

to make a quick withdrawal from here.”

I hope that during the debate in July on the appropriations bill dealing with the Defense Department that we will start passing amendments that say we need to stop this out-of-control spending in Afghanistan with very little accountability.

I am one that agrees with my party and some of the Democrats that we need to hold hearings on Benghazi and the Internal Revenue Service. But I have written to the leadership of the Armed Services Committee and the subcommittee chairmen asking for a hearing on this out-of-control waste in Afghanistan. Not only did the CIA acknowledge that they have been giving tens of millions of dollars in cash to Karzai for 10 years, but, Mr. Speaker, we are also authorizing \$8 billion a month to go to Afghanistan. We are holding no hearings on the waste, fraud, and abuse in Afghanistan.

I hope that after we get through the appropriations process that we will start holding hearings. It's not fair to the American people that we borrow money from China to send to Karzai in Afghanistan. And, Mr. Speaker, we all know that Karzai is not going to survive. The Taliban, whom we are fighting, who are killing Americans today, will be the future leaders of Afghanistan. Every expert that I've spoken to, military and nonmilitary, has said that the Taliban, which primarily is made up of Pashtuns—that's the largest tribe of Afghanistan—in time, they will be the leaders of Afghanistan.

It is time for this Congress to wake up and join the American people. Seventy-five percent of the American people say, We want out of Afghanistan. We want to bring our troops home. We want to stop wasting money.

So, Mr. Speaker, before I close, I would also like to reiterate this cartoon. It's Karzai standing at a CIA ATM machine. He's got bags of cash down at his feet, and the little guy has a credit card that he's going to put into the machine, like we all do here in America to get money from our own accounts. But he's not getting it from his own account; he's getting it from the CIA account. And then I see this poor soldier standing behind him who's saying, “I'd like to make a quick withdrawal from here.”

Mr. Speaker, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to hold in His arms those families who've given a child dying for freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan. I ask God to please bless the House and Senate, that we will do what is right in the eyes of God. I ask God to please bless the President, that he will do what is right in the eyes of God. And three times I will ask, God, please, God, please, God, please continue to bless America.

#### REMEMBERING THE WORDS OF HARVEY MILK

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I, too, along with my colleague from California, Congresswoman BASS, express my sorrow for the victims of the terrible tragedy in Oklahoma, and I stand ready to work with my friends across the aisle to do all we can to alleviate the tragedy.

Mr. Speaker:

Somewhere in Des Moines or San Antonio there is a young gay person who all of a sudden realizes that he or she is gay; knows that if their parents find out they will be tossed out of the house, their classmates will taunt the child, and the Anita Bryants and John Briggs are doing their part on TV. And that child has several options: staying in the closet and suicide.

And then one day that child might open the paper that says, “Homosexual elected in San Francisco,” and there are two new options: the option is to go to California, or stay in San Antonio and fight. Two days after I was elected, I got a phone call and the voice was quite young. It was from Altoona, Pennsylvania. And the person said, “Thanks.”

And you've got to elect gay people, so that thousands upon thousands like that child know that there is hope for a better world; there is hope for a better tomorrow.

Without hope, not only gays, but those who are Blacks, the Asians, the disabled, the seniors, the us's: without hope, the us's give up. I know that you can't live on hope alone, but without it, life is not worth living. And you, and you, and you, and you have got to give them hope.

□ 1010

Those words, Mr. Speaker, were spoken by Harvey Milk. It is with tremendous honor and gratitude that I enter them into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on his behalf and all of the “us's” in our Nation.

#### YUCCA MOUNTAIN AND SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, there's good news in our pursuit of a repository to hold our Nation's spent nuclear fuel and nuclear waste, although it went largely unreported.

Officials from both the Department of Energy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission have publicly admitted that neither agency has identified any technical issues that would prevent us from being able to develop a safe repository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada. This admission came during a recent hearing before the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee in response to a question from my friend and colleague, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, the subcommittee chairman.

