

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MIKE POMPEO

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Mr. POMPEO. Mr. Speaker, on May 5th, I missed Rollcall vote numbered 295 because I was unavoidably detained in an Energy and Commerce hearing.

Rollcall No. 295 was a vote on the Holt Amendment to H.R. 1230, Restarting American Offshore Leasing Now Act. Had I been present I would have voted "no."

HONORING THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ON "REPUBLIC DAY"

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Republic of Azerbaijan in celebration of the 93rd anniversary of Republic Day on May 28th. Later this year, Azerbaijan will also celebrate the 20th anniversary of its freedom from the Soviet Union and the start of diplomatic relations with the United States.

Located in a geopolitically dynamic region between Europe and Asia and sandwiched between Russia and Iran, Azerbaijan is a secular country with a predominantly Muslim population that has also been home for more than a millennia for vibrant Christian and Jewish communities.

Azerbaijan has opened Caspian energy resources to development by U.S. companies and has emerged as a key player for global energy security. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project is the most successful project contributing to the development of the South Caucasus region and has become the main artery delivering Caspian Sea hydrocarbons to the U.S. and our partners in Europe. Notably, in 2009 Azerbaijan provided nearly one quarter of all crude oil supplies to Israel and is considered a leading potential natural gas provider for the U.S. supported Nabucco pipeline.

On the security front, immediately after 9/11 Azerbaijan was among the first to offer strong support and assistance to the United States. Azerbaijan participated in operations in Kosovo and Iraq and is actively engaged in Afghanistan, having recently doubled its military presence there. Azerbaijan has extended important over-flight clearances for U.S. and NATO flights to support ISAF and has regularly provided landing and refueling operations at its airports for U.S. and NATO forces. Also, Azerbaijan, as highlighted by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, plays an important role in the Northern Distribution Network, a supply route to Afghanistan by making available its ground and Caspian naval transportation facilities. Moreover, Azerbaijan provides vital support for U.S. nonproliferation efforts.

Again, as the Co-Chairman of the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus, it is my distinct pleasure to honor the Republic of Azerbaijan in celebration of the 93rd anniversary of Republic Day and to recognize the valuable bilateral relationship between the United States and Azerbaijan. I also encourage my col-

leagues who are interested in supporting Azerbaijan to join me as a member of Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus, a bipartisan group of nearly 40 Members of Congress working to help foster the growing partnership between the United States and Azerbaijan and to advance U.S. interests in this pivotal region.

HONORING ASTON PARK HEALTH CARE CENTER OF ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

HON. HEATH SHULER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Aston Park Health Care Center of Asheville, North Carolina during this year's National Nursing Home Week.

For over 30 years, Aston Park Health Care Center has treated residents and their families with respect, support, and friendship. They recognize that these values, along with high quality medical care, ensure the dignity of life for their residents. The Aston Park Health Care Center has earned a five star rating from the U.S. News & World Nursing Home Rankings for their holistic approach to Alzheimer's care, adult home care, assisted living, skilled nursing care, and short-term rehabilitation. That is how they do their part to carry out this year's National Nursing Home Week theme, "Fulfilling the Promise."

I would like to commend and thank all of the skilled and trained staff members at Aston Park Health Care Center who strive to ensure a proud life for Aston Park residents. Their warm, friendly, sincere, and comfortable atmosphere allows their residents to continue to live life to the fullest.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of their excellence in care, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the staff and residents of Aston Park Health Care Center.

RECOGNIZING YOM HA'ATZMA'UT, ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the people of Israel on their Independence Day. On this very special day, we recognize and celebrate 63 years of Israel's independence as the national homeland of the Jewish people. This is a time to commemorate the rich history and journey from a scattered and persecuted Diaspora to the thriving modern nation we see today in the state of Israel.

Throughout their challenging history and against all odds, Israel has become a prospering democracy whose groundbreaking contributions in technology, medicine, agriculture, and environmental innovation have truly been a beacon to the world.

Since 1948, when the United States became the first country to recognize the Jewish State of Israel, we have always stood by her side as a strong ally and friend. As each day brings a new set of complex changes to the

Middle East, it is more vital than ever that we protect and strengthen that friendship. I am deeply committed to ensuring that Washington's steadfast support of Israel will continue to grow over the years, and I am honored to serve as a Member of Congress so I can bring my unwavering support for Israel to work every day.

