

support it, despite my profound wish that Turkey fully embrace the full diversity represented within its borders. Further, I would like to see the current government of Turkey—as well as the governments of Greece and Armenia—fully and fairly recognize the enduring pain that conflict and hatred have wrought in its territory. I feel that under Prime Minister Erdogan, that process of acceptance and accountability has begun. We in the United States Congress can support a process of authentic reconciliation, and we should.

Turkey is our strong ally and friend. By shoring up our friendship, we can have discussions about the shortcomings we see in our ally. But this resolution fails to meet the basic standard of an enduring alliance, and therefore must oppose it.

THE WATER FOR THE WORLD ACT OF 2012

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, as America prepares for the holiday season, it is important to pause and reflect on what we can do for others as well as ourselves. I hope that Congress will give a gift of life, health and hope by helping people around the world with something that most Americans take for granted: safe drinking water.

Nearly 900 million of the world's poorest don't have clean drinking water, and fully 2.6 billion lack access to improved sanitation. This shortfall poses a significant challenge for development and security around the world, reinforcing a cycle of poverty and instability that represents both a humanitarian disaster and a national security threat.

Water-related diseases are particularly brutal in how they target children: 90% of all deaths caused by diarrheal diseases are children under 5 years of age, mostly in developing countries. In all, 1.8 million children under the age of 5 die every year, more than from AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined. The economic impacts are devastating: inadequate sanitation in India alone costs that country \$53.8 billion, or 6.4 percent of its GDP every year.

What's more, dirty water directly affects every area of development. Children cannot attend school if they are sick from dirty water, and adults suffering from water-borne illnesses overwhelm hospitals and cannot go to work. Hours spent looking for and collecting clean water mean hours not spent adding to a family's economic well-being. In short, the best intentioned efforts at development fail if the basic necessity of clean water is not met.

In this period of good tidings, there is good news with water. The solution to this problem is cheap and relatively straightforward. We don't have to spend millions searching for a cure. Sometimes something as simple as teaching the value of hand washing, or providing access to technology we already have is all it takes to save millions of lives and increase economic development. What we lack is leadership and accountability.

It's time for Congress to act again. The Water for the World Act of 2012 builds on current U.S. efforts to provide those in need with

greater access to clean water and sanitation. And in this period of tight budgets, it is important that the Water for the World Act doesn't ask for any increase in funding, but rather improves the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of international aid programs. Given the strains on federal resources and the depth of need, it is essential that we are able to target our efforts more efficiently.

The Water for the World Act also gives the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development the tools needed to leverage the investments they are already making by elevating the current positions within the State Department and USAID to coordinate the diplomatic policy of the U.S. on global freshwater issues and to implement country-specific water strategies.

There is nothing more fundamental to the human condition and global health than access to clean water and sanitation. More needs to be done, and it needs to be done well. Taxpayers are rightly demanding better results and greater transparency from foreign aid. This bill provides the tools and incentives to do just that.

URGING TURKEY TO SAFEGUARD ITS CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

SPEECH OF

HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on H. Res. 306, urging the Republic of Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties.

I believe that it is important for Secretary Clinton to discuss issues of religious freedom and equality with her Turkish counterparts, but I regret that Congress often fails to acknowledge the rapidly developing situation in Turkey, where the relationship between religion and state is evolving in positive and dynamic ways.

As a devout Christian and American, I believe that all religions should be treated equally, with dignity and respect, both here in the United States and abroad, and as such, I wish the resolution before us today would have offered a more balanced perspective, acknowledging the positive steps taken by the Turkish government.

Turkey is home to many faiths, and I believe that Turks take questions and concerns about religious freedom and equality very seriously. Turks are no strangers to religious restrictions, discrimination and prejudice, which confront many of their communities abroad.

I would like to commend the government of Turkey for its recent reform of The Law on Foundations, which enables the return of or compensation for immovable properties significant to religious minority communities. Congress should also acknowledge that Turkey has preserved or restored many sites of importance to religious minorities in recent years, and we should encourage the continuation of this important work.

I applaud the Turkish government for easing restrictions on the Greek Orthodox community and the Ecumenical Patriarch, initiatives that have been welcomed by the Hellenic communities in Turkey and the United States and improved relations between Turkey and Greece.

In another example of forward movement that Congress has yet to recognize, the Armenian Orthodox Patriarch led worship services in the historic Armenian church on Akhtamar Island near Van for the first time since World War I, attended by thousands of pilgrims from Turkey and abroad.

