

to permanent residency for victims of major crimes who cooperate with police on serious criminal cases. The bill also completely excludes vulnerable populations such as tribal women, and LGBT individuals.

The House Republican bill removes the key provisions from the bipartisan passed Senate bill improving protections for Native American women and ensuring all victims are assisted regardless of religion or sexual orientation.

The House Republican bill is opposed by hundreds of groups within the domestic violence community, as well as law enforcement, civil rights and faith-based groups.

Drafting a VAWA bill without any input from Democrats and without any Democratic support in the Judiciary Committee goes against how these reauthorizations have been crafted for over two decades. And it has produced a bill that weakens, rather than strengthens, protections for women against domestic abuse.

I oppose H.R. 4970 and urge my colleagues to do likewise.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 18, 2012

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, on May 7, 2012, I inadvertently missed rollcall vote 197 on H. Con. Res. 117. Had I been present I would have voted "yea."

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTING IRAN FROM ACQUIRING NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 15, 2012

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, on May 17, 2012, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed H. Res. 568, a resolution expressing a sense of the House regarding the importance of preventing the Government of Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability. Despite agreeing with the overall intent of the resolution, I was compelled to vote "present" due to concerns about how the resolution was drafted.

I wholeheartedly believe that stopping the proliferation of nuclear weapons is necessary to ensure the peaceful security of our Nation, and the world. Accordingly, I am gravely concerned about the prospect of a nuclear weapon-armed Government of Iran, which has vehemently antagonized its regional neighbors, particularly our ally Israel. H. Res. 568 expresses this concern and supports a permanent agreement with Iran that assures its nuclear program is entirely peaceful. I also agree with the support expressed in H. Res. 568 for the universal rights and democratic aspirations of the Iranian people, many of whom have suffered greatly in pursuit of these noble causes.

Unfortunately, H. Res. 568 employs dangerously ambiguous language when reframing U.S. policy to prevent this potential nuclear weapon threat. The resolution references nu-

clear weapons "capability" as a new basis for U.S. policy. A loose interpretation of the undefined "capability" term, combined with the resolution's strong rejection of any policy—U.S. or otherwise—that does not prevent a nuclear weapons-capable Iran, can easily accelerate the rhetoric for military action against Iran. Furthermore, the resolution's policy restrictions can only hinder the upcoming P5+1 negotiations with Iran. For these reasons, I voted "present" on H. Res. 568.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4310) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2013, and for other purposes:

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chair, I am in opposition to this bill.

Let me begin by praising our ranking member, the gentleman from Washington, Representative ADAM SMITH. Ranking Member SMITH brought forward a number of excellent proposals that would have significantly improved this bill, especially his effort to eliminate the indefinite detention provisions that were included in last year's bill. He also supported efforts to rein in excess Pentagon spending by supporting Representative BARBARA LEE's amendment to trim \$8 billion from the bill. Had the amendment passed, it would have restored the funding level in the bill to what Democrats and Republicans had agreed to in this year's Federal budget bill.

Unfortunately, the majority chose to vote down both of those amendments and thus continue a misguided, counterproductive detainee policy and still more reckless spending. Moreover, the majority is attempting to interfere with the President's ability to negotiate arms control agreements with Russia, a potentially unconstitutional action. Additionally, this bill continues to fund Cold War legacy weapon systems like the F-35 and V-22 which we neither need nor can afford. Indeed, it's worth remembering that if we proceed with the procurement of the F-35, that program will cost taxpayers in excess of \$400 billion—\$50 billion more than the entire defense budget was a decade ago. We need to think anew about how best to defend our country, not continue to buy weapons to deter a Soviet Union that ceased to exist over 20 years ago.

Finally, this bill continues the deadly folly that is the war in Afghanistan, now the longest war in our country's history. There is no good reason for us still to be involved in combat operations in Afghanistan. We invaded Afghanistan to get Osama bin Laden and his key lieutenants—the men who were responsible for the 9/11 attacks on our Nation. Last year, President Obama authorized the operation that eliminated bin Laden. The chief planner of the 9/11 attacks, Khalid Sheik Mohammed, has been in our custody for years. The Al Qaeda we went to war with in 2001 effectively

no longer exists, and thus the reason we sent our troops to Afghanistan no longer exists, which is why they should come home now but won't, thanks to this misguided bill. It is for all these reasons that I will vote against this bill.

