

calls this latest version the Energy Consumers Relief Act, an Orwellian name if there ever was one, deceptively titled as Congress heads for recess, but the title does not reflect reality. This bill more aptly might be called the Blocking Public Health Protections Act.

Shamefully, this is yet another attempt by the majority to gut public health and safety protections so they can give more handouts to big energy producers, many of which of course have financed the majority in this House.

Not only does this bill block or delay the EPA from finalizing rules, Madam Chairman, to reduce pollution that threatens the air we breathe and the water we drink. It also gives unprecedented power, as the distinguished ranking member of the committee pointed out, to the Department of Energy to veto EPA rules—nonsensical and a non sequitur if there ever was one.

We know rules already in place, like the mercury and air toxic standards that effectively regulate carcinogens, neurotoxins, smog and soot pollution, prevent up to 11,000 premature deaths, 47 heart attacks, and 130,000 asthma attacks every year. So I ask my colleagues: Why are we trying to prevent proven protections on public health?

Our amendment will continue to put public health first by ensuring that EPA retains that authority to implement the vital safeguards that protect air and water quality that previous generations in this House on a bipartisan basis believed were necessary and important to protect the public we serve.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY).

The question was taken; and the Chair announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia will be postponed.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Madam Chair, I move that the Committee do now rise. The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LANKFORD) having assumed the chair, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1582) to protect consumers by prohibiting the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from promulgating as final certain energy-related rules that are estimated to cost more than \$1 billion and will cause significant adverse effects to the economy, had come to no resolution thereon.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair

will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

□ 1945

VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS ACT OF 2013

Mr. ROYCE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1897) to promote freedom and democracy in Vietnam.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1897

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2013”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Findings and purpose.

Sec. 3. Prohibition on increased non-humanitarian assistance to the Government of Vietnam.

Sec. 4. United States public diplomacy.

Sec. 5. United Nations Human Rights Council.

Sec. 6. Annual report.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The relationship between the United States and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has grown substantially since the end of the trade embargo in 1994, with annual trade between the two countries reaching nearly \$25,000,000,000 in 2012.

(2) The Government of Vietnam’s transition toward greater economic freedom and trade has not been matched by greater political freedom and substantial improvements in basic human rights for Vietnamese citizens, including freedom of religion, expression, association, and assembly.

(3) The United States Congress agreed to Vietnam becoming an official member of the World Trade Organization in 2006, amidst assurances that the Government of Vietnam was steadily improving its human rights record and would continue to do so.

(4) Vietnam remains a one-party state, ruled and controlled by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), which continues to deny the right of citizens to change their Government.

(5) Although in recent years the National Assembly of Vietnam has played an increasingly active role as a forum for highlighting local concerns, corruption, and inefficiency, the National Assembly remains subject to the direction of the CPV and the CPV maintains control over the selection of candidates in national and local elections.

(6) The Government of Vietnam forbids public challenge to the legitimacy of the one-party state, restricts freedoms of opinion, the press, and association and tightly limits access to the Internet and telecommunication.

(7) Since Vietnam’s accession to the WTO on January 11, 2007, the Government of Vietnam arbitrarily arrested and detained numerous individuals for their peaceful advocacy of religious freedom, democracy, and human rights, including Father Nguyen Van Ly, human rights lawyers Nguyen Van Dai,

Le Thi Cong Nhan, Cu Huy Ha Vu, and Le Cong Dinh, and bloggers Nguyen Van Hai, Ta Phong Tan, and Le Van Son.

(8) The Government of Vietnam continues to detain, imprison, place under house arrest, convict, or otherwise restrict persons for the peaceful expression of dissenting political or religious views.

(9) The Government of Vietnam continues to detain labor leaders and restricts the right to organize independently.

(10) The Government of Vietnam continues to limit the freedom of religion, restrict the operations of independent religious organizations, and persecute believers whose religious activities the Government regards as a potential threat to its monopoly on power.

(11) Despite reported progress in church openings and legal registrations of religious venues, the Government of Vietnam has halted most positive actions since the Department of State lifted the “country of particular concern” (CPC) designation for Vietnam in November 2006.

(12) Unregistered ethnic minority Protestant congregations, particularly Montagnards in the Central and Northwest Highlands, suffer severe abuses because of actions by the Government of Vietnam, which have included forced renunciations of faith, arrest and harassment, the withholding of social programs provided for the general population, confiscation and destruction of property, subjection to severe beatings, and reported deaths.

(13) There has been a pattern of violent responses by the Government to peaceful prayer vigils and demonstrations by Catholics for the return of Government-confiscated church properties. Protesters have been harassed, beaten, and detained and church properties have been destroyed. Catholics also continue to face some restrictions on selection of clergy, the establishment of seminaries and seminary candidates, and individual cases of travel and church registration.

