

**VICTOR LOVELADY, TEXAN,
KILLED IN TERRORIST ATTACK**

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in a remote region of Algeria at an oil and gas facility, in the dark of night before the sun rose, workers from all over the world were getting ready to sit down for breakfast when suddenly gun-wielding Islamic radicals stormed the facility.

Some of the workers were killed; some were able to escape; some were taken hostage. One of the hostages killed in this attack was a member of my congressional district, Victor Lovelady.

Victor was a native of southeast Texas. He was originally from Nederland, Texas, a town of primarily hardworking, blue collar folks centered around the energy industry. Victor had recently moved to Atascocita, Texas, his home not far from where I live. He was 57 years of age.

When he died, he was on a contract assignment for ENGGlobal, an energy company in Algeria. According to his family, Victor waited to take that contract until his children had finished school so he could attend their sporting events. This was not surprising for someone who was described as a "dedicated family man and a fantastic co-worker." Although it was hard to be so far away from his family, Victor was excited to take the contract assignment so he could ensure a secure future for his family. That's just the kind of father and husband he was.

The deal for this contract was 28 days on, 28 days off, and he was just 10 days in with only 18 days left to go. He was scheduled to come home to Texas the day after his daughter's birthday. His life was stolen by those who seek to destroy Americans, the radicals who inflict terror on all who believe in freedom.

Victor is survived by a loving family, including his wife, Maureen; daughter, Erin; and their son, Grant. Over the holidays, the close Lovelady family expressed concern for the safety of Victor, but he reassured them saying, "It's so safe. We have protection." It's hard for people to understand such unspeakable evil.

I spoke with Victor's brother, Mike, throughout the crisis and as did Congressman RANDY WEBER. Yesterday, after we heard the terrible news, Mike told me:

I can associate with my brother getting in a car wreck or having cancer. But terrorism and Nederland, Texas, don't go together.

He was described as "a great family man and a fantastic coworker" and "a leader who mentored countless individuals during his tenure." He was also known for his spontaneous wit. Victor moved from Nederland, Texas, to Atascocita to be closer to work, but he went back and forth so that his children could finish school there.

Mr. Speaker, Victor was killed not just because of what he did; he was

killed because of who he was. He was killed because he was an American. A radical Islamic al Qaeda group by the name of the Signatories in Blood claimed responsibility for this terrorist attack, those who seek to destroy us and kill indiscriminately.

□ 1010

They hate us for who we are and what we stand for. Diplomacy is not in their vocabulary.

Two other Americans were also killed in this attack. Their names were Gordon Lee Rowan of Sumpter, Oregon, and Frederick Buttaccio of Katy, Texas.

The Algerian military retook the compound after 3 days, and they found that 34 other hostages had been killed, as well as dozens of terrorists.

Mr. Speaker, our thoughts, prayers, and concerns are with the Lovelady, Rowan, and Buttaccio families today.

Secretary Panetta said that America must respond to these murders. That is correct. We should go after these killers who have malice and evil in their hearts, that kill Americans because they are Americans. That would be justice, and justice is what we do in this country.

And that's just the way it is.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, 3 years have passed since the Supreme Court's dreadful Citizens United decision, and we have seen the dramatic increase in the amount of corporate money flowing into our elections, drowning out the voices of ordinary American citizens eager to participate in the political process.

Citizens United also epitomizes the so-called "corporate personhood" movement in which some now say that corporations are people. The fact is, corporations are not people, and the Constitution was never intended to give corporations the same rights as the American people. Corporations don't breathe, they don't have kids, and they don't die in wars.

My constituents continue to express concern about the growing influence of corporations in our political discourse. They're also demanding action on campaign finance reform because they are repulsed by the large amount of money in our campaigns. Quite frankly, they want elected officials to spend more time on policy, deliberating and debating on issues, and less time dialing for dollars.

