

turned the corner on the immigration debate.

When Sean Hannity and Senator RAND PAUL and a group of others in the Republican Party begin saying it's time to rethink the party's approach to immigration, we've probably reached a milestone. When Donald Trump says the Republican policy of asking 12 million people to self-deport is a "crazy policy" that likely cost the Republicans the White House, you've turned a corner. Any time I agree with Donald Trump, hope for a bipartisan agreement should be running high.

Most Americans believe that Election Day demonstrated that it's time to move beyond the same old politics, the same tired blame game on immigration. So, when I saw a Republican-sponsored STEM visa bill on the House calendar this week, I thought, well, maybe House Republicans are changing their tune. On the campaign trail, we heard Governor Romney say he supported stapling green cards to the diplomas of every math and science graduate from our universities. Why should we educate some of the best minds on Earth and then say, "Sorry, no room in the U.S. economy for you"? It makes no sense. They go away and compete against us rather than innovating and creating jobs here.

Then I took a closer look at what the Republicans are actually proposing. They haven't turned a corner at all. In fact, they haven't even stepped out of their houses. They certainly didn't learn anything from the last election. The STEM visa bill on the House floor this week was actually voted down in September. It was introduced with a few changes but with absolutely no consultation with Democrats.

I want to find a bipartisan solution on immigration. I am committed to it. I know it won't be easy. They say a journey of a thousand miles begins with just one step. The problem is my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to take one step and have the Democrats travel the other 999.9 miles. Certainly, this bill isn't even a step—it's a shuffle; it's a shell game. It has exactly the same problem that the STEM bill in September had. It moves visas from a legal immigration program, which works, over to a new visa category where there may or may not be sufficient demand to use those visas each year.

Immigration is always a zero-sum game for my colleagues on the other side: we will only increase visas for immigrants we like if we can eliminate immigration for immigrants we don't like. But it isn't even a zero-sum trick they're pulling here. Best estimates are that only 20,000 STEM visas would be issued to graduates, meaning that the other 35 visas would just disappear.

Which immigrants do they want to exclude in order to play this game?

They're people from around the world who want a chance to make a new life for themselves in the U.S., people like the fathers and mothers and grand-

parents of almost every Member of Congress. In this case, half of the people who come to America legally, through the Diversity Visa program, come from the continent of Africa, over half of them. Yet they come from all over. So the Republicans would have us say to the good people of Ghana or South Africa—but also to the people of Sweden and Ireland and New Zealand and Taiwan who apply to come here legally—sorry, we have to withdraw the chance you had at 50,000 visas so we can divert them to, maybe, 20,000 STEM graduates. Maybe. Once again, the Republicans' math doesn't add up.

Here is something I'll bet you didn't know about the Diversity Visa program, which is that many of them come to this country and join the Armed Forces of the United States of America. But these legal immigrants are the target of the Republican bill.

I have news for my friends on the other side of the aisle: you can't fool immigrants. You can't pretend to be pro-immigrant and then eliminate immigration from one group to allow another group to come.

I woke up the day after the election and I saw a new landscape for the immigration debate. It is one in which Democrats and Republicans work together to solve tough problems facing the United States. We should not treat this as an opportunity for politicians to score political points again, but sadly, that is what is happening here. I want Republicans to know that Democrats support STEM visas. We don't need to kill other legal immigration programs to create a STEM program, but Republicans are more interested in killing the Diversity Visa program than in creating a program for STEM graduates. For this bill, no matter what happens on Friday, it will not pass in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we can turn the corner on real immigration reform but only if Republicans are willing to put on their walking shoes and take a few steps with Democrats, walking side by side, for a greater, better America.

□ 1020

HONORING LOUIS GIACOMELLI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Louis Giacomelli of New Britain in my home of Bucks County, Pennsylvania. A devoted husband and a loving father, Louis passed away earlier this week after a long life of service to his community and to his country.

As a young man in the Army, Louis answered his country's call and honorably served in the Korean War and was awarded a Purple Heart for his service. Upon returning home from the war, Louis went on to serve his community with the Philadelphia Police Department for over 20 years.