(14) In May 2010 the village of Con Dau, a Catholic parish in Da Nang, faced escalated violence during a funeral procession as police attempted to prohibit a religious burial in the village cemetery; more than 100 villagers were injured, 62 were arrested, five were tortured, and at least three died.

(15) The Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV) suffers persecution as the Government of Vietnam continues to restrict contacts and movement of senior UBCV clergy for refusing to join the state-sponsored Buddhist organization, the Government restricts expression and assembly, and the Government continues to harass and threaten UBCV monks, nuns, and youth leaders.

(16) The Government of Vietnam continues to suppress the activities of other religious adherents, including Cao Dai and Hoa Hao Buddhists who lack official recognition or have chosen not to affiliate with the state-sanctioned groups, including through the use of detention, imprisonment, and strict Government oversight.

(17) Many Montagnards and others are still serving long prison sentences for their involvement in peaceful demonstrations in 2001, 2002, 2004, and 2008. Montagnards continue to face threats, detention, beatings, forced renunciation of faith, property destruction, restricted movement, and reported deaths at the hands of Government officials.

(18) Ethnic minority Hmong in Northern Vietnam, the Northwest Highlands, and the Central Highlands of Vietnam also suffer restrictions, confiscation of property, abuses,

and persecution by the Government of Vietnam.

(19) The Government of Vietnam restricts Khmer Krom expression, assembly, and association, has confiscated nearly all the Theravada Buddhist temples, controls all Khmer Kaon Buddhist religious organizations and prohibits most peaceful protests.

(20) The Government of Vietnam controls nearly all print and electronic media, including access to the Internet, jams the signals of some foreign radio stations, including Radio Free Asia, and has detained and imprisoned individuals who have posted, published, sent, or otherwise distributed democracy-related materials.

(21) People arrested in Vietnam because of their political or religious affiliations and activities often are not accorded due legal process as they lack full access to lawyers of their choice, may experience closed trials, have often been detained for years without trial, and have been subjected to the use of torture to admit crimes they did not commit or to falsely denounce their own leaders.

(22) Vietnam continues to be a source country for the commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor of women and girls, as well as for men and women legally entering into international labor contracts who subsequently face conditions of debt bondage or forced labor, and is a destination country for child trafficking and continues to have internal human trafficking.

(23) There are many reports of Vietnamese officials and employees participating in, facilitating, condoning, or otherwise being complicit in severe forms of human trafficking.

(24) United States refugee resettlement programs, including the Humanitarian Resettlement (HR) Program, the Orderly Departure Program (ODP), Resettlement Opportunities for Vietnamese Returnees (ROVR) Program, general resettlement of boat people from refugee camps throughout Southeast Asia, the Amerasian Homecoming Act of 1988, and the Priority One Refugee resettlement category, have helped rescue Vietnamese nationals who have suffered persecution on account of their associations with the United States or, in many cases, because of such associations by their spouses, parents, or other family members, as well as other Vietnamese nationals who have been persecuted because of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.

(25) While previous programs have served their purposes well, a significant number of eligible refugees from Vietnam were unfairly denied or excluded, including Amerasians, in some cases by vindictive or corrupt Vietnamese officials who controlled access to the programs, and in others by United States personnel who imposed unduly restrictive interpretations of program criteria. In addition, the Government of Vietnam has denied passports to persons who the United States has found eligible for refugee admission.

(26) The Government of Vietnam reportedly is detaining tens of thousands of people, with some as young as 12 years old, in government-run drug detention centers and treating them as slave laborers.

(27) In 2012, over 150,000 people signed an online petition calling on the Administration to not expand trade with communist Vietnam at the expense of human rights.

(28) Congress has passed numerous resolutions condemning human rights abuses in Vietnam, indicating that although there has been an expansion of relations with the Government of Vietnam, it should not be construed as approval of the ongoing and serious violations of fundamental human rights in Vietnam.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to promote the development of freedom and democracy in Vietnam.

SEC. 3. PROHIBITION ON INCREASED NON-HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM.

(a) ASSISTANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (b), the Federal Government may not provide nonhumanitarian assistance to the Government of Vietnam during any fiscal year in an amount that exceeds the amount of such assistance provided for fiscal year 2012 unless—

(A) with respect to the limitation for fiscal year 2014, the President determines and certifies to Congress, not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, that the requirements of subparagraphs (A) through (G) of paragraph (2) have been met during the 12-month period ending on the date of the certification; and

(B) with respect to the limitation for subsequent fiscal years, the President determines and certifies to Congress, in the most recent annual report submitted pursuant to section 6, that the requirements of subparagraphs (A) through (G) of paragraph (2) have been met during the 12-month period covered by the report.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The requirements of this paragraph are the following:

(A) The Government of Vietnam has made substantial progress toward releasing all political and religious prisoners from imprisonment, house arrest, and other forms of detention.

