

Palestinian kids grow up with the same positive role models as we did.

But recently, “Sesame Street” has been off the air. Now Palestinian kids are left watching Farfour. This is Farfour right here. He’s a mouse who is the main character of a Hamas TV show. Instead of tolerance and understanding, Farfour promotes violence and anti-Semitism.

This Congress approved funding for “Sesame Street” in Palestine last year, but because of the position of certain individuals in Congress, that means the money is being held up. There’s no Elmo, but there is Farfour, trafficking and teaching extremism.

I’m not the only one who wants Congress to release the funding. Even the Israeli Government wants it released. Let’s get good funding to the people of Palestine so that they can grow and strengthen their own society. Let the funding flow and give something for Farfour to compete with—Elmo.

CHALLENGING US TO DO OUR BEST

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome our colleague, Congresswoman GABRIELLE GIFFORDS, GABBY GIFFORDS, back home to this House, a place that she served ably and is serving ably today, to thank her for her courage and to thank her for accepting the challenge of what an American hero is. Many have called her that; for in the course of this enormous tragedy, she stood tall and still continues to do that today.

I want to thank the medical professionals, the emergency medical professionals, and many in Houston, Texas, TIRR, one of the best renowned rehabilitation hospitals in the world.

But most of all, as Congresswoman GIFFORDS comes back, let us give as a gift, both on behalf of the American people and this Congress, that we can work together to improve the lives of all Americans. That I believe would be her challenge, and that would be her call. As she comes back today, serving the people of Arizona and serving the American people, we want to say: Thank you, Congresswoman, for your courage and for being a model for the American people and challenging us to do the best.

IMPROVING OUR ECONOMY

(Mr. HIMES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, in 9 hours the President will stand on this podium behind me to deliver the State of the Union address. I remember the first time he did that. I sat in this Chamber as one of our colleagues called the new President a liar. And that was not the low mark in the partisanship that has earned this institution its historically

low approval ratings by the American public.

We’ll be sitting in bipartisan fashion today, and I guess that’s good; but let’s make it something more than symbolic. Let’s think in our responses to this speech what is in this speech that we can find common ground to get done.

I have a suggestion. I don’t care if you’re a Republican or Democrat, northern or southern, rich or poor, you need roads. You need railways, you need a good electrical grid for your economy to flourish. We’re going to invest the money in those things at some point to fix them to be world leaders. Why not do it soon? Why not do it soon when it would help our economy and help millions of out-of-work Americans go to work with dignity. Improving our infrastructure is the way to improve our economy.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL PRAYER ACT OF 2011

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2070) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to install in the area of the World War II Memorial in the District of Columbia a suitable plaque or an inscription with the words that President Franklin D. Roosevelt prayed with the Nation on June 6, 1944, the morning of D-day, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2070

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “World War II Memorial Prayer Act of 2011”.

SEC. 2. PLACEMENT OF PLAQUE OR INSCRIPTION AT WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL.

The Secretary of the Interior—

(1) shall install in the area of the World War II Memorial in the District of Columbia a suitable plaque or an inscription with the words that President Franklin D. Roosevelt prayed with the Nation on June 6, 1944, the morning of D-Day;

(2) shall design, procure, prepare, and install the plaque or inscription referred to in paragraph (1); and

(3) may not use Federal funds to prepare or install the plaque or inscription referred to in paragraph (1), but may accept and expend private contributions for this purpose.

SEC. 3. COMMEMORATIVE WORKS ACT.

Chapter 89 of title 40, United States Code, (commonly known as the “Commemorative Works Act”) shall not apply to this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOHNSON) and the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today, I rise in support of legislation that I sponsored, the World War II Memorial Prayer Act of 2011.

This legislation directs the Secretary of the Interior to install at the World War II Memorial a suitable plaque or an inscription with the words that President Franklin Roosevelt prayed with the Nation on the morning of the D-day invasion.

This prayer, which has been entitled “Let Our Hearts Be Stout,” gave solace, comfort and strength to our Nation and our brave warriors as we fought against tyranny and oppression. The memorial was built to honor the 16 million who served in the Armed Forces of the United States during World War II and the more than 400,000 who died during the war.

Prior to introducing the legislation, I spoke to many World War II veterans in Ohio and asked them if they thought putting this prayer on the memorial would be appropriate. The answer was a resounding yes.

Furthermore, the Nation’s largest service organization, the American Legion, is supportive of this legislation. The American Legion in a support letter said that this legislation would bolster the meaning of the memorial and would also give strength and encouragement to future generations.

It seems to me that if the remaining veterans of World War II are supportive of the prayer being added, we as a country should honor that request.

Unfortunately, the administration and the Department of the Interior don’t think it’s that easy. Last year, the Department of the Interior testified before the Natural Resources Committee that this legislation would “necessarily dilute the central message of the memorial.” Now, I don’t know how the administration came to this position because I don’t see how a non-denominational prayer that gave solace and comfort and strength to our Nation during one of the most pivotal days of World War II and one of the most memorable days in our Nation’s history would dilute the central message of the memorial. In fact, I think it would do exactly the opposite and

would only strengthen the central message of the memorial.

