

successes as his proudest professional accomplishments.

He has shared his expertise as a lecturer at the University of South Carolina's College of Journalism and Mass Communications and at the Strom Thurmond Institute of Government at Clemson University. He is also a recipient of the Order of the Palmetto, from two different governors, which is the highest civilian honor that can be awarded by the State of South Carolina.

Ike is married to the lovely Sue Smith Curran. They have a blended family of five children and four grandchildren. Having spent his entire career in Columbia, he is also a die-hard Southeastern Conference (SEC) sports fan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in recognizing the extraordinary contributions of Ike McLeese. I, like so many others in the greater Columbia, South Carolina area, are proud to call him a friend. He has dedicated his career to serving this community and our state's capital is a much better place because of his service. I wish him well as he steps down from the chamber's helm, but know that his pride and passion of and for South Carolina and Columbia will allow him to continue being a powerful force in Columbia.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE RELATING TO CROP INSURANCE

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 11, 2013

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of this Sense of the House that the Durbin-Coburn amendment on crop insurance should be included in a farm bill conference report. This measure limits crop insurance premium subsidies for the wealthiest producers, saving more than \$900 million over ten years. The bipartisan amendment was adopted in the Senate by a 59–33 vote, and enjoys bipartisan House support as well. As we look to trim spending in all areas of the budget, limiting taxpayer handouts to farmers making over \$750,000 is a sensible place to start. Currently there are no limits to crop insurance premium subsidies or payments. This proposal doesn't eliminate assistance for those well-off producers, but simply limits it. In fact, I supported an amendment last June—offered by my colleague Congressman RON KIND—which would have shrunk taxpayer subsidies for crop insurance even further than the measure being considered today. I look forward to working with other Members of the House, and our colleagues in the Senate, to reform the nation's agriculture safety net in a way that provides security to our farmers while reducing the deficit.

INTRODUCTION OF H. RES. 327, EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD VOTE AGAINST CHINA REGAINING UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (UNHRC) MEMBERSHIP AND ENCOURAGE OTHER MEMBERS TO VOTE AGAINST ITS ELECTION, AND ENCOURAGE ANOTHER MEMBER TO STAND FOR ELECTION AS AN ALTERNATE CANDIDATE FROM THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

HON. KERRY L. BENTIVOLIO

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 16, 2013

Mr. BENTIVOLIO. Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a few remarks regarding ongoing human rights and religious freedom abuses in China, and my related resolution, House Resolution 327.

China's suppression of its people's rights is an atrocious affair. With the recent change in leadership, some had held hope that there would be progress, but it seems that the new premier, Xi Jinping, has continued to take things in the other direction—suppression of religious and ethnic minorities is getting worse, the right to free speech is being eroded, and more people are being subjected to harsh treatment by their government.

China's claim that economic modernization would lead to increased protection of civil liberties has not proven true. Economic advances seem to come at the cost of those who are most vulnerable. Rather than securing liberty for its people, China has continued to vastly fund programs that serve to monitor and harass civilians.

There are many people who have been fighting to obtain for China the level of freedom we enjoy in the United States and other countries around the world. These are people who I believe many Americans identify with, because we can empathize with those who are beaten down in noble, selfless struggles for dignity and liberty.

Wang Bingzhang struggled to find a path towards freedom in China—a burden that I'm sure was overwhelming at times. His advocacy and his message ultimately cost him what he was fighting for—freedom. Dr. Wang was abducted in 2002, along with his colleagues, in Vietnam and taken back to China, where he faced a secret trial. In a one day trial, in which no evidence or witnesses were presented, Dr. Wang was sentenced to life imprisonment in solitary confinement on charges of espionage and terrorism. His physical and mental health has deteriorated to the point where continued imprisonment is inhumane. This case has begun to attract more international recognition.

Li Huanjun, whom I had the pleasure of meeting, was arrested on July 12, 2013, on "suspicion of gathering a crowd to disturb social order." Ms. Li is a housing rights activist who advocates against the forced evictions that are occurring in China. She lost her home in just this manner as community leaders decided to sell her home to developers without consulting her. Her arrest is worrying, because many of the people who are arrested for pro-

testing this kind of state action are subject to torture, beatings, and harsh sentences for alleged crimes. She is a mother whose fate is yet to be seen.