(B) The Government of Vietnam has made substantial progress toward—

(i) respecting the right to freedom of religion, including the right to participate in religious activities and institutions without interference, harassment, or involvement of the Government, for all of Vietnam's diverse religious communities; and

(ii) returning estates and properties confiscated from the churches and religious communities.

(C) The Government of Vietnam has made substantial progress toward respecting the right to freedom of expression, assembly, and association, including the release of independent journalists, bloggers, and democracy and labor activists.

(D) The Government of Vietnam has made substantial progress toward repealing or revising laws that criminalize peaceful dissent, independent media, unsanctioned religious activity, and nonviolent demonstrations and rallies, in accordance with international standards and treaties to which Vietnam is a party.

(E) The Government of Vietnam has made substantial progress toward allowing Vietnamese nationals free and open access to United States refugee programs.

(F) The Government of Vietnam has made substantial progress toward respecting the human rights of members of all ethnic and minority groups.

(G) Neither any official of the Government of Vietnam nor any agency or entity wholly or partly owned by the Government of Vietnam was complicit in a severe form of trafficking in persons, or the Government of Vietnam took all appropriate steps to end any such complicity and hold such official, agency, or entity fully accountable for its conduct.

(b) EXCEPTION.—

(1) CONTINUATION OF ASSISTANCE IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST.—Notwithstanding the failure of the Government of Vietnam to meet the requirements of subsection (a)(2), the President may waive the application of subsection (a) for any fiscal year if the President determines that the provision to the Government of Vietnam of increased non-

humanitarian assistance would promote the purpose of this Act or is otherwise in the national interest of the United States.

(2) EXERCISE OF WAIVER AUTHORITY.—The President may exercise the authority under paragraph (1) with respect to—

(A) all United States nonhumanitarian assistance to Vietnam; or

(B) one or more programs, projects, or activities of such assistance.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) NONHUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE.—The term “nonhumanitarian assistance” means—

(A) any assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (including programs under title IV of chapter 2 of part I of that Act, relating to the Overseas Private Investment Corporation), other than—

(i) disaster relief assistance, including any assistance under chapter 9 of part I of that Act;

(ii) assistance which involves the provision of food (including monetization of food) or medicine;

(iii) assistance for environmental remediation of dioxin-contaminated sites and related health activities;

(iv) assistance for demining and unexploded ordnance (UXO) remediation, and related health and educational activities;

(v) assistance to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons;

(vi) assistance to combat pandemic diseases;

(vii) assistance for refugees; and

(viii) assistance to combat HIV/AIDS, including any assistance under section 104A of that Act; and

(B) sales, or financing on any terms, under the Arms Export Control Act.

(2) SEVERE FORM OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS.—The term “severe form of trafficking in persons” means any activity described in section 103(8) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-386 (114 Stat. 1470); 22 U.S.C. 7102(8)).

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply with respect to the provision of nonhumanitarian assistance to the Government of Vietnam for fiscal year 2014 and subsequent fiscal years.

SEC. 4. UNITED STATES PUBLIC DIPLOMACY.

(a) RADIO FREE ASIA TRANSMISSIONS TO VIETNAM.—It is the sense of Congress that the United States should take measures to overcome the jamming of Radio Free Asia by the Government of Vietnam and that the Broadcasting Board of Governors should not cut staffing, funding, or broadcast hours for the Vietnamese language services of the Voice of America and Radio Free Asia, which shall be done without reducing any other broadcast language services.

(b) UNITED STATES EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS WITH VIETNAM.—It is the sense of Congress that any programs of educational and cultural exchange between the United States and Vietnam should actively promote progress toward freedom and democracy in Vietnam by providing opportunities to Vietnamese nationals from a wide range of occupations and perspectives to see freedom and democracy in action and, also, by ensuring that Vietnamese nationals who have already demonstrated a commitment to these values are included in such programs.

(c) UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State should strongly oppose, and encourage other members of the United Nations to oppose, the candidacy of Vietnam for membership on the United Nations Human Rights Council for the term beginning in 2014.

SEC. 5. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

(a) COUNTRY OF PARTICULAR CONCERN.—It is the sense of Congress that Vietnam should be designated as a country of particular concern for religious freedom pursuant to section 402(b) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6442(b)).

(b) MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR THE ELIMINATION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING.—It is the sense of Congress that the Government of Vietnam does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance, and this determination should be reflected in the annual report to Congress required pursuant to section 110(b) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7107(b)).

SEC. 6. ANNUAL REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than six months after the date of the enactment of this Act and every 12 months thereafter, the Secretary of State shall submit to Congress a report on the following:

(1) The determination and certification of the President that the requirements of subparagraphs (A) through (G) of section 3(a)(2) have been met, if applicable.