To his credit, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar testified during a hearing last year that he personally disagreed with his own Department's testimony on the legislation. However, since his testimony, neither the Department of the Interior nor the administration has changed their official position on this legislation. I am hopeful after a bipartisan vote today on this legislation that the administration may have a change of heart.

Fortunately, you don't have to just take my word for it because today we are honored to be joined by George "Poppy" Fowler of Coolville, Ohio. Poppy is 88 years young and served 3 years, 10 days, 1 hour and 10 minutes in the United States Navy during World War II. He flew 35 missions in Air Group 15 on a SB2C Helldiver as both a rear gunner and photographer.

I had the pleasure of escorting Poppy last fall on an honor flight trip to visit the World War II Memorial, and he and I became friends.

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When the Natural Resources Committee scheduled a hearing on this legislation, I invited Poppy to come testify before the committee, and he graciously accepted the offer and came out to testify at his own personal expense.

Here is a brief excerpt of Poppy's testimony at the hearing: "I feel, with no doubt, that it would be appropriate that this prayer be inscribed in some manner at the World War II Memorial. Those reading this prayer will be able to recall the sacrifices made by our military, also those on the homefront. This prayer came at a perilous time, yet it was answered in victory at a dear cost of lives. Today, this prayer can pertain to any military action. Under present circumstances, it is also appropriate."

Now, I don't think anybody or anyone in this body could be more succinct and articulate than Mr. Fowler, and I thank him again for coming to Washington to testify on behalf of this legislation and for being here for today's debate and final vote in the House.

Before I close, I also want to thank my fellow Ohioan, Chris Long, for his tireless efforts to gain support and momentum for this legislation. This legislation wouldn't be on the House floor today without Chris' efforts.

Like Poppy, I have no doubt that the prayer should be included among the tributes to the Greatest Generation memorialized on the National Mall, and I strongly urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SABLON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. SABLON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SABLON. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2070 would direct the Secretary of the Inte-

rior to install at the World War II Memorial a plaque or inscription with the text of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's prayer on June 6, 1944—D-day. The committee considered this legislation in November. We have no objections.

I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) as much time as he may consume.

Mr. KUCINICH. I want to thank my friend, Mr. SABLON, and the Members for pursuing this important legislation. I rise on behalf of not just myself but of a now departed World War II combat veteran by the name of Frank J. Kucinich, Sr. He was proud to serve this country. He served in the Pacific theater. But all veterans come together to pay respect not only to those who served but to a President who on June 6, 1944, as the Nation was preparing for that D-day invasion, said the following, "With Thy blessing, we shall prevail over the unholy forces of our enemy. Help us to conquer the apostles of greed and racial arrogances. Lead us to the saving of our country, and with our sister nations, into a world unity that will spell a sure peace—a peace invulnerable to the schemings of unworthy men. And a peace that will let all of men live in freedom, reaping the just rewards of their honest toil. Thy will be done, Almighty God. Amen."

Those words by President Franklin Roosevelt, upon the occasion of D-day, June 6, 1944, should not only be inscribed—as my friend in his work will make sure of it, with the consent of this Congress—on a plaque for a suitable presence in the memorial, but should also be reflected upon on a daily basis to remind us of the sacrifices that people have made for this country and to remind us that the ultimate objective of those sacrifices is peace, peace within our Nation and peace among people around the world.

And so it is in that spirit of human unity and in recognition of the importance of this legislation that I ask all of our colleagues to join with us in approving it.

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for their support. May I ask if the minority bill manager has any additional speakers? We do not.

Mr. SABLON. No, I don't, Mr. Speaker. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2070, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further pro-

ceedings on this question will be postponed.

WAR MEMORIAL PROTECTION ACT

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 290) to amend title 36, United States Code, to ensure that memorials commemorating the service of the United States Armed Forces may contain religious symbols, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 290

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "War Memorial Protection Act".

SEC. 2. INCLUSION OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AS PART OF MILITARY MEMORIALS.

(a) AUTHORITY.—Chapter 21 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 2115. Inclusion of religious symbols as part of military memorials

"(a) INCLUSION OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AUTHORIZED.—To recognize the religious background of members of the United States Armed Forces, religious symbols may be included as part of—

"(1) a military memorial that is established or acquired by the United States Government; or

"(2) a military memorial that is not established by the United States Government, but for which the American Battle Monuments Commission cooperated in the establishment of the memorial.

"(b) MILITARY MEMORIAL DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'military memorial' means a memorial or monument commemorating the service of the United States Armed Forces. The term includes works of architecture and art described in section 2105(b) of this title."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following:

"2115. Inclusion of religious symbols as part of military memorials."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOHNSON) and the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 290, introduced by the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), will allow the inclusion of religious symbols as part of military monuments.