KRISTEN DUNN

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 18, 2012

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Kristen Dunn for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Kristen Dunn is an 8th grader at Wheat Ridge 5-8 and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Kristen Dunn is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Kristen Dunn for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all her future accomplishments.

RECOGNIZING SHERRIE SLICK OF KETCHIKAN, ALASKA

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 18, 2012

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of an incredible person. I do so, on behalf of myself, former Senators Ted Stevens and Frank Murkowski, the Community of Ketchikan, and the State of Alaska. It is my privilege to recognize Sherrie Slick of Ketchikan, Alaska, for her 25 years of dedicated service as staff to the Alaska Congressional Delegation.

Sherrie is a true community leader and has worked hard to represent the Alaska Congressional Delegation in our Ketchikan office. While we are sad to see her go, we wish her the best during her retirement and future endeavors.

The first thing that comes to mind when I think of Sherrie is her unfailing energy. She has been tireless in her dedication to constituents and her service to the Delegation. She is deeply tied to Ketchikan, and residents value her civic leadership. I am impressed at how Sherrie manages to take on so many projects—from charitable events to Delegation visits, and I always say that Sherrie is so involved that she seems to be in several places at once.

The Alaskans who visited Sherrie over the years, in need of assistance or to voice their opinion on legislation, found her to be both knowledgeable and welcoming. In fact, Sherrie was a staunch advocate for her fellow citizens.

Sherrie is also a great story-teller. I always looked forward to hearing from her about local

happenings when I visited Ketchikan. There was no better guide than Sherrie when members of the Delegation were in town.

To me, Sherrie is a friend, close advisor, and one of the best staffers I have had the pleasure of working with. I know Sherrie is looking forward to a lively retirement, particularly as a grandmother. I'm sure that she will continue to work hard, just as she has during her time serving the Delegation. Today, we remember Sherrie's accomplishments and know that she will achieve many more in the years to come.

BURMA SANCTIONS SHOULD NOT BE EASED, LIFTED, OR REMOVED

HON. TRENT FRANKS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 18, 2012

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, on March 30, 2012, the Associated Press had an article about the Obama Administration expanding sanctions against the Syrian regime. These new sanctions focused on military and security officials, particularly targeting the Minister of Defense. In a statement, Under Secretary of the Treasury David Cohen said, "The U.S. and the international community will hold to account those who stand with the Assad regime as it trains the instruments of war against Syrian civilians . . . the time has long since passed for Syrian officials at all levels to turn their backs on this bloody regime." The article went on to state that over 9,000 people had been killed in the fighting in Syria.

Jump ahead to today, and reports in the Washington Post that the U.S. is now "coordinating" "more and better weapons" for the Syrian opposition. Persian Gulf states are funding the weapons.

Also today we hear deeply disturbing news that the Administration is "easing" sanctions against the dictatorship in Burma. This has to raise the question of why Administration officials are actively working—in fact "coordinating"—the delivery of "significantly more and better weapons" for the Syrian opposition, but is literally turning its back on and deliberately ignoring the extreme brutality being carried out on a daily basis by the Burmese dictatorship against the people of Burma, particularly the Kachin people.

Why would the Administration lift sanctions against a brutal dictatorship that has years and years of documented, horrific human rights violations against the people of its nation, when in the Middle East, the Administration is supporting the opposition forces fighting against a different brutal dictatorship? Why is it that one brutal dictatorship has the ire and opposition of the U.S. Government, but another dictatorship, that has yet to prove it will uphold and implement its commitments, is being rewarded for continuing to attack, rape, and kill its people?

What is going on that our nation, which says it stands for the protection of human rights and the upholding and protection of basic human freedoms, would decide to help one group fighting a brutal dictatorship while deliberately ignoring, and now, even supporting a terrible dictatorship on the other side of the world? The Administration needs to strongly reconsider its actions in Burma.

This easing of sanctions against a brutal Burmese regime comes in the face of much opposition from the people of Burma, ethnic leaders, democracy activists, NGOs, ASEAN parliamentarians, and Nobel Peace Prize winner Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and is disturbing and puzzling to say the least.

What does this Administration expect to gain for itself by easing sanctions against Burma? It certainly can't be anything that will help the people of Burma, since the ethnic leaders and the democracy groups have urged the U.S. not to lift, ease, or remove sanctions.