I had the opportunity to visit the Korean War Memorial here in our Nation's capital with Louis earlier this year. I was fortunate to have been able to spend that time with him and proud to have called him my friend.

His life of service is an example to each of us, and I wish his family all the best in these difficult times.

PITS FOR PATRIOTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the exceptional work of an organization operating in my district called Pits for Patriots. This innovative program strives to save not just one life, but two.

The Chicagoland organization currently trains rescued pit bulls to become service dogs for veterans in need. In addition to helping our country's patriots, the program is committed to educating the public about the loyalty, devotion, and commitment of the pit bull breed. Their service dogs are trained to help improve a veteran's quality of life in their day-to-day activities, such as opening and closing doors, retrieving items, and assisting with mobility problems.

I had the honor of attending a training session and meeting a dedicated veteran, Sergeant Danny Randall, and his companion dog, Shiloh. After serving for 9 years in the Army, Danny felt an emotional disconnect between military and civilian life. Reentering the civilian workforce had been a difficult adjustment. Danny suffers from posttraumatic stress disorder, making it difficult for him to remain calm in large crowds or tight spaces. He is not comfortable sitting with his back to a door or window and feels stress when strangers enter his personal space. But Danny has found a way to help battle some of the aftereffects of war. Danny's medicine is in the form of a four-legged pit bull dog that goes by the name of Shiloh. Shiloh helps Danny to remain calm when going out in public and increases his comfort level and socialization skills.

Shiloh and other pit bulls do more than just facilitate the day-to-day lives of the recipients; they provide a sense of independence and unconditional love. For the veterans, caring for a companion animal can provide a sense of purpose and fulfillment, while lessening feelings of loneliness, isolation, and depression.

There are over 22 million veterans in America today. And although the number of servicemembers being deployed in today's wars are fewer than in wars of the past, those returning from war are suffering from increasingly severe disabilities, such as traumatic brain injury, numerous amputations, and posttraumatic stress disorder.

Over the past decade, the number of vets in need of disability compensation has more than doubled, from 600,000 in

2000 to over 1.4 million in the year 2011. As more vets return home from multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, the need for assistance will grow even greater. We must do all we can to support inventive programs such as Pits for Patriots that provide essential support and assistance to our veterans in need.

I want to end with the words of Sergeant Danny Randall, who said about his pit bull, Shiloh:

He truly gives me a reason to be successful. Shiloh gives me a great sense of calm and balance. He is an amazing dog, not just where he has been and what he's lived through, but all that he has overcome. In that sense we are a lot alike, and I believe that is why we have such a strong bond. We truly do everything together, and I could not have asked for a better pittie partner.

Let's make sure other veterans in need have access to the same program that has done so much to help Danny and Shiloh.

TRIBUTE TO CONGRESSMAN RON PAUL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my friend, RON PAUL. I have now served in Congress for 24 years, the last 16 of which I have served with Congressman PAUL. During all of that time, I have never once seen him waver or stray from a commitment to liberty and freedom and his promise to uphold and defend our Constitution.

I can assure you that no one runs for office wanting to make people mad. In fact, it may be that people who run for office have a stronger desire to be liked than most people. Thus, I feel certain that at times it has been hurtful to Congressman PAUL to be the only Member out of 435 to vote "no" on some popular bill or seemingly harmless resolution. Yet, on many occasions, he has been the only vote on some issue. Yet, because of his courage and sincerity and his steadfast belief in free enterprise, private property, and individual freedom, he has earned the respect and admiration of almost everyone with whom he has served on both sides of the aisle.

When there was tremendous pressure, especially on the Republican side, to vote to go to war in Iraq, only six Republicans voted "no." Three of those were very liberal Republicans, and three were very conservative. The three conservative "no" votes came from John Hostettler of Indiana, Congressman PAUL, and myself.

It is probably accurate to say that, during the 16 years Congressman PAUL and I have served together, no two Members have voted more alike than we have. Most of that time we have arrived at our decisions separately and independently. But we also have discussed many votes over the years, and I have attended most of the meetings

of the Liberty Caucus. Congressman PAUL has hosted in his office with a wide variety of speakers.