(2) If the President has waived the application of section 3(a) pursuant to section 3(b) during the reporting period—

(A) the national interest with respect to which such a waiver was based;

(B) the amount of increased nonhumanitarian assistance provided to the Government of Vietnam; and

(C) a description of the type and amount of commensurate assistance provided pursuant to section 3(b)(1).

(3) Efforts by the United States Government to promote access by the Vietnamese people to Radio Free Asia transmissions.

(4) Efforts to ensure that programs with Vietnam promote the policy set forth in section 102 of the Human Rights, Refugee, and Other Foreign Policy Provisions Act of 1996 regarding participation in programs of educational and cultural exchange.

(5) Lists of persons believed to be imprisoned, detained, or placed under house arrest, tortured, or otherwise persecuted by the Government of Vietnam due to their pursuit of internationally recognized human rights. In compiling such lists, the Secretary shall exercise appropriate discretion, including concerns regarding the safety and security of, and benefit to, the persons who may be included on the lists and their families. In addition, the Secretary shall include a list of such persons and their families who may qualify for protections under United States refugee programs.

(6) A description of the development of the rule of law in Vietnam, including—

(A) progress toward the development of institutions of democratic governance;

(B) processes by which statutes, regulations, rules, and other legal acts of the Government of Vietnam are developed and become binding within Vietnam;

(C) the extent to which statutes, regulations, rules, administrative and judicial decisions, and other legal acts of the Government of Vietnam are published and are made accessible to the public;

(D) the extent to which administrative and judicial decisions are supported by statements of reasons that are based upon written statutes, regulations, rules, and other legal acts of the Government of Vietnam;

(E) the extent to which individuals are treated equally under the laws of Vietnam without regard to citizenship, race, religion, political opinion, or current or former associations;

(F) the extent to which administrative and judicial decisions are independent of polit-

ical pressure or governmental interference and are reviewed by entities of appellate jurisdiction; and

(G) the extent to which laws in Vietnam are written and administered in ways that are consistent with international human rights standards, including the rights enumerated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

(b) CONTACTS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.—In preparing the report under subsection (a), the Secretary shall, as appropriate, seek out and maintain contacts with nongovernmental organizations and human rights advocates (including Vietnamese-Americans and human rights advocates in Vietnam), including receiving reports and updates from such organizations and evaluating such reports. The Secretary shall also seek to consult with the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom for appropriate sections of the report.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

This bill, which we rise in support of, H.R. 1897, is the Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2013, and it is authored by the chairman of the Africa, Global Human Rights, and Health Subcommittee, Mr. CHRIS SMITH of New Jersey.

And I thought I would just take a moment and, as a prelude, talk about the efforts that Mr. SMITH has put in over the years, not just to the issue of human rights but, in particular, identifying those most at risk, identifying those who are held captive in prison, and taking the personal effort to go and try to visit them in these horrible conditions which they find themselves in.

I remember him saying to me once, Can you imagine what it is like for someone who's a prisoner, a prisoner because he attempts to speak out for some modicum of free speech, or for religious liberty, and he finds himself there in confinement, not knowing, when they open that door, when they come for you, what they might do to you next, not knowing what type of torture might be applied?

It takes a strong constitution for a Member of this House, year after year after year, to continue to go to bat for those who are held in captivity, those who are subject to show trials and then disappear. And part of his efforts have been to pass this particular legislation because he's concerned with the magnitude of what is happening in Vietnam, but also what he has seen with his own eyes with respect to some of those victims.

Over the years, the Foreign Affairs Committee has held many hearings on this subject, and if these hearings have had one consistent theme, it's the deterioration of human rights. And I think this is the thing we really find most regrettable: that at a time when we hoped that Vietnam might change its policies, it actually has regressed.

And we've heard from the witnesses of the use of the government by government agents, by militias—some call them thugs—who use everything from electric batons to metal prods to beat those who are demonstrating in Vietnam and who are in the process of speaking up for religious liberty or speaking up for the rights of free speech.

And now it's gotten to the point that any young person who dares to blog those words, "freedom of speech," those words, "democracy," anyone who publishes material promoting democracy or criticizing totalitarian rule, faces so many years in jail. It is so disproportionate, it is so ridiculous to put a young person in jail for 6 or 7 years because they blog on democracy.

But the thing that I think CHRIS SMITH and I and others here, ELIOT ENGEL, find so objectionable is the physical abuse that they are subject to in confinement.

So, as we say, religious freedom is also under attack with freedom of speech. Residents of Con Dau, Da Nang, have suffered severe violence. I've seen some of the photographs of the consequences of these beatings with batons and electric rods during a May assault at the hands, again, of Vietnamese Government officials. And again, this was because the parishioners attempted to protect their historic Catholic cemetery from seizure by the government.