Though the previous two activists are not mentioned in the legislation, they are both activists for whom I have advocated. The specific cases and people mentioned in the legislation are equally important. The persecution of individuals and entire groups of people in China is staggering, and much of this abuse is covered in H. Res. 327.

Uyghurs in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region are facing increased pressure and persecution from Beijing. Hundreds of people have also been arrested in Xinjiang for spreading "online rumors," and for expressing dissatisfaction with the Chinese government. Chinese authorities claim that they grant wide-ranging freedoms to people in this region, but religious persecution, suppression of dissent, and monitoring and harassment prove otherwise.

Mongolians continue to face harsh government oppression, as well. An example is Mr. Hada, who served a 15 year prison sentence for "subversion," who continues to face detention after his release from prison, and whose wife and son have recently "disappeared". Dissidents are not the only ones who face persecution—their families are often targeted by authorities, as well. Inner Mongolia continues to struggle to keep a grasp on their culture and language while Beijing attempts to erode it. As a result of Chinese expansion into Inner Mongolia, the land and ecosystem is deteriorating—the Mongolian culture and way of life is in danger of deteriorating with it.

The oppression of Tibetans has caused concern around the world. In acts of desperation, many Tibetan monks have self-immolated. They want greater religious freedom, and the return from exile of Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. But, Beijing continues to maintain strict control over the Tibetan Autonomous Region, even going as far as maintaining police presence in monasteries. Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, who was sentenced to death in 2002, along with his assistant who was almost immediately executed, but had his sentence commuted to life imprisonment after human rights groups and experts claimed he did not receive a fair trial and that he faced harsh treatment in detention.

Falun Gong practitioners have also faced serious persecution from Chinese authorities. China's efforts to eradicate this religion can be particularly severe. Long imprisonment, torture, and inhumane treatment of practitioners can often lead to death. The adherence to a belief system in China, like Falun Gong, is often a dangerous attribute. Many Falun Gong practitioners are often subject to the China's "Reeducation Through Labor" program, black prisons, and arbitrary detention. Hundreds of thousands of people are sentenced to serve time in these "Reeducation Through Labor" prisons.

The list of human rights abuses, violations, and religious and ethnic persecution is almost innumerable. During China's previous membership on the Council, they greatly expanded their "Weiwen" program, used to monitor and harass civilians. This program is currently being funded at higher levels than their national defense budget. Many of the most famous cases of violations occurred while China sat as a member on the Council. Liu Xiaobo

was arrested in 2009 on charges of "inciting subversion of state power," and was sentenced to 11 years in prison. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010, making him the only Nobel Peace Prize winner in prison. His wife, Liu Xia, continues to face harassment is currently under house arrest.

For these reasons, the United States government and our representative in the United Nations should vote against China regaining membership on the United Nations Human Rights Council. This Council was designed to help protect people from the kinds of persecution that they suffer at the hands of the Chinese government. The effort to keep China off of the Council has a strong coalition, including Tibetans, Uyghurs, Mongols, Han Chinese, Christians, Muslims, and Falun Gong, along with many human rights lawyers and advocates.

I would urge my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join in this effort by cosponsoring H. Res. 327 to keep China off of the United Nations Human Rights Council and encourage another suitably qualified member from the Asia-Pacific region to stand for election as an alternate candidate.

IN HONOR OF NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 16, 2013

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, once again, this year, we observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 1 to October 15 and celebrate the rich history, culture and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. The observation began in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan twenty years later as a month-long celebration and enacted into law August 17, 1988. Our leaders, then and now, recognize this nation was founded and built through the hard work and sacrifices of immigrants from around the world and so we honor Hispanic-Americans whose past and future contributions have added to the strength and endurance of American society. The shared goal of a prosperous, greater America is further enhanced by their ongoing participation and recognized during National Hispanic Heritage Month.

SUPPORT OF FARMINGTON AREA REPUBLICANS

HON. KERRY L. BENTIVOLIO

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 16, 2013

Mr. BENTIVOLIO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Farmington Area Republicans of Michigan, who like so many organizations throughout our country have diligently educated our citizens on various public issues facing us today. Exercising their Constitutional right to peacefully assemble and in many cases petition their government for a redress

of grievances in support of the restoration of liberty, not in restricting it; shrinking our bloated government, not expanding it; who want to reduce taxes, not raise them; abolish costly government programs, not create them; expose the abuses and oppressions of tyrannical dictates; and promote the freedom and independence of our citizens, not the interference of government in their lives; and observe the limited, enumerated powers of our Constitution, not ignore them.

