

horses for human consumption. Regardless of gender, political affiliation, or whether they live in urban or rural areas, Americans oppose this awful practice.

The last U.S. horse slaughterhouses were closed in 2007 but, despite public opposition, Congress recently restarted horse meat inspections, paving the way for slaughterhouses to reopen. That's why we need to pass the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act, which would prohibit the sale and transport of horses for slaughter in the United States, as well as prohibit their transport across the borders to Canada and Mexico. The passage of this critical bipartisan bill would save the lives of approximately 100,000 American horses exported for slaughter each year.

Horses have a special place in our Nation's history and folklore, and they are not raised for food. This bill would make sure that these majestic creatures are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve. It should be passed now.

□ 1210

SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

(Mr. DEUTCH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, today is Israel's independence day, Yom Ha'azmaut, and I recognize our great ally's many achievements over the past 64 years.

Israel has endured against all odds, against border attacks, against deniers of a right to exist, against international bias; and even in the face of the threats posed by Iran's nuclear ambitions, Israel valiantly strides forward.

Israel is a world hub for biotechnology, for medical research, green energy and innovation, and she is also a welcoming home to those seeking freedom and equal rights as the region's only true democracy.

So as we celebrate Israel's independence day, let's remember why our bonds run so deep. It's more than strategic cooperation or shared security. It's the values that Americans and Israelis share. For democracy and freedom, for basic human dignity, that's what forms the bond; and it's a bond that I will always work to protect and support.

NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

(Mr. SCHILLING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHILLING. Mr. Speaker, a few months ago I had the opportunity to visit the Children's Advocacy Center in my hometown of Rock Island, Illinois. The work that they do there to help children and their families that are

victims of crimes is truly amazing, and I am grateful for their commitment to helping the children that need it the most.

April is recognized as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Unfortunately, sexual abuse of children is still a serious problem in our country, and too many cases go unreported.

My colleague from California and I have introduced H.R. 3486, the Speak Out to Stop Child Abuse Act, which would require States that receive Federal funding under their Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to have a law on the books that makes it a criminal penalty for any adult who knowingly fails to report the sexual abuse of a child.

H.R. 3486 simply asks States to help by requiring adults who witness the sexual abuse of a child to report it. I want to thank Congresswoman BASS for introducing this legislation, and I also recommend all of my colleagues help support this, also.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

(Ms. BASS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BASS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. During this month, it is important that we acknowledge the role that we all play in promoting the social and emotional well-being of children in our communities. Unfortunately, throughout this congressional term, we've been astonished by a few high-profile child sex abuse cases; and in some situations, the abuse was unreported for years, leaving dozens of youth vulnerable to further maltreatment for decades. This is unacceptable. Adults should never turn a blind eye after seeing sexual abuse firsthand.

Sadly, failing to report child sexual abuse is not new. In 1999, Sherrice Iverson, a 7-year-old girl from Los Angeles was attacked in a restroom. A witness didn't stop the attack or even call for help. She was ultimately murdered. Fortunately, California enacted a law in her name to help ensure this never happens again.

At the end of 2011, Representative BOBBY SCHILLING and I introduced a similar bill here in Congress. The bipartisan Speak Out to Stop Child Abuse Act requires all adult witnesses to report child sexual abuse to law enforcement or Child Protective Services. I ask my colleagues to cosponsor this bipartisan bill.

EPA

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

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, the EPA is out to get you and crucify you. That's the message from one of President Obama's EPA appointees to our country's oil and natural gas companies.

Yesterday, we learned that an official at the Environmental Protection Agency based in Dallas used the Roman Empire to illustrate the kind of philosophy that he's followed at the EPA. Here's what he said:

The Romans used to conquer little villages in the Mediterranean. They'd go into a little Turkish town somewhere, they'd find the first five guys they saw, and they would crucify them. And then you know that town was really easy to manage for the next few years.

That's exactly what he did as an EPA official, going after a company that was safely using hydraulic fracturing to drill for gas. He led the charge to crucify this company with no proof that the company had done anything wrong in a case that was finally dismissed last month by a Federal court.

This is enviro-fascism at its worst; and if someone needs to be made an example of, it's this EPA official who disregarded science and facts to radically and negligently pursue the Obama administration's war on energy.

VA DISABILITY CLAIMS

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

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss issues affecting veterans throughout California, particularly the VA disability claims backlog and inaccuracy rates at the Oakland regional office.

A Vietnam veteran from my district, like many others across the country, is suffering from stage 4 lung cancer caused by exposure to Agent Orange. He made great sacrifices to defend our country, but waited for more than a year for the Oakland office to process his claim.

My office was able to help him, but such delays are unacceptable. Unfortunately, long waits have become the norm for veterans in northern California. With more and more veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, it is imperative that the VA take action now to address the backlog in Oakland.

While I welcome the news that the entire staff at the facility will be retrained, much more is needed. I call on the VA to implement a concrete plan to address the inaccuracies and delays at the Oakland office. Our region's and Nation's veterans deserve no less.

STUDENT LOANS

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss an important issue to young America: that's access to affordable higher education.

Young Americans today are graduating college with a degree but also with \$25,000, \$50,000, and \$100,000 in student loan debt. Thirty-seven million people have outstanding student loan debt totaling over \$1 trillion. Two-

thirds of the debt held by Americans under the age of 30 is student loan debt.