We have over 350 Montagnard Christians who remain in prison for their beliefs, and other religious groups.

When I was in Vietnam, I talked to the leader of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, the venerable Thich Quang Do, who was under house arrest, and Le Quang Liem, another. He was the leader of the Hoa Hao Buddhists at the time. He has subsequently, in a protest, been beaten so badly I don't think he can carry on a conversation today.

The Cao Dai Buddhists face severe persecution from the government, the communist government there.

So what brings us here tonight is that Vietnam has actually taken steps backwards. As we heard from the witnesses who testified before our committee, in the first 6 weeks of this year, 40 dissidents have been convicted in show trials, more than all of last year. That's how bad things are deteriorating.

And that means that the communist government is not only eclipsing their past bad performance, but, paradoxically, the government is also actively pursuing a seat on the U.N. Human Rights Council. That is why we need to

take this step and why passage of the Vietnam Human Rights Act is so important and why we've got to use what leverage we have. And part of that leverage is nonhumanitarian U.S. assistance to Vietnam. And we do that unless the Vietnamese Government improves its respect for human rights to meet specified requirements.

Let's send a message to that regime that the status quo is unacceptable. This bill does that. I strongly urge its passage.

And once again, I strongly commend and thank its author for his perseverance on this issue.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I might consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1897. I'd like to thank the sponsor of this legislation, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), and once again thank the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. ROYCE, for their leadership in advocating for human rights in Vietnam.

Despite Vietnam's transition to a more open economy in recent years, political and religious freedoms for the people of Vietnam remain severely curtailed.

Just last week, President Obama hosted the President of Vietnam for a visit. I was there for the luncheon at the State Department, and I am pleased that he urged the Vietnamese leader to respect freedom of expression, freedom of religion, and freedom of assembly. At that very luncheon, I sat next to one of the Vietnam ministers and urged the same thing to him as well.

As the United States and Vietnam build a closer and more cooperative relationship, we must continue to be candid in calling for more progress in protecting the human rights and civil liberties of the Vietnamese people.

I certainly remember the Vietnam War, as I know many of my colleagues do, and it seems a bit strange that the United States and Vietnam are, in many ways, allied and working together. That's fine. But human rights is so important to us, and it's not something we can just sweep under the rug.

This legislation, the Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2013, takes a step in the right direction by prohibiting an increase in nonhumanitarian assistance to Vietnam above fiscal year 2012 levels unless the Government of Vietnam makes significant progress on critical human rights issues.

The bill makes it clear to Vietnam that the only factor limiting U.S. aid is positive action by the Vietnamese Government on political, human, and religious rights.

The Government of Vietnam has an important choice to make: Will it protect human rights and provide religious and political freedom to its citizens, or will it shirk those responsibilities and forsake the closer relation-

ship that it wants with the United States?

Again, I think a closer relationship with Vietnam is something that I would like to see. But, you know what? We have principles, and the Vietnamese have to respect those principles. We respect them. They need to respect us.

So I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, and the author of this bill.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I want to thank, first of all, you for your very kind remarks, but also for moving this legislation very swiftly through the full committee, along with ELIOT ENGEL's full support, and the chairwoman emeritus, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you for your steadfast support for human rights, now presiding over this session.

And, Mr. Chairman, I do want to thank you for being a champion on behalf of the dissidents, the bloggers, the religious dissidents, political and religious in Vietnam, who suffer daily beatings at the hands of an increasingly absurd and worsening dictatorship.

Vietnam is in a race to the bottom with some of the dictatorships around the world, including Cuba, including China, Somalia, and other places where people's human rights are systematically trashed by the regimes.

I do rise to ask, respectfully, that Members support the Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2013. The purpose of this bipartisan legislation is simple: to send a clear, strong, and compelling message to the increasingly repressive communist regime in power in Vietnam that says that the United States is serious about combating human rights abuse in Vietnam.

Underscoring the worsening situation in Vietnam, John Sifton of Human Rights Watch testified at a June 4 hearing that I chaired, and he noted that "in the first few months of 2013, more people have been convicted in political trials as in the whole of the last year." And that has only gotten worse as each week passes in Vietnam.

Reporters Without Borders have put out their numbers, and there's at least 35 netizens, bloggers, journalists who write online who have been incarcerated by this dictatorship.

I'll never forget, on one particular trip to Vietnam, I met with Dr. Pham Son; I met with his wife. He was in prison. And what was his crime? He went on U.S. Embassy Hanoi, took an essay entitled, "What is Democracy?" translated it, and rebroadcast, resent it out online, and for that he got a multi-year sentence in jail.

