

gentleman, my daughter, we've had a lot of fun with her, teaching her how to shoot a gun and going out also in our pasture. We have an area that we've blocked off, and we target shot, and it's a lot of fun and she enjoys it. But just as importantly as it being enjoyable, I think just being familiar with guns and for the potential of having self-protection is so important, as well. And I know you would agree.

□ 1700

Mr. STUTZMAN. Absolutely. I think that as Payton, our oldest, we've given him a bow and arrow, and he has his straw bales out in the back of the barn. And I think that any time he goes out, we always talk to him about look what's beyond your target and make sure that you're not shooting in a direction towards a house or towards any other one that's behind there.

And it really does come down to awareness and responsibility and making sure that any time you're shooting, whether it's a bow and arrow, or whether it's a baseball, for that matter, throwing a baseball or shooting a firearm, that there is an awareness always around you.

I know we see a lot of the tragedies that happen in cities, whether it could be from a stray bullet, and that's where we need to continue to focus on those people, whether it's through our churches, whether it's through charitable organizations, through schools, education, and helping people understand the great responsibility that comes with firearms.

I feel fortunate to be raised on a farm where I could start at a very young age and was taught the lessons of responsibility with gun ownership. And then we're teaching the same with Payton and Preston.

There is that point of fun and the enjoyment of having firearms as you're out in the woods or wherever you're at. But it also goes deeper than that. And I think that's why the Second Amendment goes to the very heart of Americans and how we were founded. Obviously, the men who fought in the Revolutionary War needed to have the access to a gun to defend themselves against the Redcoats at the time, and so they obviously had to learn the same thing.

And it wasn't just to defend themselves from another army. It was also a tool used to provide food for themselves.

We're very fortunate in so many ways that we don't have the responsibility of using a gun on a daily basis like people used to. With that, people don't use a firearm as often, and they do have a responsibility to make sure that they're trained when they do purchase one, and recognizing those that are around them when they're using them.

But again, it goes to the heart of us as Americans and defending our freedom. And if it has to absolutely come to that, to defeat tyranny. That is

what Thomas Jefferson mentioned about the Second Amendment.

Mrs. HARTZLER. It's certainly a deterrent, I think, from any government who would want to take on their citizens. And you look at this list that I was sharing, two pages of people and countries who have very high murder rates. I feel for the people of those countries.

I can't imagine what that would be like to live in a country where you're basically helpless. You and your family are helpless. You are totally open to and vulnerable to anyone, whether it's somebody in government, a rogue government, or a criminal who wants to do yourself or your family harm, and you don't have that ability to protect yourself.

Madam Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. VARGAS) for 30 minutes.

Mr. VARGAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on our Nation's need for comprehensive immigration reform. I did want to, however, congratulate my friend, MARLIN STUTZMAN, and his family. What a beautiful family. And it was a delight looking over and seeing both boys. What a terrific family.

I come today, though, to thank, really, the faith community in this country that has come together around comprehensive immigration reform. It's been interesting to see how, literally, every denomination, every faith group, has come together and said that we must have comprehensive immigration reform because of the values that they have, as religious people and religious groups, but also, more importantly, the religious values that we share as Americans.

So I want to thank all of the groups that have been praying for us, that have come to the Capitol to speak to us, to say, open up your hearts, open up your minds and take a look at the stranger among you.

I would like to read a letter that I received yesterday that, I think, puts it into context, certainly in the Judeo-Christian context, and that was a letter that I received from Rabbi Ron Stern from the Stephen S. Wise Temple in Los Angeles, California.

He wrote this:

Among the fundamental stories of the Jewish people is the classic telling of the experience of slavery in Egypt.

The story is not only told each year during the Passover Seder held by Jews around the world but it is also referenced repeatedly as the rationale for many Jewish ethical principles.