Congress should welcome Prime Minister Erdogan's commitment to return property to religious minority communities and recognize Turkey's status as a majority Muslim, democratic, secular state where all religions are equal.

The latest International Religious Freedom Report published by the State Department lists areas where the Turkish government has made significant advances, while calling for improvements in areas such as the reopening of the Halki Seminary on the island of Heybeli.

Further improvement is always possible, and as Turkey moves forward with constitutional reform efforts, I am confident that this process will recognize religious freedom, equality and plurality as universal values that should be upheld in every corner of the world.

SUDAN PRESS CONFERENCE

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I submit remarks I delivered at a Sudan press conference today hosted by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

SUDAN PRESS CONFERENCE,

1 P.M., DECEMBER 14, 2011, RAYBURN FOYER

We are surrounded today by photos which convey a dark but familiar story—Sudanese people, brutalized, marginalized and terrorized by their own government.

And yet, it seems this same regime has been afforded the privilege of legal representation in Washington by the Obama administration.

Earlier this week, I was outraged to learn that the genocidal government of Sudan led by Omar Hassan Bashir—an internationally indicted war criminal—now has a lawyer, Mr. Bart Fisher, on retainer in Washington.

According to a news report in Africa Intelligence, Mr. Fisher was hired with the express purpose of trying "to lift American sanctions against it."

In documentation posted on the Department of Justice Web site, it appears that Mr. Fisher was granted a license by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) at Treasury to provide this representation and that he plans to engage in political activities, among them, "Representations (including petitions) . . . to U.S. government agencies regarding sanctions . . ."

If true, I am appalled that this has been permitted and can't help but wonder if Mr. Fisher's political contributions were a factor. The administration should reverse this approval.

Martin Luther King famously said, "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

I can't help but wonder what the people of Sudan are thinking at this particular juncture when the administration struggles to find its voice on their behalf, while at the same time seemingly empowering the voice of their oppressors.

Would we even dream of allowing Milosevic, Karadzic or Gaddafi to have representation in the nation's capital?

Bashir's crimes are well-known and documented. This is the same man that is accused by the International Criminal Court of five counts of crimes against humanity, including murder, rape, torture, extermination, and two counts of war crimes.

I've been to Sudan five times, including in July 2004 when Senator Sam Brownback and I were the first congressional delegation to go to Darfur. We spoke with women who had been raped just days earlier.

The Arab janjaweed militias, armed by Khartoum, told these women that they wanted to make "lighter skinned babies."

In addition to horrific human rights abuses and crimes committed by Bashir and his National Congress Party (NCP), Sudan remains on the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism. It is well known that the same people currently in control in Khartoum gave safe haven to Osama bin Laden in the early 1990s. Moreover, Khartoum was a revolving door for Hamas and other designated terrorist groups.

But Bashir's crimes are not merely at thing of the past as we will hear in greater detail today. At a recent Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission hearing on the crisis in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states in Sudan, former Member of Congress and President of United to End Genocide, Tom Andrews, spoke about his experiences while visiting the region.

He said that there were reports of, "Sudanese armed forces and their allied militias going door to door targeting people based upon their religion, and based upon the color of their skin."

Let me repeat that . . . people were being targeted for killing based upon their religion and the color of their skin.

According to the USCIRF delegation that recently visited Sudan and met with refugees in Yida camp, all of the pastors with whom they spoke said they fled Southern Kordofan after learning that the Sudanese military was undertaking house searches for Christians and SPLM-N supporters.

If this were happening in southern France, the world would be outraged. The world would take action. And yet, this story rarely features above the fold.

We stand just blocks from a museum that cries out "Never Again." Meanwhile, it appears that this administration is complicit in allowing the genocidaire Bashir an advocate in Washington.

Which begs the question, who lobbies for the people whose faces are represented in this room?

Yesterday I wrote the president along with the Departments of State Treasury and Justice requesting immediate clarification about this matter and will continue to press them—just as I have done during previous administrations.

I am submitting this correspondence and relevant information into the Congressional Record for all to see.

We must not be silent in the face of this injustice.

If President Obama, Secretary Clinton and Secretary Geithner stand by and allow this to happen, history will be their judge.

RECOGNIZING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA—PRINCE WILLIAM

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 20th Anniversary of

Literacy Volunteers of America—Prince William.