I met with his wife, who lived in great fear that they would go after her

as well. And certainly, when I had dinner with her one night, sitting as far away as Chairman ROYCE, at the next table at a hotel were three bully boys from the—three thugs from the secret police of Vietnam, very, very visibly standing up and taking pictures to let us know that they were watching. Of course, I took their picture as well. But that's the kind of intimidation campaign this wonderful wife of a dissident was experiencing.

Boat People at the SOS suggest that there are well over 625 political prisoners and religious prisoners, as we meet here tonight, who are suffering. And of course that number often goes up. One might be let out, two more incarcerated by this dictatorship.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 1897 is designed to promote the development of freedom of democracy in Vietnam. The bill will bring much-needed scrutiny to a seriously deteriorating situation. It stipulates that the United States can increase nonhumanitarian assistance to Vietnam above the 2012 levels only if the President is able to certify that the Government of Vietnam has made substantial progress in establishing a democracy and promoting human rights, including respecting religious freedom and the release of political prisoners and religious prisoners, repealing and revising laws that criminalize peaceful dissent, respecting human rights of members of all ethnic groups—there's an enormous amount of racism in Vietnam, particularly directed at people who happen to be Montagnard, and others—taking all appropriate steps, including the prosecution of government officials to end government complicity in that nefarious practice called human trafficking. There are also very clear benchmarks articulated in the legislation.

Madam Speaker, in the last 4 months alone, on April 11 and June 4, I've held two more congressional hearings on this deteriorating situation. We heard stories about individuals and groups who are being persecuted in a variety of ways. Their testimony confirmed that religious, political, and ethnic persecution has worsened, and that there is complicity by leadership, by the people who are in the Government of Vietnam, in human trafficking.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, in 2013, in their report, noted:

The Government of Vietnam continues to expand control over all religious activities, severely restricting independent religious practice and to repress individuals and religious groups it views as challenging their authority.

□ 2000

The Commission says very candidly that Vietnam ought to be a country of particular concern—a CPC designation—pursuant to the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. Unfortunately, that was removed by President Bush—a misguided move on his part—in 2006, when it was thought that the bilateral trade agreement and the

permanent normal trading relations might lead to a matriculation from a dictatorship to a democracy. Things actually have gotten worse since this government got this trade benefit. Rights have suffered and people—real casualties—have endured unspeakable hardships.

Mr. Speaker, on several human rights trips to Vietnam, I have met, as has Chairman ROYCE and other Members—and I know when you meet these people you are forever moved—courageous leaders who struggle, sacrifice and endure numbing hardships, including torture, to promote fundamental human rights in their beloved country. Many of these remarkable individuals hale from virtually every denomination of faith, whether it be Christian, Falun Gong, or Buddhists, and suffer, again, horrifically because of their faith.

I met with the Venerable Thich Quang Do, under pagoda arrest—a great Buddhist leader who has been relegated to his pagoda. He couldn't step one foot outside of that pagoda without the secret police rushing in. He told me if he took one step out with me to say good-bye, there would be an onslaught of these bully boys who would push and shove or mistreat him.

I met with Father Ly when he was under house arrest before being re-arrested. He was a great democracy activist who was being so callously mistreated by this dictatorship. And he is only one of many.

It is not just the religious leaders in particular or individuals who are victimized by the government. Entire communities are also targeted by the regime. Mr. Tien Tran testified at our April 11 meeting and told my subcommittee of the brutality experienced by the Con Dau Catholic Parish, which has been repressed like you can't believe, Mr. Speaker. Individuals have been beaten to a pulp. Some have died. And they have confiscated their property. So they're kleptomaniacs as well.

Also, at the April 11 meeting we heard from the sister of a Vietnamese woman who was forced to work in a brothel in Russia with 14 other Vietnamese women. When there was an effort made by the Russian Government to liberate those women, it was the Embassy of Vietnam in Moscow that tipped off the traffickers—because they were complicit with them—to ensure that these women were not liberated but continued to be hurt by the traffickers. There was another one dealing with women who were trafficked to Jordan. Those officials of the Vietnamese Government were complicit in that as well.

Again, that's only the tip of the iceberg of this terrible complicity with heinous crimes against women.

I think the State Department report on trafficking was a good one, but they made a gross exception when it came to Vietnam, and actually improved their grade, when the information even in the narrative about Vietnam and the TIP report would have suggested otherwise.

I'm the prime author of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and worked to create those minimum standards. It's appalling that Vietnam is not where it ought to be, a Tier 3 country, an egregious violator subject to sanctions.

This will be the fourth time, if this bill passes, Mr. Speaker, that we've been able to get the Vietnam Human Rights Act passed. In 2004, 2007, and last year, 2012, iterations of this bill have gotten over to the Senate, only to die through holds and other very non-democratic means of suppressing the will of the Senate in working on this bill. I hope that changes.