Unfortunately, the Republican leadership in the House has failed to address these pressing issues during the past 2 years. They have been indifferent. We haven't had the opportunity to vote on any legislation to curb the influence of unlimited and sometimes secret corporate money flowing into

our elections. We haven't even had the opportunity to address these issues in committee hearings or markups.

Recently, I joined 18 of my colleagues in a letter to Chairman GOODLATTE and Ranking Member CONYERS of the Judiciary Committee requesting a hearing to explore constitutional amendment proposals in response to Citizens United and related cases. I hope that we will have an opportunity to discuss these issues in the coming weeks and months. This is, after all, the people's House, and this is the place where we ought to discuss the concerns of the people.

Members of the Democratic Caucus have been working to reform our campaign finance system and restore the rights of the American people that were undermined by the Citizens United decision. We have sponsored and cosponsored legislation to address the growing influence of money in our democratic process.

As a member of the task force on elections reform, I'm proud to join my colleagues in working to rein in corporate spending and address unregulated money flowing into our elections.

Today, I'm introducing two constitutional amendments. The people's rights amendment would overturn Citizens United and put a stop to the growing trend of corporations claiming First Amendment rights. This amendment not only addresses corporate rights as they pertain to campaign finance, but is broader in scope to clarify that corporations are not people with constitutional rights. Importantly, my amendment clearly protects the people's rights of freedom of speech, freedom of press, free exercise of religion, freedom of association, and all other such rights of the people.

My second amendment advances the fundamental principle of political equality for all by empowering Congress and the States with the right to regulate political spending. It will allow Congress to pass campaign finance reform legislation that will withstand constitutional challenges.

Mr. Speaker, we need to empower people, not corporations or Big Money special interests. Our current system has been corrupted. It undermines the rights of ordinary citizens, and it undermines our democracy. Surely, this is not the system our Founders envisioned. The preamble to the Constitution is "We the people." Let us hope that this Congress doesn't forget that.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting these important bills to reform our campaign finance laws and assure that corporate rights do not trump people's rights.

IN HONOR OF VIRGINIA STATE POLICE TROOPERS JAY FERLAND AND PHILIP BATTEL

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

Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise and submit remarks in

honor of Virginia State Trooper Jay Ferland, a devoted public servant, who along with Trooper Philip Battel saved a family of three from a house fire in Saltville, Virginia.

When I first learned of their bravery, news reports failed to mention Trooper Ferland's involvement. On January 2, I spoke of this incident and only mentioned Trooper Battel. However, both men are deserving of our recognition.

To recap, in the early hours of Friday, December 28, 2012, Trooper Ferland and Trooper Battel were in search of a stolen car that had been involved in an earlier police chase when they noticed off in the distance an orange hue. They decided to investigate. When they reached the area in question, much to their surprise, Troopers Ferland and Battel saw a home engulfed in flames. They banged on the door, but when there was no answer, they made the selfless decision to enter the home and investigate.

Their actions in the house awoke its three residents who had no idea that their home was burning down around them, leading to their ultimate escape from the burning house and from the fire. Because of their bravery, the family was saved, and all are in good health. Their lives were saved, and the lives of two of their pets were also saved. The heroic actions of Trooper Ferland and Trooper Battel in service to the community are to be commended, and I am honored to be here today to pay tribute to them.

Please join me in thanking Trooper Jay Ferland and Trooper Philip Battel for all they have done for the people of southwest Virginia. The Virginia State Police, as my experience has shown over the years, always respond in fine fashion and rise to the occasion. Trooper Ferland and Trooper Battel are among just two of the many law enforcement officers to note in the long and proud history of the Virginia State Police.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend the Virginia State Police, Trooper Ferland, Trooper Battel, and the good work and heroism of all the officers in the Virginia State Police.

PARITY FOR PUERTO RICO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow I will reintroduce two bills: the first to extend the SSI program to Puerto Rico, and the second to provide fair treatment to Puerto Rico under TANF.