To stakeholders in the nuclear waste debate, this fact should come as no surprise. Why else would Greg Jaczko, Senator REID's former staffer, abuse his authority as NRC chairman and de-

ceive his Commission colleagues to scuttle publication of the agency's safety review?

If Yucca Mountain were as scientifically flawed as Senator REID says it is, then he would have benefited by having the agency's conclusions released publicly. Instead, Senator REID got a promise from President Obama to shut down the program.

President Obama obliged, with no basis other than the cryptic statements about Yucca Mountain being “unworkable.” Meanwhile, Senator REID's protege, Mr. Jaczko, made sure the NRC's independent technical conclusions never saw the light of day.

These actions have been challenged in court. The State attorneys general for both Washington and South Carolina, together with the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, Aiken County, South Carolina, and Nye County, Nevada, have all alleged that the NRC has violated the Nuclear Waste Policy Act by ceasing its review of the Yucca Mountain license application, which is mandated under the law. The case is currently before the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals.

When President Obama took office, he said that this administration would “restore scientific integrity in government decisionmaking.”

Shortly after taking office, he issued a Presidential Memorandum stating:

Political officials should not suppress or alter scientific or technological findings and conclusions. If scientific and technological information is developed and used by the Federal Government, it should ordinarily be made available to the public.

Except for information that is properly restricted from disclosure, each agency should make available to the public the scientific and technical findings or conclusions considered or relied upon in policy decisions.

The public must be confident that public officials will not conceal or distort the scientific findings that are relevant to policy choices.

He reaffirmed these statements recently when addressing the National Academies of Science:

In all the sciences, we've got to make sure that we are supporting the idea that they're not subject to politics, that they're not skewed by an agenda, that, as I said before, we make sure that we go where the evidence leads us.

Mr. Speaker, I find it very difficult to reconcile these pronouncements with the Yucca Mountain situation as it stands today. Electricity consumers and taxpayers have invested \$15 billion to find a safe disposal site for our Nation's civilian spent fuel and the nuclear waste left over from the Cold War. After investing 30 years and \$15 billion in Yucca Mountain, they deserve, at a minimum, for the independent nuclear safety regulator, the NRC, to release its conclusions on whether the site is safe or not.

Given the admissions from these DOE and NRC officials, it appears we have found a safe solution to our Nation's nuclear waste problem: Yucca Mountain. The bad news is that this administration would rather play politics

than solve the problem. Transparency and scientific integrity should not be debased into political buzz words easily cast aside for the sake of political favors.

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve better. They deserve to know the truth about Yucca Mountain. It's outrageous that they must go to court to get it.

#### PUT ASIDE POLITICS FOR DISASTER RELIEF

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

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, our hearts go out to the people of Oklahoma and our colleague, Representative TOM COLE, whose district has been devastated by the latest catastrophe that has befallen our country.

I recall the great courage of TOM COLE on this floor and in his conference, putting aside politics and ideology and voting for relief after Hurricane Sandy. As the death toll rises and the search and rescue valiantly continues, let us not just offer our prayers, as much as they are needed and welcomed, but let us act as united citizens and send, with all due speed, relief for the people of Oklahoma.

Disasters and tragedies should never be about ideology or politics or geographic locale. When Americans are in need of help, this Congress needs to respond. That is who we are as a people. That's what leads us to become a more perfect union.

Any American befallen by tragedy or national disaster needs the assistance of their Nation and their fellow Americans. Let us act in this Congress before we leave. Before we go on an extended break, let us take action on behalf of the citizens of Oklahoma.

Let us put aside and let us damn politics and ideology and act on behalf of the American people and these people of Oklahoma who are enduring so much through this natural disaster.

God bless America.

#### HONORING THE 200TH-PLUS ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEATAACK COMMUNITY

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

Mr. RIGELL. Mr. Speaker, this morning I consider it a joy and really a special privilege to rise today to honor the 200th-plus anniversary of the Seataack community, the oldest African American community in the United States.

The community, named for the sea attack of the coast by the British Navy, is a stalwart in Hampton Roads, steadfastly protecting civil rights and promoting the African American community. Throughout its proud history, the Seataack community has stood for

doing what is right in the face of adversity.