One national magazine about 4 years ago gave just three Members 100 percent ratings on a freedom index—Congressman PAUL, Congressman JEFF FLAKE of Arizona, and myself. Last year I was very surprised when the National Taxpayers Union ranked me as the most fiscally conservative Member on all 338 spending votes. But the only reason Congressman PAUL was not first was because he missed many votes during his run for the White House.

There have been articles and comments and questions about who would be the next RON PAUL in Congress, but, really, no one can replace RON PAUL or fill his shoes or be the next RON PAUL. He has achieved a fame and a following and a position of influence that is almost miraculous considering his unique independence.

He is such a kind, humble, almost bashful person that I know he has been amazed by the numbers that have turned out to support him, and especially the following he has among young people. After all, there is nothing cool or hip about him, but several million college students and 20-somethings love the man. I think his appeal lies in his principled stands on the issues, the concern young people have for their future and where this country is headed, and the fact that Congressman PAUL is real. There is nothing fake about him. He believes what he says and says what he believes and then sticks by it even when it is not "politically correct."

Financial columnist Charles Goyette probably summed up Congressman PAUL's time in office best in a column a few days ago. He wrote:

Politics has ways of bending such lesser men and molding even the well-intentioned to become servants of the State. The tools are many: Congressional leadership bribes and bestows its favors from plum committee assignments to nicer Capitol offices. The parties reward the lockstep marchers, too. For those who stay in step, there are endorsements and campaign funds. Meanwhile, for those who march to a different drummer—well. And then there is the simple social pressure to which men whose eyes are not focused on a polestar of principle soon succumb. The description you've heard of Washington that you have to go along to get along is all too true.

Mr. Goyette concluded by writing:

Ron Paul never succumbed. He never sold out for a better assignment, a nicer office, lobbyist largesse, or shallow conviviality.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I think words written in a 1930 novel called "The Lion's Den" fit Congressman RON PAUL. The words described a fictional Congressman named Zimmer. The author, Janet Fairbank, wrote:

No matter how the espousal of a lost cause might hurt his prestige in the House, Zimmer had never hesitated to identify himself with it if it seemed to him to be right. He knew only two ways; the right one and the wrong, and if he sometimes made a mistake, it was never one of honor. He voted as he believed he should, and although sometimes his

voice was raised alone on one side of the question, it was never stilled.

□ 1030

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO VOTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, Americans turned out in record numbers this past election day, November 6, to exercise our most cherished and fundamental right, the right to vote.

No doubt my colleagues heard from their constituents who endured, in many cases, outrageously long lines. I spoke with voters who reported having to wait two or more hours, and in some cases up to 5 hours, to cast that precious vote. In most cases, the absence of early voting and the shortage of voting machines and well-trained election volunteers were the primary culprits leading to unacceptably long lines.

Whether one lived in a blue or red State, or voted in an urban, suburban or rural precinct, residents at polling places in more than a dozen States, including Florida, Pennsylvania, Colorado, Ohio, New York, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, South Carolina, Montana, Tennessee, Hawaii, Arizona, Rhode Island, and my own Commonwealth of Virginia, encountered significant, yet avoidable, barriers to casting their ballots.

This is not a Republican or a Democratic problem. Voters from both parties were affected. This is truly a national bipartisan challenge, if not a crisis. And to quote President Obama: "It's one we have to fix."

I think about the employee who struggles to manage his commute or her commute and work schedule on election day, or the senior citizen who may not have had the stamina to stand in line for 5 hours, or the young working mom waiting to vote, worried about the fact that she won't get to the front of the line in time to pick up her kids at daycare.

The experience of our constituents on election day amount to a modern-day poll tax on all Americans that must be eliminated. Twelve years after the 2000 Presidential election exposed the deep structural problems that plague our decentralized voting system, our troubles appear to have worsened, not improved.

Long waits in the cold or the heat, confusing and conflicting instructions from poorly trained election officials, a paucity of voting machines or malfunctioning machines showing their age, a shortage of paper ballots, absentee ballots that failed to reach civilian and military voters in time were among the litany of voting problems that came to a head on election day.

I saw the problem firsthand at polling places in my district as I visited with voters in one Prince William County precinct who had been waiting in line for more than 4 hours in the