

Umatilla County Neighborhood Watch and Rural Crime Prevention Program that now has 19 units and over 800 active members. Recognizing the rural nature of Umatilla County and the challenges that are posed, especially in the winter, John implemented an all-terrain vehicle and snowmobile patrol program, for search, rescue, and patrols. Whether it was creating a program to take meth off the streets or sending a bill to a foreign county for the care and feeding of their citizens, Sheriff Trumbo has always looked for simple, straightforward solutions to solving problems.

Although John has retired as Sheriff, I know he won't be ending his service to Pendleton or Umatilla County. In fact, John remains an active volunteer with the Pendleton Round-Up, serving as the Board of Director who heads up security during the world famous rodeo. In this role he spearheads efforts to provide protection and safety of thousands of people attending the performances and visiting the community, including helping those wayward individuals leaving the "Let'er Buck" room stay out of trouble!

I also know he will be spending plenty of well-earned time on those things he loves, whether it is traveling horseback across the county with his grandchildren, woodworking, or camping with his family. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Sheriff John Trumbo the best in his retirement. Sheriff, thanks for all your service to Umatilla County, the region, and our fine State of Oregon. You may be able to turn that cell phone off from time to time now!

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2013

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 7 on H.R. 41 "To temporarily increase the borrowing authority of the Federal Emergency Management Agency for carrying out the National Flood Insurance Program," I am not recorded because I was absent due to illness.

Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

RECOGNIZING THE 2012 STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY BASEBALL TEAM

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2013

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the 2012 Stony Brook University Baseball team on a record-setting season with its "Shock the World" rallying cry.

The Seawolves finished the regular season with a 43–11 record and won their second straight conference regular season title. The team also swept the major conference awards, bringing home Coach of the Year, Player of the Year, and Pitcher of the Year. Twelve players were named all-conference. But the team's success did not end there.

After winning its conference, Stony Brook went on to win the America East Champion-

ship for the second time in three seasons. The Seawolves then competed in the Coral Gables Regional of the NCAA tournament. The tournament, attended by four teams, was statistically the toughest regional tournament in the country. The team was able to prevail over the three other competitors and advance to the Super Regional in Baton Rouge.

In the Super Regional, the Seawolves faced the LSU Tigers in a best-of-three tournament. After falling behind in Game 1, the Seawolves won Game 2 to force a winner-take-all Game 3. Although the Tigers took an early lead, the Seawolves won the game to become the first Northeast region school to advance to the College World Series since the end of geographic regional tournaments in 1987.

The Seawolves went to Omaha as the team that had captured the attention and the hearts of observers throughout the country. The team embraced the rallying cry "Shock the World" as a mission; it set out to leave a mark on the national stage and make Stony Brook a household name. Unfortunately, the Seawolves were eliminated from the College World Series after a loss to Florida State, but they were successful in their mission to raise the profile of the Stony Brook University athletic program. The question, "What's a sea wolf?" is now able to be answered by people who have never set foot on the Stony Brook campus.

By the end of the post-season, Stony Brook had compiled an NCAA-best 52 wins. For the 2011 and 2012 seasons combined, the team has a winning percentage of .777, the best in the nation. In addition to its playoff run, the team reached a number of milestones for its program. Coach Matt Senk became the third coach in the history of the conference to win 6,000 games. The program also had a record seven players drafted in the Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft, including its first player to be drafted in the first round. All seven players have signed with major league organizations.

Stony Brook's remarkable season of triumphs was recognized by the local news media as among the top sports moments of 2012, and the coaches and members of the team were named People of the Year in Sports by a local newspaper. These are a few among the many ways the team has been honored by organizations across Long Island, and I am so very proud to represent this outstanding baseball team and Stony Brook University as their representative in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of New York's first congressional district, I again congratulate the 2012 Stony Brook University Baseball team on its record-breaking season and wish the program continued success. Go Seawolves!

INTRODUCTION OF THE 21ST CENTURY READINESS ACT OF 2013

HON. THOMAS E. PETRI

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2013

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, in order for our students to be competitive in the global economy, we must do our part to ensure that they are acquiring the knowledge and skills they need for success.

The skills needed for success go beyond the basics of reading, writing, and math, how-

ever. When surveyed, employers continually emphasize that, in our 21st century economy, students need to be adept at critical thinking and problem solving; communication; collaboration; and creativity and innovation, in addition to being proficient in core subjects.

Sixteen states, as well as local school districts from across the country, have formed a partnership with over thirty leading education organizations and corporate entities to find ways to strengthen 21st century skills in their K–12 classrooms. However, this momentum isn't sustainable unless federal policy gives states and districts the flexibility to innovate in this direction.