This Congress must continue to show Israel the love and support that we have provided for more than six decades. There is much to rejoice on this momentous anniversary. Mazel tov, and may you continue to go from strength to strength.

IN CELEBRATION OF ISRAELI INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Israel's Independence Day. For 63 years and counting, Israel continues to be a valuable ally and friend. From fighting global terrorism, to containing the threat of Islamic radicalism, to impressive scientific research, Israel and the United States have developed a unique bond that is based upon shared visions, democratic values, and foreign policy goals.

Still, significant challenges remain for our close ally. Citizen uprisings in nations such as Egypt, Libya, and Syria have changed the political landscape of that region. While there is potential for positive political change, as citizens speak out and demand their rights, there is also increased uncertainty that threatens the stability of the already volatile region.

Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Israel's independence this year, let's give them a gift they surely deserve—the full-faith assurance that this Congress will continue to robustly aid and assist its most trusted ally in the region.

I wish President Peres, Prime Minister Netanyahu, and the people of Israel all the best on this very important occasion.

NO TAXPAYER FUNDING FOR ABORTION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2011

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 3, the "No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act."

The title of this bill is misleading. This is not about funding abortions; it's about restricting a woman's right to choose. This bill is not necessary—the Hyde Amendment already prohibits federal funds from being used for abortion. This bill also raises taxes and penalizes individuals and small businesses that choose health plans that include abortion care.

The majority is using this bill as a tool to push the abortion debate into the tax code. H.R. 3 would increase taxes in order to prevent women from obtaining abortion care. Under the confines of the bill, rape victims could be subject to invasive IRS audits to

prove that their assault qualifies for abortion care. The same lawmakers who campaigned on growing our economy and cutting taxes are now trying to impose new tax penalties on individuals who happen to choose a procedure that they do not agree with.

The majority campaigned on a promise of job creation. Instead the majority is pushing H.R. 3 which would make it more difficult for women to obtain reproductive healthcare services. Judging by the number of this bill, it is the third highest priority for the majority. At a time when America is digging itself out of a recession, and nearly 14 million people are out of work, we should not be prioritizing bills that limit and restrict a woman's access to health care services. We should be focusing on growing the economy and creating jobs. I am ready to get to work and move legislation that would create jobs and revitalize the economy, not restrict women's healthcare coverage.

This bill is nothing more than a mean-spirited attack on women's healthcare. It targets women, many of whom are low-income and women of color, and seeks to permanently deny them coverage for a pregnancy-related healthcare benefit. Then, under the misleading guise of protecting tax-payer dollars, it manipulates the tax code to advance the majority's ideological agenda.

I cannot vote for a bill that punishes women for making their own private healthcare decisions and subjects them to government intrusion.

Madam Speaker, I strongly oppose this bill and urge my colleagues to do the same.

A TRIBUTE TO JOAN BALLANTYNE

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievement of one of my constituents, Joan Ballantyne of Cherokee, Iowa. Joan was recently honored by the National Association of Realtors with their "Meritorious Service Award".

The National Association of Realtors is America's largest trade association with more than a million members nationwide. The Association developed the Meritorious Service Award as a way to provide recognition to those who go above and beyond in their service to NAR. The presentation of this award to Joan embodies the long-standing tradition that its recipients are not only experts of their industry, but also effective educators for me and other Members of Congress on the issues of concern to realtors across this great nation.

This national award is only bestowed upon two Realtors in America annually. This achievement requires a demonstrable history of dedication and commitment to the Association while understanding, and advocating for, the most important issues facing the real estate industry and realtors in Iowa and across the nation.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to know and to work with Joan and I am proud to represent such an exemplary and dedicated Iowan. Her passion has taken her all around Iowa, and all around the country, to promote the ideals in which she believes. I know that my colleagues in the United States Congress will join me in

congratulating Joan on her well deserved recognition of a job well done. Again, I thank Joan for her continued, unwavering commitment to her passion, her career and her fellow realtors and I offer her my best wishes for continued success in the future.

