not only defined their generation—they stand as a testament to the fortitude of our Nation.

I am tremendously proud to welcome the Quad Cities Honor Flight and Iowa's veterans of the Second World War to our Nation's capital today. On behalf of every Iowan I represent, I thank them for their service to our country.

RECOGNIZING WHIRLPOOL CORPORATION

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Whirlpool Corporation on the tremendous occasion of its 100th anniversary. Headquartered in Benton Harbor, Michigan, Whirlpool is the global leader in the home appliance industry: delivering products of unmatched quality to customers in virtually every corner of the world.

Since its founding in 1911, Whirlpool has continued to build upon its well-earned reputation as a socially and environmentally conscious company by improving the quality of life in countless communities, fostering strong private-public partnerships, and setting the industry standard for energy efficiency and conservation.

Much has changed for the company in the past 100 years, but through it all Whirlpool has remained true to its Midwest, hometown roots. Michigan has faced more than its fair share of challenges through the recent economic downturn, but companies like Whirlpool are helping lead the way for our State's recovery and to restore our Nation's economic competitiveness.

The company is currently undertaking the multimillion-dollar construction of a state-of-the-art headquarters office campus in Benton Harbor. Whirlpool has also played an integral role in the half-billion-dollar Harbor Shores development project, which is revitalizing the St. Joseph-Benton Harbor area.

Thank you to Whirlpool for a century of creating jobs and giving back—here's to the next 100 years.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE CLEVELAND JUNIOR TAMBURITZANS

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the Cleveland Junior Tamburitians, a group which has been promoting Croatian arts and culture for more than fifty years.

Established in 1959, The Cleveland Junior Tamburitians are a parent sponsored non-profit group whose members range in age from 5 to 21 years old. The group performs songs and dances to traditional Croatian music in order to celebrate and honor their heritage. The group is currently comprised of more than 100 children who are under the direction of Katarina Lukacevic and Tom Salopek. The Tamburitians have held concerts in Canada, Croatia, and throughout the

United States. The group's purpose is to preserve and celebrate the culture of Croatia.

Cleveland's Croatian community is among the most robust in North America. Croatians have played a pivotal role in developing the businesses and industries which helped make Cleveland great. Their presence provided additional diversity to our growing city and members of the Croatian community have made valuable contributions to the area's athletics, arts, and music. In 1949, Cleveland was the first city to bring traditional Croatian song and dance together with the founding of the American-Croatian Singing Association.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in recognition of the Cleveland Junior Tamburitians, just one of the many bright spots of Cleveland's Croatian community.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today our national debt is \$14,973,228,608,405.04.

On January 6, 2009, the start of the 111th Congress, the national debt was \$10,638,425,746,293.80.

This means the national debt has increased by \$4,334,802,862,111.24 since then. This debt and its interest payments we are passing to our children and all future Americans.

CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize October as the eighth annual National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. The National Cyber Security Alliance, the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center, the Department of Homeland Security, and other organizations developed the "STOP. THINK. CONNECT." national awareness campaign to educate our citizens and help them stay safer online. It is vital that the public is engaged and aware of how to properly utilize security software in order to protect their social security numbers, financial information, health information, and other personal data. We must all work together and take responsibility for securing our own networks and computers to ensure that government systems, personal data and even critical infrastructure remain safe from attack.

Recently, Deputy Secretary of Defense William Lynn noted to Foreign Affairs magazine that our Nation is shifting its priorities in cyberspace, recognizing that attacks online can be as threatening as bullets and bombs. Additionally, the importance of cyber to not just our national security, but also our economic competitiveness, cannot be overstated. The vulnerabilities our Nation faces in cyberspace come from potential attacks against critical infrastructure, as described by Lee Hamilton in

his post 9/11 report, as well as from damage to our military readiness, as Secretary of Defense Panetta testified earlier this year. But our vulnerabilities also include the intellectual property that is a critical driver of our economy.

Cyber threats to our intellectual property are growing more numerous, sophisticated, and successful. As noted by a recent report from the National Counter Intelligence Executive, vital intellectual property is targeted and stolen in cyberspace every day as these threats become more damaging and extensive. While the cost of a data breach can run well into the millions, even that loss is dwarfed by the long term damage to America's ability to remain the world leader in innovation, especially in our high tech and defense sectors.