SSI provides assistance to blind, disabled, and elderly individuals with low incomes. Congress has chosen not to extend the program to Puerto Rico, which instead receives a limited block grant. The average SSI payment to residents of the States is \$500 a month, while the average payment to residents of Puerto Rico is just \$70.

The TANF program provides payments to needy families with children. The territories are not eligible for certain TANF grants. Moreover, Federal law imposes a cap on the aggregate funding that a territory can receive under a combination of safety net programs, including TANF. My legislation would eliminate this cap, which has not been increased since 1996, and make the territories eligible for TANF grants they do not currently receive. Equality under TANF would mean at least \$40 million in additional funding for Puerto Rico each year.

Those who seek evidence of how Puerto Rico is harmed by its territory status need look no further than the treatment it receives under SSI and TANF. I will fight to secure parity under these two programs. But as long as Puerto Rico remains a territory, it will be an uphill battle.

Mr. Speaker, Puerto Rico recently held a referendum on its political status. Under the current status, the 3.7 million American citizens living in Puerto Rico cannot vote for the leaders who make their national laws and are treated unequally under those laws, as the examples of SSI and TANF well illustrate.

The ballot had two questions. On the first question, voters were asked if they wanted Puerto Rico to remain a territory. Of 1.8 million voters, 54 percent said they do not want the current status to continue, while 46 percent say they do.

On the second question, voters were asked to express their preference among the alternatives to the current status. Of the 1.4 million people who chose an option, 61 percent voted for statehood, 33 percent for free association, and 5.5 percent for independence.

□ 1020

The 834,000 votes for statehood on the second question exceeded the 828,000 for the current status on the first question. For the first time ever, more people in Puerto Rico want to be a state than to continue as a territory.

True to form, defenders of the status quo have tried to distort the results of this referendum, making claims that are intellectually dishonest and divorced from the facts. These critics ignore the results of the first question and argue that, because close to 500,000 people left the second question blank, statehood did not prevail in the referendum.

Let me be clear so there is no confusion. A majority of voters in Puerto Rico soundly rejected the current status. Among the three alternatives, statehood won a decisive victory, and statehood obtained a greater number of votes than any other status option, including the current status.

Mr. Speaker, at yesterday's inauguration, President Obama invoked the Declaration of Independence:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain

unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

President Obama then emphasized, while these truths may be self-evident, they have never been self-executing; that while freedom is a gift from God, it must be secured by His people here on Earth.

To uphold this Nation's core principles and values, the President and Congress must respond to the democratic expression of their fellow citizens in Puerto Rico, who have withdrawn their consent to a political status that makes them second-class citizens and who have made clear that they aspire to have full democratic rights and full equality under the law. None of my stateside colleagues in Congress would accept territory status for their own constituents, so they must recognize and they must respect that the American citizens I represent no longer accept it either.

THE DEBT CEILING

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

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen testified before the House Armed Services Committee that America "is maintaining nearly historic fiscal deficits and national debt. Indeed, I believe that our debt is the greatest threat to our national security. If we as a country do not address our fiscal imbalances in the near term, our national power will erode, and the costs to our ability to maintain and sustain influence could be great."

Admiral Mullen is right: debt caused sequestration. Debt and sequestration will slash our uniformed personnel to their lowest levels since before World War II; will reduce our Navy to the smallest number of operational vessels since World War I; and will cut our Air Force to the smallest number of operational aircraft in its history. In sum, debt is putting America's national security at risk.

Last week, on January 17, the Comptroller General of the United States delivered to President Obama a Government Accountability Office report on America's financial health. I have reviewed many government audits and financial statements during my three decades in public office. I have never seen warnings as stark as those given by the GAO to President Obama. Some lowlights of the GAO report are striking and deserve emphasis.

In fiscal year 2012, the Federal National Mortgage Association and Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, commonly known as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, reported about \$85 billion in net valuation losses. The Federal Government's Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation's liabilities exceeded its assets by about \$34 billion. The Postal Service "finished the year with