DOMESTIC FUEL FOR ENHANCING NATIONAL SECURITY ACT OF 2011

HON. JAY INSLEE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the bipartisan Domestic Fuel for Enhancing National Security (D-FENS) Act of 2011, which will allow Civilian Agencies and Military Agencies to extend multiyear contracts from the current limit of 5 years to up to 15 years for the purchase of advanced biofuels. I thank my colleague Mr. JONES of North Carolina for working with me on this issue, which will increase our national security and help build an American industry.

Accounting for about 2 percent of U.S. energy consumption, the Department of Defense is the largest single consumer of energy in the country. According to Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "[the Department of Defense] is using 300,000 barrels of oil every day. The energy use per soldier creeps up every year. And our number-one import into Afghanistan is fossil fuel."

U.S. Navy Secretary Ray Maybus has outlined several goals to lead the Navy toward a more energy-secure fleet. By 2015, the Navy will reduce petroleum use in the commercial fleet by 50 percent. By 2020, the Navy will produce at least 50 percent of shore-based energy requirements from alternative sources and 50 percent of total energy consumption will come from alternative sources.

No one knows better than the Department of Defense that energy supplies are critical to combat troops and our national security. To ultimately realize these goals, we must dramatically scale-up advanced biofuel production in the United States. With added Congressional authority to purchase longer-term contracts, our defense sector could adopt domestically produced sustainable fuels for the security of our troops.

Companies already have developed technologies to produce "drop-in" ready fuels, meaning our military could use these fuels in existing infrastructure, aircraft and ships. The longer-term contracts provided by this bill will not only increase our energy security, but can ultimately help unlock private investment for construction and development of large advanced biofuel refineries in the United States. In states like Washington, North Carolina, California, Montana and others, interests from the private sector, universities, ports and major airports are already working to bring the first generation of biofuels to the market, and their efforts can be greatly enhanced by this legislation.

Washington state and the Pacific Northwest are well-positioned to commercialize aviation biofuels—all elements of the supply chain are feasible, and the region has come together to map out a strategic and sustainable path to bring advanced bio-based jet fuels to market. Already in the Northwest, 40 public and pri-

vate stakeholders from academic research institutions, environmental advocacy, and government, and the aerospace and aviation, biofuels, and agriculture and forestry industries have formed the Sustainable Aviation Fuels Northwest (SAFN) initiative. This effort was convened by regional aviation leaders Boeing, Alaska Airlines, the region's largest airports—Port of Seattle, Port of Portland and Spokane International Airport—as well as Washington State University, a center of advanced biofuels research. Stakeholders include fuel producers, farm and forest managers, non-governmental organizations and key government leaders, including representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Defense Logistics Agency. This diverse group representing all points along the supply chain is working to create a "flight path" that will overcome challenges to deploying advanced aviation biofuels. This legislation will support Washington's effort to make the Northwest region a market leader in the advanced biofuel industry.

With our nation's security and energy independence in mind, I urge my colleagues to support the Domestic Fuel for Enhancing National Security (D-FENS) Act of 2011.

VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 17th anniversary of Vietnam Human Rights Day.

The inspiring images of young people fighting for democracy in the Middle East remind us of the ongoing struggles around the world for the basic human rights that we've enjoyed in America for so long. It's a struggle that has been going on in Vietnam for far too long. Journalists, bloggers, whistleblowers, and religious communities face harassment, abuse, and imprisonment for speaking out.

Pro-democracy activists are arrested and jailed under draconian and wide-reaching anti-propaganda laws, often without due process. The U.S. Commission on Religious Freedom (USCIRF) released its 2011 Annual Report two weeks ago, on April 28, and it states that "[t]he government of Vietnam continues to control religious communities, severely restrict and penalize independent religious practice, and brutally repress individuals and groups viewed as challenging its authority."

Despite consistent pressure from Congress and human rights organizations, the Vietnamese government continues to violate its international human rights obligations, silencing the voices of its citizens through repression.

On this May 11th, I ask my colleagues to reflect on the struggles of the courageous Vietnamese citizens who are striving to implement change in an authoritarian society. I would also ask my colleagues to urge the State Department to redesignate Vietnam as a Country of Particular Concern, as USCIRF has recommended every year since 2001.