In 2007, a Democratic Congress cut the interest rate on student loans in half to 3.4 percent, but it is set to expire this summer, and allowing the interest rate to double would constitute a tax hike on students in middle America.

In my western New York district alone, this rate increase would affect 62,000 students and their families. I urge my colleagues to take immediate action on this issue because all Americans deserve a fair shot at a good education.

□ 1220

LET'S HELP THE STUDENTS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the House Republicans want to play politics on the issue of doubling the student loans. They say, well, the reduction in student loan interest rates was never supposed to be permanent. Guess what. The Bush tax cuts, which I voted against, for millionaires and billionaires were never supposed to be permanent either, but you're fighting to preserve them every step of the way.

We can do one simple thing here. If we raised the tax rate on income over \$350,000 only from 35 to 36 percent, we could give millions of students a more affordable education with lower interest rates. Those who have already made it would share a little bit of the burden to help those who want to be the next generation of business leaders and political leaders and scientists for our country.

Come on, guys. The millionaires and billionaires, they can take care of themselves. That wasn't supposed to be permanent. Let's help the students.

GIRL SCOUTS

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

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, a century ago Juliette Gordon Low assembled 18 girls from Georgia for the first Girl Scout meeting. From "Daisy" Low's start, 50 million people have been counted among the ranks of the Girl Scouts of the USA, and today there is a membership of more than 3 million.

Today, Girl Scouts are involved in much more than cookies. I've had the privilege to see their wonderful community service projects, have attended award ceremonies, and I know about their work to introduce girls of all ages to math and science.

Recently, I had the opportunity to spend time with members of the Girl Scouts from West Windsor in Plainsboro, New Jersey. Their robotics team placed first in the Eastern Pennsylvania Division of the FIRST LEGO

League, and they're competing in the World Festival in St. Louis this week. I send them my best wishes.

I'm inspired by the Girl Scouts, and I rise to honor all the work that the Girl Scouts have done over 100 years, and I wish them success for the next 100 years.

STUDENT LOAN REFORM

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in a global economy, putting a college education within reach for every American has never been more important, but it has also never been more expensive.

Our Nation's young people have been hit particularly hard over the economic downturn in the last several years. In Texas and all across the country, students and recent college graduates are now facing the highest unemployment rate of any other group. Two-thirds of the class of 2010 graduated with an average of \$25,000 of student loan debt. Young Americans are rightly concerned about their future, and so am I.

Mr. Speaker, on July 1 of this year, Stafford loan interest rates are set to double unless Congress takes action. As we sit here as a Congress, we need to work together to prevent this increase. I, along with my Democratic colleagues in Congress and President Obama, have been working on a number of efforts to make college more affordable.

PROTECTING OUR FUTURE

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, the best thing Members of Congress can do to represent their constituents well is to stay in touch.

Today we had another teletown hall in my district, and we listened to seniors be concerned about Social Security and Medicare. They wondered why the Ryan budget takes away from them and why would Social Security and Medicare, which are good for so many years to come and not the cause of the deficit, why their future health care expenses and their daily expenses are being threatened. Those are good questions, and I let them know that the Democrats in this Congress and in the Senate aren't going to allow that to be jeopardized. We are going to maintain Social Security and Medicare as we know it. It's so important.

For the young people—and I see one up there. The young people, Mr. Speaker, need to see that student loan rates stay at 3.4 percent and not the way the Republicans are going to do it and pay for it by taking away cervical cancer screenings and mammograms for women. That's wrong. We need to pro-

tect our future, the future generations, be statesmen and not worry about tomorrow's election.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

(Mr. MCINTYRE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today for the observance of the National Day of Prayer, which will take place next Thursday, May 3.

This tradition began under President Eisenhower and continued through peacetime and wartime, through times of prosperity and times of uncertainty, and demonstrates our commitment as a Nation to maintaining a foundation of prayer.

Through prayer, we acknowledge that God gives us peace in the midst of our circumstances, we seek the wisdom to know and act upon God's purpose for our lives, and we feel the power of God to protect and provide for those of us who call on His name. We know that the true source of power cannot be found here in the Halls of Congress or in the Oval Office in the West Wing or in the chambers of the Supreme Court, but only on our knees before the one who is the true source of power.

So may we pray not only next Thursday on the National Day of Prayer and join communities across this Nation which are joining in prayer for our country, but may we do so also in honor and in recognition of our national motto, "In God we trust." Indeed, may God bless this great Nation.

RESPECT AMERICA'S CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

(Ms. HAHN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, we must hold the government accountable for the safekeeping of the sensitive information that we choose to share with it.

In response to a number of privacy concerns I have with the Cyber Intelligence Sharing and Protection Act, I sought to encourage more government accountability by cosponsoring a bipartisan amendment with Congressman WOODALL that was offered to the Rules Committee yesterday addressing some of these concerns.

Under the current bill, the threshold for having a cause of action against the government for disclosing personal information is exceptionally hard to meet. Our amendment would have lowered this threshold, ensuring that the government treats highly sensitive and personal information it receives with the utmost care.

While this amendment was a great example of Democrats and Republicans coming together on an issue that all Americans care about deeply, unfortunately, the Rules Committee chose not to move it forward.

While I believe it is important to protect our country against impending