We have seen a deterioration, as my colleagues and I have all pointed out tonight, in the human rights situation in Vietnam. It is time to stand with the oppressed people who are yearning to be free in Vietnam and to stand up against this dictatorship. It's time to meet with them, talk with them, and talk to President Sang, who was here last week to meet with President Obama, and lay down very specific benchmarks on simple respect for the fundamental liberties of people in Vietnam who just yearn to be free and to experience their God-given rights.

Mr. ENGEL. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. In closing, I, again, want to thank my colleague, Mr. SMITH from New Jersey, for his dedication to human rights in Vietnam, and for human rights in general, and for not only his work on this bill but, again, the time and energy that he has put into attempting to intervene on behalf of those who have been subject to these beatings that he has cited, to this maltreatment, to these long prison terms.

Last week, we had President Sang of Vietnam visiting Washington for the first official visit, I think, since 2007. While we've been assured that human rights were on the agenda during these meetings with the President and with the State Department, we did all we could to make certain that this time they were on the agenda. But I think the Vietnamese people need more than talk. And that is why we need to pass this legislation. It's a sign to all Vietnamese people that the U.S. is committed to the cause of human rights, but it is also leverage that can be used to guarantee some measure of attention from the regime.

This is Congress's chance to speak to those Vietnamese people who are yearning for freedom. It's our chance to do so by vocally supporting a human rights agenda in Vietnam. We've got to get this back on the agenda.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this important bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I fully support HR 1897—the Vietnam Human Rights Act and I thank my distinguished colleague from the Foreign Affairs Committee and champion of human rights—CHRIS SMITH for bringing this legislation forward and I am happy to cosponsor this bill.

We all want to see a prosperous, democratic and free Vietnam under which all people enjoy equal opportunities and fundamental freedoms.

This bill prohibits U.S. non-humanitarian assistance to the government of Vietnam unless the President certifies to Congress that Vietnam has made substantial progress respecting political, media, and religious freedoms, minority rights, access to U.S. refugee programs, and actions to end trafficking in persons and the release of political prisoners.

I continue to be concerned about the deteriorating human rights situation in Vietnam. The United States should stop sending American taxpayer money to governments that deny its citizens even the most basic human rights. Instead, we should leverage our assistance to push these governments into implementing democratic reforms, improving their human rights practices and allowing their citizens their fundamental rights, and that is what this bill will do.

My husband Dexter is a Vietnam combat veteran and former Army Ranger who was wounded defending the ideals of freedom and democracy—not just for Americans, but for all those who seek them. As the leading nation of the free world, the United States must stand with the Vietnamese people who are being brutally oppressed by their authoritarian government so that they may all live in a free and democratic country.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1897, the Vietnam Human Rights Act. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation, and I thank my colleague Mr. SMITH for introducing it.

This bill would prohibit any increase in U.S. non-humanitarian assistance to Vietnam until substantial progress has been made with regard to political and religious freedom for the citizens of Vietnam. The bill also expresses the sense of Congress that Vietnam should be designated as a Country of Particular Concern for religious freedom, and that the government does not meet the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking. In addition, the bill urges the Secretary of State to strongly oppose Vietnam's candidacy for membership on the United Nations Human Rights Council.

I strongly support this bill. Vietnam's record on human rights is appalling. The government in Vietnam continues to repress its citizens, including peaceful democracy activists, bloggers, and religious minorities. Reporters Without Borders ranks Vietnam as 172nd of 179 countries, only two places above China, and the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has once again identified Vietnam as a "Tier 1 Country of Particular Concern," grouping it with nations such as North Korea, Burma, and Iran. The Vietnamese government has clearly indicated by its actions that it lacks a meaningful commitment to reform. This Congress needs to send a message to the government that the status quo is unacceptable, and if the Vietnamese government wants to continue to engage with the United States, these violations must end. I support this bill, and I urge my colleagues to do so as well.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MESSER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1897, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ENCOURAGING PEACE AND REUNIFICATION ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 41) encouraging peace and reunification on the Korean Peninsula, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 41

Whereas the Republic of Korea (in this resolution referred to as "South Korea") and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (in this resolution referred to as "North Korea") have never formally ended hostilities and have been technically in a state of war since the Armistice Agreement was signed on July 27, 1953;

Whereas the United States, representing the United Nations Forces Command which was a signatory to the Armistice Agreement, and with 28,500 of its troops currently stationed in South Korea, has a stake in the progress towards peace and reunification on the Korean Peninsula;

Whereas progress towards peace and reunification on the Korean Peninsula would mean greater security and prosperity for the region and the world;

Whereas, at the end of World War II, Korea officially gained independence from Japanese rule, as agreed to at the Cairo Conference on November 22, 1943, through November 26, 1943;

Whereas, on August 10, 1945, the Korean Peninsula was temporarily divided along the 38th parallel into two military occupation zones commanded by the United States and the Soviet Union;