The tradition teaches us that we must always remember that we were strangers in a strange land, that we were powerless immi-

grants with no choice but to rely upon the grace and mercy of others who not only had power over our subsistence, but sometimes over our lives.

The truth of the Exodus story for the Jewish people is eternal because we have often been wanderers in lands that were not our own.

Subsequent to the Exodus story, the first encounter with the landless powerlessness occurred nearly 2,500 years ago in the land of Babylonia.

It was there that we also learned the strength that comes when a people exits the shadows and is able to take its place in the light of the Nation's destiny. A vibrant Jewish community thrived there for thousands of years as citizens of a Persian nation.

Elsewhere in the world over the centuries Jews encountered wandering, rootlessness and powerlessness in Europe, Russia and Northern Africa. With each move, we endured the insecurity of foreigners never fully welcomed in a land that benefited from our labor and our skills.

The all too infrequent eras of stability, security and peace were welcomed isles of harmony that allowed our people to prosper.

Because of our history, because of our collective memory of wandering and existing as immigrants in lands that were not our own from birth, because we were wanderers who traveled to nations looking for better fortunes and left nations where fortune and safety eluded, the Jewish people have a mission to extend compassion and embrace to others who seek the very security that we often sought for ourselves.

Now that we have found peace, comfort, stability and strength in this great country, we demand nothing less than that for others who seek these essential components of life for themselves and for their families.

Eleven million immigrants have cared for our children, attended our schools, worked in our factories, fought our wars, frequented our businesses, and made our way of life possible.

The time is now for those who have become a part of our American fabric through the sweat of their hands to be given the place in our society that we cherish for ourselves as well: citizens of the United States of America.

Sincerely, Rabbi Ron Stern.

I want to thank Rabbi Stern. I think that he, along with so many others, have really set the stage for something that I think is not only overdue but that we're going to do, and that is, we're going to look into our hearts, and we're going to see that the stranger among us is not so strange.

It was interesting that the rabbi mentioned fought our wars. For those of us that have been working with immigrants, I think probably the saddest things, the saddest occurrences that we've encountered are these, when military men and women have spouses who are undocumented.

□ 1710

A good example is a story I gave before, and I'll give it again, it was so compelling.

Here in the Capitol, on the Senate side, we heard testimony from an Army soldier who had, unfortunately, been injured. He came home and his wife is taking care of him and his young family. And what he's had to do is line the car windows and all over the car with stickers that say, "Injured Soldier,"

"Go Army," and all sorts of other stickers that show that he is someone that went and fought for us overseas. And the reason he does this, he says, is because he doesn't want to get pulled over for some small traffic violation because his wife is the only one that's able to drive, and she could be deported because she's undocumented.

And probably even more compelling, we had, afterwards, a member of the Marines come forward and say, tragically, that he is fearful when he is sent overseas, but not of dying, interestingly. He said that he served two tours of duty in Iraq. He said that he was scared the whole time he was there, but not of what I thought. He said, You wouldn't guess. He said, I'm going back now to Afghanistan, and I have the same fear. And you know what his fear is? His fear is not of dying. Interestingly and starkly, he said, That's what Marines do. We fight and we die. I'm not afraid of that. I'm afraid that my wife will get deported because she's undocumented. I'm afraid that my wife will get deported. That's what his fear is, that his wife may be deported.

He says, What then will happen to not only my wife but my children? I'm off in Afghanistan doing what I think is right, defending our country, defending our liberty, and at the same time my wife could get deported to a nation she doesn't really even know anymore. She came as a child. She came from Mexico. How is that fair?

And I can tell him, Of course, that's not fair. But I think that more and more of us are hearing these stories. And I thank him for his bravery to come forward because it does, in fact, put his family in peril because she could get deported. But I thank him and I thank the other brave members of the military that have come forward and given us their stories. I've heard from many now.

Now I would like to take a moment to share with you a letter written by the Evangelical Immigration Table to us here in the United States Congress. They wrote:

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi, Congratulations to you and your campaign teams on your election victories.