To remedy this, Rep. DAVE LOEBACK and I are introducing the 21st Century Readiness Act. This bill does not create any new programs or authorize additional spending; instead, it would amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to emphasize the importance of 21st century skills and give states and districts added flexibility to develop and enhance these skills as part of their own initiatives.

A growing coalition of states and school districts has recognized the importance of giving our students the tools they need to succeed in our 21st century workforce. This bill will give them the flexibility to succeed in these efforts.

I hope that our colleagues will join us in this effort.

A CLARION CALL FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2013

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I submit a letter I recently sent to over three hundred national faith leaders encouraging them to use their platform and lend their voice to the cause of the persecuted church globally.

DEAR FRIEND: Christians worldwide just celebrated the birth of Jesus. For those of us living in the West, this was a festive season marked by worship services, gift-giving and time with family and friends. But for our brethren in the Middle East, fear of persecution and outright violence or even death cast a long dark shadow over the Christmas holiday.

While most striking in the Middle East, given the ancient roots of Christianity in that part of the world, the challenges facing those believers are by no means isolated, nor are they anything "new under the sun."

Ecclesiastes 4:1 says, "I saw the tears of the oppressed, and they have no comforter; power was on the side of the oppressor." As you well know, oppression has marked the church since its birth. Consider the chilling words of Roman historian Tacitus regarding the early church:

"Besides being put to death they were made to serve as objects of amusement; they were clad in the hides of beasts and torn to death by dogs; others were crucified, others set on fire to serve to illuminate the night when daylight failed. . . ."

Every day, around the world, men and women of faith are imprisoned, beaten, detained, tortured and even killed. The book of Hebrews enjoins us to "remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." Do we suffer with our brethren? Have we in the West ceased to be salt and light?

Consider that on our watch a historic exodus of Christians from the Middle East is underway—an exodus fueled by persecution.

German Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, faced with the tyranny and horror of Nazism, famously said, “Silence in the face of evil is itself evil. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.”

And that is precisely what many in the church did, or failed to do, as Hitler unleashed his murderous plans. I recently encountered this haunting account by a German Christian in the book *When a Nation Forgets God*:

“I lived in Germany during the Nazi Holocaust. I considered myself a Christian. We heard stories of what was happening to the Jews, but we tried to distance ourselves from it, because, what could anyone do to stop it?”

A railroad track ran behind our small church and each Sunday morning we could hear the whistle in the distance and then the wheels coming over the tracks. We became disturbed when we heard the cries coming from the train as it passed by. We realized that it was carrying Jews like cattle in the cars!

Week after week the whistle would blow. We dreaded to hear the sound of those wheels because we knew that we would hear the cries of the Jews en route to a death camp. Their screams tormented us.

We knew the time the train was coming and when we heard the whistle blow we began singing hymns. By the time the train came past our church we were singing at the top of our voices. If we heard the screams, we sang more loudly and soon we heard them no more.

Years have passed and no one talks about it anymore. But I still hear that train whistle in my sleep. God forgive me; forgive all of us who called ourselves Christians and yet did nothing to intervene.”

The parallels are imperfect but the sentiments are the same. Has our comfort led to complacency? Can the church in the West be galvanized to act?

A phrase not often heard outside the majority Muslim world is “First the Saturday people, then the Sunday people.” The “Saturday people” are of course the Jews. Their once vibrant communities in countries throughout the region are now decimated. In 1948 there were roughly 150,000 Jews in Iraq; today less than 10 remain. In Egypt, there were once as many as 80,000 Jews; now less than 100 remain.

It appears a similar fate awaits the ancient Christian community in these same lands. Iraq’s Christian population has fallen from as many as 1.4 million in 2003 to between 500,000 and 700,000 today. Churches have been targeted, believers kidnapped for ransom and families threatened with violence if they stay. In October 2010, Islamist extremists laid siege on Our Lady of Salvation Catholic Church in Baghdad killing over 50 hostages and police and wounding dozens more.

In Egypt with the ascent of the Muslim Brotherhood, Coptic Christians, numbering roughly 8 to 10 million, are leaving in droves. Ironically, some 2,000 years ago, the Holy Family sought refuge in this same land from the murderous aims of King Herod.

In the midst of devastating bloodshed in Syria, the Christian population is particularly vulnerable. A recent ABC News story reported, “They [Christians] are fearful that Syria will become another Iraq, with Christians caught in the crossfire between rival Islamic groups.”

Over the span of a few decades, the Middle East, with the exception of Israel, was virtually emptied of Jews. The same thing will happen to the Christian community if the current trajectory holds true. And yet, the silence of many in the West is deafening.

Such stories receive scant attention in the mainstream media, and perhaps more strikingly, are rarely spoken of from our pulpits.