Whereas, on June 25, 1950, communist North Korea attacked the South, thereby initiating the Korean War and diminishing prospects for a peaceful unification of Korea;

Whereas, during the Korean War, more than 36,000 members of the United States Armed Forces were killed and approximately 1,789,000 members of the United States Armed Forces served in-theater along with the South Korean forces and 20 other members of the United Nations to secure peace on the Korean Peninsula and in the Asia-Pacific region;

Whereas, since the end of the Korean War era, the United States Armed Forces have remained in South Korea to promote regional peace;

Whereas provocations by the Government of North Korea in recent years have escalated tension and instability in the Asia-Pacific region;

Whereas North Korea's human rights abuses, suppression of dissent, and hostility to South Korea remain significant obstacles to peace and reunification on the Korean Peninsula;

Whereas North Korea's economic policies have led to extreme economic privation for its citizens, whose quality of life ranks among the world's lowest;

Whereas North Korea's proliferation of nuclear and missile technology threatens international peace and stability;

Whereas North Korea has systematically violated numerous International Atomic Energy Agency and United Nations Security Council Resolutions with respect to its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs;

Whereas the refusal of the Government of North Korea to denuclearize disrupts peace and security on the Korean Peninsula;

Whereas, beginning in 2003, the United States, along with the two Koreas, Japan, the People's Republic of China, and the Russian Federation, have engaged in six rounds of Six-Party Talks aimed at the verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and finding a peaceful resolution to the security concerns resulting from North Korea's nuclear development;

Whereas the three-mile wide buffer zone between the two Koreas, known as the Demilitarized Zone, or DMZ, is the most heavily armed border in the world;

Whereas the Korean War separated more than 10,000,000 Korean family members, including 100,000 Korean Americans who, after 60 years of separation, are still waiting to see their families in North Korea;

Whereas reunification remains a long-term goal of South Korea;

Whereas South Korea and North Korea are both full members of the United Nations, whose stated purpose includes maintaining international peace and security, and to that end "take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace";

Whereas the Governments and people of the United States and South Korea have continuously stood shoulder-to-shoulder to promote and defend international peace and security, economic prosperity, human rights, and the rule of law both on the Korean Peninsula and beyond, and the denuclearization of North Korea; and

Whereas July 27, 2013, marks the 60th anniversary of the Armistice Agreement of the Korean War: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) recognizes the historical importance of the Korean War, which began on June 25, 1950;

(2) honors the noble service and sacrifice of members of the United States Armed Forces and the armed forces of allied countries that have served in Korea since 1950;

(3) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to its alliance with South Korea for the betterment of peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula; and

(4) calls on North Korea to respect the fundamental human rights of its citizens, abandon and dismantle its nuclear weapons program, and end its nuclear and missile proliferation as integral steps toward peace and eventual reunification.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), the author of this bill and a hero of the Korean War, who served his country with valor during that tough campaign. After surviving an onslaught by waves of Chinese troops, he led his surviving comrades, while wounded, to safety from behind enemy lines, for which he was awarded a Purple Heart and also a Bronze Star for Valor.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I was prepared to respond to the chairman and ranking member for their legislative courtesies they had extended to me. I appreciate the tribute being paid to me which, unusually, I was awkwardly unprepared for. But I do want to thank the gentleman for his friendship in more ways than just this resolution, as well as Tom Sheehy, who worked with your staff, and, of course, my friend from New York, J.J., on the committee staff. He guided to make certain that this almost-legislatively impossible resolution was so expediently brought up to be considered by this august House.

On Saturday last, the President of the United States, along with our congressional colleague, who is now the Secretary of the Department of Defense, and the Secretaries of all of the Armed Forces groups, got together to honor the veterans of the Korean War. It was a sight to see so many Korean veterans from so many different parts of the country.

They were reminded by the President that we had been labeled—those that participated—as what was referred to as "the forgotten war." Because most all of the world knew about the importance of America being involved in saving democracy in World War II. And Vietnam, for good or bad, everyone knew people that went there. But somehow, in the middle of that, no one really missed us or knew where Korea was—or it didn't appear there was too much concern. When we did return, unlike the Vietnam veterans, who really had unfairly been treated, but fortunately for us, we were never missed, except by our families and friends. People never knew where we were. The Congress was not as kind to us as they had been to the veterans.

Having said all of that, it was a wonderful tribute. Veterans turned out from all over. Certainly, there were comrades that were part of the 20 countries that were part of the United Nations. And when the North Koreans invaded South Korea, those of us that were called to go to South Korea to defend them were going to a country that we never knew to fight for a people that we never met and for causes that were not well known.

And the war has never really been called a war. It's never been called a truce. It still is a division between these people. But as a result of the United States and the United Nations' efforts, millions of lives lost—54,000