Our Nation faces many great challenges and opportunities. We pray that God will lead and guide your steps and provide you with the wisdom during the years ahead. As evangelical leaders, we live every day with the reality that our immigration system doesn't reflect our commitment to the values of human dignity, family unity, and respect for the rule of law that define us as Americans.

Initiatives by both parties to advance commonsense fixes to our immigration policies have stalled in the years past. With your leadership, this can change. In the next Congress, Republicans and Democrats need to come together to pass and implement a national immigration strategy that addresses our Nation's broken immigration system. We commit to supporting you. We are already working across the country to educate and mobilize our fellow evangelical Christians to support just immigration laws. Support for reform is growing in our churches, denominations, campuses, and communities.

As an aside, it is. And we see it here at the Capitol. We see more and more church groups and pastors coming and speaking to us, and speaking to us in a very united way and a very compassionate way and a very values-filled way, saying that we have to do something. And I thank them again for that.

They go on:

We stand ready to support legislation that reflects our Christian values and builds the common good. We are driven by moral obligation rooted deeply in our faith to address the needs of immigrants in our country. Compassionate and just treatment of immigrants is a frequent topic in the Scripture. The Hebrew word for immigrant, "ger", occurs 92 times throughout the Bible.

We respectfully request that you meet personally with leadership from the Evangelical Immigration Table in the first 92 days of the next Congress to discuss bipartisan immigration reform legislation that:

One, guarantees secure national borders;

Two, respects the God-given dignity of every person;

Three, ensures fairness to taxpayers;

Four, protects the unity of the immediate family;

Five, establishes a path toward legal status and/or citizenship for those who qualify and those who wish to become permanent residents;

Six, respects the rule of law.

These principles are endorsed by the signers of this letter and by more than 150 other prominent evangelical leaders from around the Nation. The principles reflect a growing convergence with the position of other religious, civic, business, labor, and law enforcement leaders.

We urge you to reach across the aisle and to work to create a bipartisan solution that reflects our values, creates just and humane immigration laws, and moves us forward together.

The letter was signed by Leith Anderson, President, National Association of Evangelicals; Stephan Bauman, President and CEO, World Relief; David Beckmann, President, Bread for the World; Noel Castellanos, CEO, Christian Development Community Association; Robert Gittelsohn, President, Conservatives for Comprehensive Immigration Reform; Richard Land, President, Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention; Samuel Rodriguez, President, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference; Gabriel Salguero, President, National Latino Evangelical Coalition; Richard Stearns, President, World Vision United States; and Jim Wallis, President and CEO of Sojourners.

So why have all of these evangelical leaders and why have so many other faith groups come together and said with a unified voice that we have to have comprehensive immigration reform? Well, as they say, the reason is because of their values. Because they believe in the Bible and they believe that the stranger among us must be treated as ourselves. In fact, interestingly, some of them quote Leviticus.

In Leviticus, of course, it says that you shall love the alien, the stranger, as you love yourselves, because you have to remember that you once were strangers, too, in the land of Egypt.

And so I thank all of these religious leaders, all of these faith communities that have come together. Interestingly, I can't recall another time when you've had so many different religious faith groups, pastors, reverends, and rabbis come together with one voice and say, This is the path forward; we all agree. But we have it here.

The nice thing about it is that I think we are getting to a point where we are going to agree that we have to have a comprehensive immigration package that reflects the values that they have spoken to, the values that we hold dear as Americans, and I think that we are going to get there. And I thank each and every one of them that prays for us because I am a person of faith. I do believe that prayers work. I can feel their fervent prayers here. We can all hear them here. It's a wonderful thing.

I do want to read a few more letters and a few more quotes from these same evangelical leaders because I think it's important to get a feel for how unanimous they are that we have to have comprehensive immigration reform that really reflects our best values, our better angels. So here's a press release from the evangelical leaders to amplify the call for bipartisan immigration reform with radio ads in key States.