All of this should tell us that the status quo is not good enough. We need to redouble our efforts and tap into our creative and innovative spirit to address not just the threats of today, but the challenges of tomorrow as well. This will require better education and action from both industry and government, as we come together to strengthen our public-private partnership. But if we fail to leverage our own abilities and work through these challenges, our personal privacy, national security and economic competitiveness will be irreparably harmed.

I applaud the Department of Homeland Security for sponsoring this month of outreach. As a Co-Founder and Co-Chairman of the House Cybersecurity Caucus, I will continue to fight to deliver the latest tools and training to support both our national security infrastructure and the personal data of all Americans.

VOTER SUPPRESSION IN AMERICA

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my fellow colleagues to urge this Congress to protect our access to the ballot, which has come under assault in several states across America.

The strongest sound that exists in a democratic society is the one voiced during our elections. However, I am troubled that over 5 million Americans are at risk of having their votes suppressed by laws that have turned back the clock on significant freedoms and accessibility achieved in many states before the 2010 elections.

Today, I stand in strong opposition to legislative tools that aim to repress the most important right to civic engagement and empowerment, the right to vote.

The impact of recent voter suppression laws is spiraling out of control, as evidenced by recent current events. For example, a 96-year-old Tennessee woman was denied a voter ID under Tennessee's new law because she was unable to locate her marriage certificate—even though she produced everything from a copy of her lease, voter registration card, birth certificate and a rent receipt. After voting for over 70 years in all but two elections, this was the first time her right to vote was suppressed.

Even our Nation's soldiers and war heroes have been disenfranchised by some of these new laws. Recently, an 86-year-old World War

II veteran had to pay for a voter photo ID, even though the state law required that the IDs be given free of charge. Another 91-year-old woman was reportedly unable to receive her ID because she was physically unable to stand in long and crowded lines at the DMV with her cane.

Students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison serve as a microcosm of college populations that now face extreme hurdles as their once-accepted student ID cards no longer qualify as acceptable forms of ID in several states. And news of a Florida teacher being unable to register several of her students—an act she customarily does every year as part of her educational curriculum on civic engagement highlights the civil penalties third party registrants face as they merely attempt to assist others become part of the political process.

This suppression is affecting all classes, races, and ages, and we owe it to the general public to join in their public outrage against these attacks, which threaten to move America backwards to a period in our history that was ugly, discriminatory and crippling.

At the core of all fundamental rights is the right to vote. As voting rights experts have noted, the recent stream of laws passed at the state level are a reversal of policies—both federal and state—that were intended to combat voter disenfranchisement and boost voter participation. That is why I sent a letter to the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee this week, asking that hearings be held to ensure that our federal laws in place to protect access to voting are being enforced.

Ensuring that every veteran, senior citizen, student—whether natural born or naturalized—has the right to vote should not be a partisan issue. It should be the very purpose of this Congress since it is a priority to our democracy. I urge every elected official who is a beneficiary of our electoral system, to support the protection of every American citizen's right to have access to voting.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,

Washington, DC, October 31, 2011.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SMITH: We write to request a hearing to address the wave of recent changes in state voting laws that make it more difficult for Americans to cast a ballot. A recent report released by the Brennan Center for Justice entitled "Voting Law Changes in 2012" has concluded that more than 5 million voters could be impacted by the recently enacted legislation. The provisions that present the most serious concerns include:

Provisions that limit voting by requiring the presentation of photo identification:

Laws that exclude the most common forms of identification (e.g., student IDs and Social Security cards), yet offer no alternate identification procedures for eligible voters.

Changes requiring proof of citizenship as a condition for voter registration:

Limitations or outright elimination of early voting opportunities.

Barriers to first time voters such as the elimination of same day registration and limitations on voter mobilization efforts.

These changes in state voting laws raise serious constitutional concerns under both the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and the Fifteenth Amendment. For example, requiring citizens to expend significant funds to obtain a photo