United to End Genocide says, "Economic investment is one of the driving forces behind the Burmese army's attacks against civilians in Kachin State. By expediting the rollback of sanctions, President Obama has told Burma's long suffering ethnic nationalities that they aren't part of the equation."

Democracy leader Aung Din with U.S. Campaign for Burma says, "The United States will be responsible for generously rewarding the regime if the war in Kachin State and human rights abuses in ethnic areas do not end, hundreds of remaining political prisoners are not released, and political settlements between the regime and ethnic resistance groups are not realized."

The Vice President of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC), "urged the U.S. Government to maintain sanctions on business activities in Myanmar, warning that a gold rush in the Southeast Asian nation could fuel further human rights abuses, risk fragile ceasefires and arrest ongoing democratic reforms rather than bolster them." As everyone with any knowledge on Myanmar will attest, the changes we have seen to date are far from irreversible. It is ludicrous to reward the current government's untested reforms by paving the way for a gold rush. Fighting in Myanmar's ethnic areas continues and many of the ethnic leaders are concerned that these reforms are just a ploy to pave the way for 'development' projects on their lands."

The Central Executive Committee of the United Nationalities Federal Council, which consists of representatives of all the ethnic minority groups—all of whose people have endured horrific attacks at the hands of the Burmese regime—says, "It is necessary for the international community to oppose and pressure Bamah [Burma] Tatmadaw for its wrong actions. Accordingly, we would like to request the international community not suspend or lift the remaining political, military, financial and economic sanctions."

And Nobel Peace Prize winner Daw Aung San Suu Kyi urged great caution in lifting or easing sanctions urging that the American people be allowed to decide whether or not sanctions against Burma should change.

Instead of listening to the people of Burma as well as those outsiders and foreigners working on behalf of the people of Burma, the U.S. Administration has ignored them all. Instead, it has gone the path of cozying up to dictators and believing their promises . . . an odd decision since the dictators have not tended to keep their word in the past. The pattern generally has been that as soon as the dictators have received what they wanted from the West or the international community, they have simply gone back to their old ways while the rest of the world stands by and wrings its hands in consternation. Nothing has been done to hold those dictators to account for their actions.

Now, with the easing of sanctions, the U.S. has given the regime what it wants and has lost any leverage it might have. It is appalling that a country founded on freedom and democracy has taken steps to deliberately undermine democracy and freedom in Burma and instead has chosen to support a dictatorship bent on absolute control of its people.

I wonder if this Administration has read the stacks and stacks of reports detailing the rape, death and destruction of the ethnic minorities and their villages. Has it read its own State Department's report on the dictators' policy of rape of ethnic women? Has it read its own Country Reports over the years that have documented the torture of political prisoners? Has this Administration read reports that have come out in the past month about the 70,000 displaced persons in Kachin State? The latest attacks have all taken place while the regime has allegedly been making "progress" towards democracy and openness.

Would this Administration open up to the Assad regime and remove sanctions while its military was involved in deliberately killing the Syrian people? Clearly not.

The Administration has even sent U.S. military advisors and experts to help the Ugandan Government track and capture the brutal warlord Joseph Kony and his cronies. Yet, despite well known and thoroughly documented violence, brutality, and destruction under the orders of the regime in Burma, the U.S. Government has now decided that the people of Burma no longer matter.

I am ashamed of these actions by the U.S. Government. The sanctions should not be eased, and the Administration must re-impose these sanctions and listen to the people of Burma instead of the siren call of the dictators' money, brutal power, and false promises.

To the people of Burma, I say, please know that you are not forgotten and there are many in the West who stand with you and will work to ensure that your freedoms and rights are upheld and protected. Your voice should not be ignored and you should be able to live in peace in your own country. Shame on those, particularly Western officials, who would tell you by their actions that you have no rights and your life is worthless.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 17, 2012

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4310) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2013, and for other purposes:

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Chair, today, I voted in favor of Representatives BARBARA LEE's and BARNEY FRANK's Amendment that would limit Defense spending in the coming fiscal year to the amount authorized in the Budget Control Act of 2011.

I am opposed to House Republican efforts to rewrite last summer's budget agreement, unfairly shifting the burden for deficit reduction