□ 1720

Dr. Richard Land, president, Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention:

Evangelical Christians who listen to Christian radio tend to be well educated in the Scriptures and politically engaged. Reaching them with this message about God's heart for immigrants and the importance of immigration solutions rooted in Biblical values will be absolutely critical for building the political will we need to pass meaningful reforms in 2013.

Our political leaders need to hear from our constituents and from their constituents and know that evangelical Christians are strongly behind them if they have the moral courage to act on the values we see in Matthew 25 and other places in the Scripture concerning welcoming the stranger.

I thank Dr. Richard Land. When he says that he hopes that we hear from our constituents, we are hearing from them. In fact, we're also hearing from Dr. Richard Land and other leaders in the evangelical churches that have come here to say, if you have any distrust in your heart for the immigrant, the stranger, or even hate, put it aside. Instead, follow your heart and understand that the immigrant, the stranger among you, deserves your love, your attention, your values.

I think it's happening here. Again, I don't think it's by accident. I think it's by their prayers. I think it's by them coming together with a united voice and saying we have to do what is right. And I thank them.

I'd like to read now from Reverend Dr. Uth, senior pastor of the First Baptist Church of Orlando. The reason I want to read the pastor's notes is because the pastor not only talks about

reform, he comes from a particular area, Orlando. This is his quote:

There's a consistent message throughout Scripture, and it's a command to welcome and to treat fairly all people, but especially the stranger and the foreigner in your land. When we fail to welcome the stranger, in essence we fail to welcome Christ.

And so Christians in our church, when they learn about God's heart for the immigrant and what the Bible has to say, their hearts are open because we are a people of faith, and it is our desire to live out that faith in our world.

Coupled with that, when they meet these immigrants, when they have personal encounters, all of a sudden this issue has a face, it has a story. And it's in that meeting that transformation happens and has happened here for us. We know that the time is now for this discussion.

I thank the pastor. I thank him because he's right. But I also thank him because I think his prayers, his supplications are being answered. I think the prayers of his congregation are being answered. We are coming together, and we are coming together in a bipartisan way.

There are many other things that we disagree on. I've been here not very long, but I can already tell you there are a lot of things that we disagree on. But more and more, we're coming together around the issue of comprehensive immigration reform, and we're coming together because it's the right thing to do.

In fact, the voices now—and they're few and they're shrill—seem to be a real outlier now. They seem to be far out, nowhere in the mainstream. Instead, we're down to the nitty-gritty and we're trying to figure out the small things. I think that that's very good; I think that that's healthy.

I appreciate, again, the candor that we've had on this discussion. It is a pleasure to have the discussion on immigration be so humane and values-based. But also, some of the interests around the country are coming together too.

I sit on the Agriculture Committee, and we were having a committee hearing on horticulture and specialty crops. Almost immediately, the discussion went to comprehensive immigration reform because it's one of the most important things for the agricultural community. Interestingly, they said that the bill in the Senate is not perfect, the bill that we're going to produce here is not perfect, but it's getting close. They're saying that there's a lot of agreement between those that work in the field and represent them and those that are the farmers. When do you see that? It seldom happens. Again, I think it's happening because of the prayers of the pastors.

I do want to read a few more of them because they've sent so many of them now to my office, and also because I appreciate what they're doing. They're making a difference here. I also want to show that it's not only in Orlando, in one part of the country; it's all over the country that pastors and religious

groups are coming together to pray for us, to encourage us to move forward on comprehensive immigration reform. So I would like to read from Reverend Dr. Fleming, senior pastor, Champion Forest Baptist Church in Houston, Texas:

We're beginning now to see immigrants as us. We live together, we work together, we serve together, we're all in this together, and the notion of welcoming the outsider and the stranger and inviting them in has been key to that. We see the immigrant as a person created in the image of God. They're husbands and wives, they're parents, they're children.