Founded in 1991 by local librarian Dona Swanson to help teach a library patron to read, Literacy Volunteers of America—Prince William has since grown to 300 volunteers and 600 students. Despite its impressive growth, LVA-PW has maintained its direct service approach, providing individualized adult literacy tutoring based on the personal needs and goals of adult learners seeking to improve their education and employment skills. LVA-PW's programs are well-researched and constantly tracked and evaluated by staff to ensure their effectiveness. This has proven to be a highly successful model; in 2010, LVA-PW's adult learners received a total of 12,000 hours of instruction, with nearly 80% achieving at least one of their personal goals.

Literacy Volunteers of America—Prince William has established itself as an institution in the community, fostering local partnerships to strengthen both their own services and those of other community groups, including the Prince William County Library System, the Virginia Employment Center, Northern Virginia Community College, the Prince William County Adult Education Program, and local businesses through workplace literacy programs. Literacy Volunteers of America—Prince William has additionally been recognized in the past as Community Service Organization of the Year by the Prince William Regional Chamber of Commerce, Volunteer Organization of the Quarter by Prince William County, and Friday's Hero by the local Channel 9 News. Most recently, LVA-PW Executive Director Kim Sells received the Nancy Jiranek Award for Outstanding Virginia Adult Literacy Executive Director from the Virginia Literacy Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the 20th Anniversary of Literacy Volunteers of America—Prince William. I also express my gratitude to LVA-PW's volunteer tutors and trainers, Board of Directors, and staff for helping to empower members of the community by increasing life skills and workforce potential through literacy.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3630, MIDDLE CLASS TAX RELIEF AND JOB CREATION ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I oppose this closed rule, particularly because it does not allow for a Democratic substitute for critical year end legislation.

In a Democratic substitute we would have included a permanent repeal of the flawed physician payment formula in Medicare replacing it with a ten-year freeze. Each year members promise to look into this formula and address it—to provide certainty and stability for America's seniors in accessing their doctors. The House passed health reform bill did exactly that. Unfortunately it did not become law, but the Republicans did not even try to solve this problem. They did not offer legislation or have markups. The Republican bill punts the question for another 2 years.

In a Democratic substitute we would have included the Wireless Innovation and Public Safety Broadband Act that Representatives ESHOO and I sponsored. It keeps many of the same policy goals as the Republican legislation, but it would not undermine public safety by erecting a faulty governance model for a public safety broadband network, nor would it mandate the premature return of spectrum utilized for mission critical voice communications. The substitute also would have allowed the FCC necessary discretion to preserve unlicensed spectrum uses that preserve innovation and benefit consumers as well as protect consumers from monopolies.

In a Democratic substitute, we would not have included the poison pill of the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline provision.

In a Democratic substitute, we would not be asking modest income seniors and individuals with disabilities to foot the bill for tax relief—that's just robbing Peter to pay Paul. Seniors making over \$85,000 a year are already paying more for Medicare. High income earners already pay more all their lives for Medicare through the Medicare payroll tax which has no cap. The changes in the Republican bill restructure the Medicare program in problematic ways to pay for short term extensions.

In a Democratic substitute, we would not be creating an additional 170,000 uninsured people by increasing costs on working class individuals through the health care tax credit and subsidies in the Affordable Care Act.

In a Democratic substitute, we would not be taking the shortsighted step of reducing our commitment to public health and prevention activities. These activities help to prevent diseases like diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and obesity and can lower healthcare costs over the long run.

The Democratic substitute would be a fair extension of important programs and would be paid for by the withdrawal and downsizing of troops overseas through the overseas contingency fund.

MARKING THE END OF THE WAR IN IRAQ

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of this great day in American history—the day that marks the end of the Iraq war. Although for years we all hoped and prayed that this day would come, there is an overwhelming feeling of relief when hope becomes a reality. Today we stand together as a nation and rejoice as we look forward to the return of thousands of men and women whose countless sacrifices, remarkable service, and enormous achievements in the name of our great Nation will never be forgotten.

Nearly 1.5 million Americans served in the war in Iraq, with 30,000 wounded and nearly 4,500 casualties. In my district, we suffered the loss of 12 remarkable servicemen. We remember Long Beach residents: Pfc. Stephen A. Castellano; Sgt. 1st Class Randy D. Collins; Sgt. Anthony J. Davis, Jr.; Sgt. Israel Garcia; Pvt. Ernesto R. Guerra; Pfc. Lyndon A. Marcus, Jr.; Spec. Roberto L. Martinez Salazar; Spec. Astor A. SunsiniPineda; Pfc.