Going back to the early 1800s, Seataack fishermen braved the rough waters of the Atlantic to save the passengers of a ship that had wrecked off the coast. The men of Seataack have fought in every major American war, including serving as air raid wardens in World War II to protect the citizens of Virginia Beach from potential airstrikes.

And when the Seataack community needed a fire department, the Seataack veterans from World War II came together to build the first fire department owned and operated by African Americans.

Even in its early days, Mr. Speaker, Seataack has shown a commitment to educating its youth. In 1908, Seataack parents formed their first school at Mount Olive Baptist Church, and a few years later formed the Seataack Public School League. Later, the community provided the land for the Seataack Elementary School. And today, Seataack continues its commitment to education by providing funding for college students.

Mr. Speaker, I am truly honored to represent this amazing community within my district. Their continuous hard work to promote education, civil rights, and a safe Hampton Roads community is nothing short of admirable.

□ 1020

In October 2011 and October 2012, the community celebrated 200-plus years of being a vibrant, active, engaged, and historical community. Thanks to the contributions of the community historian, whom I have gotten to know and greatly respect, Sadie Shaw, a pre-eminent holder of all the history of the wonderful community, because of her and so many others, the legacy of the historical community of Seataack will continue to be perpetuated for generations to come.

I congratulate them as the legacy continues. We ask that God continue to bless that wonderful community and this wonderful country that we're privileged to live in.

#### EXTENDING SYMPATHY TO THE PEOPLE OF OKLAHOMA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI).

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, it's with great sadness that I rise today to extend sympathy to the people of Oklahoma, and especially to our colleague, Congressman COLE, and his constituents who have been affected by the tornado. We just heard our President talk about how our prayers and our deeds are with the people of the community. We also just heard Mr. LARSON talk about our acting immediately to provide the assistance to the people there; and to the extent that Congress can act quickly upon that, we should.

We've seen natural disasters come and go. They're all terrible. The loss of

life is tragic, as well as the loss of homes and belongings. It's very hard to see how people can be made whole, but we are always hopeful that they will be. People say, Where do you find hope in a situation like that? It sits there comfortably between faith—we believe, and therefore we have hope—and the charity of others, that we can work together to come through this.

Whether it's earthquakes in California, storms in the Northeast, or hurricanes in the South, like Katrina, it's always tragic. There's something especially deeply saddening about what happened in Oklahoma City. It reminded me immediately of something that I carry in my heart.

I went to Italy as a representative of President Carter in 1980. It was a congressional delegation to deliver U.S. assistance following an earthquake in southern Italy. In one small town in the mountains that we visited, the roof of the church collapsed. And what was tragic about it that resembles what happened in Oklahoma is that in that church that day was the first grade. They were practicing for First Holy Communion. So every 7-year-old child in that village was a casualty. Every one died.

And so when there's loss of life, of course, it's always tragic. Everyone is a valuable life. But when every 7-year-old in the village dies, it just does something to your psyche. It's so sad. You grieve so deeply. It's so hard to console people. And it's sad to see what happened to the school in Oklahoma City. Twenty little children lost their lives, each one of them precious, all of them the future of the community. How deep the grief must be there. We must try to help wipe the tears away from that community. So many little children.

It was a beautiful sight to see the first responders trying to dig people out—and successfully. There was a picture today of a little boy pulled out from the rubble. Teachers made a valiant effort to cover children so that falling debris did not harm those who were still alive. And so whether it was first responders or teachers or families, it was a community coming together. This community has suffered a great loss of lives, a horrible loss of homes. What was a home became debris in a matter of minutes.

And so I hope that we all know what our responsibility is, because these children are America's children. Those that died have such an impact on the community. We must all appreciate the depth of the grief, the depth of the tragedy that has befallen. I'll never, ever forget the desperate look in the eyes of the people in the village of the mountains of Italy. As I said, we're always hopeful through prayer, which gives us strength; faith, which gives us hope; and the charity of others, which helps us to go forward.

So I hope it is a comfort to the people of the region that their loss is one