Oftentimes our broken immigration system causes great suffering in the homes and in the families and in the people's lives.

I believe, and my experience has been here in Texas that conservative Christians and evangelicals are rising to support a Biblical approach to this very complex issue.

I thank him. I thank Dr. Reverend David Fleming, senior pastor, Champion Forest Baptist Church of Houston, for his courage, for his prayers, for his encouragement, for his heart, and for his insight. I think it's very insightful. I want to quote him:

We're beginning now to see immigrants as us. We live together, we work together, we serve together, we're all in this together, and the notion of welcoming the outsider and the stranger and inviting them in has been key to that.

In fact, they have been invited in. I've had the great honor now to speak to many pastors, and evangelization has happened with many of the undocumented people that have come to our Nation.

Now, in fact, as the marine that I spoke of earlier, as well as the soldier, oftentimes they meet their spouses in church and they get married. Then we put them in a situation that if they legally want to live together their spouse has to leave the country for 10 years. Can you imagine that? The marine, who is again going to be deployed overseas, for his wife to be here legally she would have to leave the country for 10 years, what would she do with the children? Does she take them with her? They're American citizens. Does she go to this country that she really doesn't know anymore? How can that be right? How can that be fair? How can that be just? How can that be Christian? How can those be our values? They're not our values. That's why I thank Pastor Dr. David Fleming for stepping forward and saying it's time that we change.

Now, I happen to be a Catholic, so I'd like to quote now Archbishop Jose Gomez, the archbishop of Los Angeles and chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration. He says this:

Our collective faith groups are prepared to support just and humane reform of a broken immigration system. With the President's leadership and cooperation between both parties in Congress, we can achieve this goal within the year.

We agree with the President and the bipartisan Senate leaders who are stressing the importance of a path to citizenship for the undocumented. We should not sanction a permanent underclass in our society.

Never to correct an archbishop; however, I would add that also the good

work that's being done bipartisanship here, too, in this House, in the Congress, and you will soon see a bill.

I thank and I pray every day for the members of that group that are working hard—often under great stress—to come forward with a bill, a change in the law, that represents our better angels. It represents our values as Americans, as Christians, as Jews, as people of faith. So I thank them.

I'd also like to quote Reverend Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference:

Today's meeting invigorated me with hope and optimism. The President's resolve in conjunction with evangelical support facilitate the prescription for a comprehensive resolution addressing America's immigration crisis. I am convinced that with prayer and prophetic activism, we will live out Matthew 25 and welcome the stranger in the name of Jesus.

□ 1730

Of course he quotes famously Matthew 25. Matthew 25, of course, is the judgment where Jesus himself says how we will be judged as a nation. I hope you go back and read that part of Scripture.

Jesus says:

"When I was hungry, you gave me to eat. When I was thirsty, you gave me to drink. When I was naked, you clothed me. When I was ill, you cured me. When I was a stranger, you welcomed me. When I was a prisoner, you visited me."

Then of course the sheep will ask:

"When do we do that, Jesus?"

"When you did it to the least of my brothers."

That's what Reverend Samuel Rodriguez was quoting and most Christian groups quote. It's so profoundly who we are: the welcoming of the stranger, Christ among us.

Madam Speaker, I know I don't have much time left. I appreciate deeply the time that I was given today to speak to my colleagues and to speak to hopefully a larger crowd that I have great faith, I have great faith that we are coming together and we're coming together in a way that we will produce a bill that we can all be proud of and hopefully that we will all support but that will have bipartisan support. And it won't be an accident. It will be because of the prayers of these pastors. It will be because of the courage of Rabbi Stern. It will be because of all the encouragement that we've received from the faith communities outside of this House. It is because of their fervent love and support for the immigrant, the stranger, that we will have a just law, and I thank them.

Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity today. I yield back the balance of my time.

ATROCITIES OF ABORTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the