A recent study on Christian persecution released by the British-based think tank Civitas explained the media’s seeming ambivalence this way: “Parts of the media have been influenced by the logical error that equates criticism of Muslims with racism, and therefore as wrong by definition. This has further distracted attention away from the hounding of Christians, helping to cement the surprisingly widespread idea that Christianity is a ‘Western’ faith.”

And yet, we in the church ought to know better. The Middle East is the very cradle of Christendom. Consider Iraq: with the exception of Israel, the Bible contains more references to the cities, regions and nations of ancient Iraq than any other country. The patriarch Abraham came from a city in Iraq called Ur. Isaac’s bride, Rebekah, came from northwest Iraq. Jacob spent 20 years in Iraq and his sons (the 12 tribes of Israel) were born in northwest Iraq. A remarkable spiritual revival as told in the book of Jonah occurred in Nineveh. The events of the book of Esther took place in Iraq as did the account of Daniel in the Lion’s Den. Furthermore, many of Iraq’s Christians still speak Aramaic, the language of Jesus.

So how do we account for the Church’s indifference? Is it political correctness? Lack of awareness? What tragedy must befall this community before we are propelled to act?

The persecution plaguing the Middle East is no exception. Christians are targeted throughout the world in countries like China, Vietnam and Pakistan. According to the Civitas study, “More Christians are imprisoned in China than in any other country in the world.” If the faith community in the West isn’t engaged, are we surprised when government leaders turn a blind eye to matters of religious freedom?

Consider the following: bipartisan legislation to create a special envoy position at the State Department charged with advocating on behalf of religious minorities in the Middle East and South Central Asia overwhelmingly passed the House of Representatives more than a year and a half ago. But it remained stalled in the Senate as a result of State Department opposition and the refusal of the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and presumptive secretary of state, John Kerry, to even hold a hearing on the legislation.

I have had the privilege of meeting individuals who boldly follow Jesus despite unbelievably hostile circumstances. Shabbaz Bhatti, Pakistan’s federal minister for minority affairs, and the only Christian Member of the cabinet and an outspoken critic of his country’s blasphemy laws, was one such man. On March 2, 2011 he was murdered, his car riddled with bullets, leaving his mother’s house for work. In a video filmed shortly before his assassination (accessible on my Web site at <http://wolf.house.gov/bhattivideo>), Bhatti appears to sense that the path he has chosen will come with a price.

When asked about the threats against his life, he said, without malice or fear, “I believe in Jesus Christ who has given his own life for us. I know what is the meaning of [the] cross. And I am following the cross. And I am ready to die for a cause.” And so he did.

The book of Proverbs tells us to “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves . . .” Bhatti can no longer speak. The Chinese bishop under house arrest cannot speak. The North Korean believer enslaved in the gulag can’t speak. The Iraqi nun fearing for her life cannot speak.

Will we be their voice? Martin Luther King, Jr. famously said, “In the end, we will

remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.” Are we not their friends?

The Church globally is under assault. Our response must not be to simply sing more loudly, thereby drowning out the cries for help from our brothers and sisters. Rather we must speak out, advocate and act on their behalf.

From my perspective the Church in the West, specifically in America, is failing in this regard. Can you, as a leader in the Church, help? Are you pained by these accounts of persecution? Do you have ideas about how best to respond? Will you use your sphere of influence to raise the profile of this issue—be it through a sermon, writing or media interview? I welcome your thoughts and invite your engagement in this monumental task.

Next week, when Congress reconvenes, I intend to reintroduce the special envoy legislation and press for passage in both houses of Congress. I don’t pretend to think that a special envoy will single-handedly solve the problem, but it certainly can’t hurt to have a high-level person within the State Department bureaucracy who is exclusively focused on the protection and preservation of these ancient communities. Furthermore, to do nothing is simply not an option.

We in the West must speak out on behalf of the persecuted church around the world.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Member of Congress.

P.S. I know you are busy and have so many competing priorities but your involvement could really make a difference in the lives of believers around the world.

CONGENITAL HEART DEFECT AWARENESS WEEK

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2013

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week, which is February 7th–14th.

This week is dedicated to the millions of Americans who have been diagnosed with Congenital Heart Defects, the challenges their families face and for the families of those who have sadly lost loved ones to this condition. Congenital Heart Disease is considered to be the most common birth defect and is also the leading cause of birth defect related deaths worldwide.

Each year approximately forty thousand babies are born in the United States with Congenital Heart Defects and some remain undiagnosed for months or even years after birth. This dangerous condition, if left undiagnosed, can cause sudden cardiac death especially in young adolescent athletes.

Unfortunately, despite these statistics, newborns and young athletes are not routinely screened for Congenital Heart Defects and funding for research regarding the condition is limited.

Mr. Speaker, Congenital Heart Defects affect millions of Americans and I rise to recognize those affected by this condition and to help bring awareness to this important cause.