Mr. Speaker, these truly American patriots of every cultural, religious and ethnic background have found a common cause in fighting back today's proliferating big government rules and regulations imposed by costly bloated government bureaucracies who are accountable to no one at the expense of individual rights.

They are God-fearing, freedom-loving Americans who desire nothing more than to rein in big government's tendency toward excessive coercion and the insidious spread of government overreach. They question when the validity of laws and morality contradict each other. They desire nothing more than the extension of individual freedom in a Democracy that attaches all possible value to citizens rather than making each citizen a mere agent, a mere number; a Democracy that seeks equality in Liberty rather than in restraint and servitude.

Mr. Speaker, there is a great political awakening taking place in our country today. The roots of which are solid stock and American made, they are visionary individuals who understand the moral foundations of a Constitutional Republic, the benefits of free markets, and individual liberty. May they continue to strive valiantly and dare greatly.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me a few short minutes to give this testimony in support of a truly American organization.

HONORING JAY KAPITZ

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 16, 2013

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Jay Kapitz, who will be honored by the Los Angeles Democratic Party as a 2013 Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt Democrat of the Year.

Jay is a community activist who possesses a vested interest in the social, economic and political well-being of Ventura County. He has always gone above the call of duty to explain the political nuances that will impact our community.

His insight and knowledge about the political process are invaluable. As a community volunteer, member of the Ventura County Democratic Party Communications Committee, and Election Strategy Chair of the Democratic Club of the Conejo Valley, Jay is a committed advocate of progressive issues and has long supported the priorities of the Democratic Party.

Jay has always taken his passion, charisma, and expertise in political organizing into the community. As a champion for environmental sustainability, he was involved in raising awareness over the Santa Susana Field Laboratory superfund site clean-up and Ventura County's Save Open-Space and Agricultural

Resources (SOAR) initiative in the Conejo Valley. He is dedicated to the protection of open space and stands against further development of the hillsides around Oak Park, the Conejo Valley and all of Ventura County.

For being an exemplary grassroots activist who is consistently on the frontline for Democratic candidates and important statewide propositions, I extend my sincere congratulations and join the Los Angeles Democratic Party in honoring Jay Kapitz.

SUPPORT OF THE WESTERN WASHTENAW TEA PARTY

HON. KERRY L. BENTIVOLIO

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 16, 2013

Mr. BENTIVOLIO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Western Washtenaw Tea Party of Michigan, who like so many grassroots organizations throughout our country have diligently educated our citizens on various public issues facing us today. Exercising their Constitutional right to peacefully assemble and in many cases petition their government for a redress of grievances in support of the restoration of liberty, not in restricting it; shrinking our bloated government, not expanding it; who want to reduce taxes, not raise them; abolish costly government programs, not create them; expose the abuses and oppressions of tyrannical dictates; and promote the freedom and independence of our citizens, not the interference of government in their lives; and observe the limited, enumerated powers of our Constitution, not ignore them.

Mr. Speaker, these truly American patriots of every cultural, religious and ethnic background have found a common cause in fighting back today's proliferating big government rules and regulations imposed by costly bloated government bureaucracies who are accountable to no one at the expense of individual rights.

They are God-fearing, freedom-loving Americans who desire nothing more than to rein in big government's tendency toward excessive coercion and the insidious spread of government overreach. They question when the validity of laws and morality contradict each other. They desire nothing more than the extension of individual freedom in a Democracy that attaches all possible value to citizens rather than making each citizen a mere agent, a mere number; a Democracy that seeks equality in Liberty rather than in restraint and servitude.

Mr. Speaker, there is a great political awakening taking place in our country today. The roots of which are solid stock and American made, they are visionary individuals who understand the moral foundations of a Constitutional Republic, the benefits of free markets, and individual liberty. May they continue to strive valiantly and dare greatly.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me a few short minutes to give this testimony in support of a truly American grassroots organization.