

households gave a single dollar, they could send every single graduating senior in the city to college. And so Dollars for Scholars was born.

With the deep faith and compassion of a tight-knit community, Dr. Fradkin began collecting as little as \$1 from his neighbors and friends to provide scholarships to the local students. Over four decades later, what began as a card table operation in a determined Massachusetts town became Scholarship America, an organization that has awarded nearly \$3 billion in scholarships across 38 States.

At 92 years old, Dr. Fradkin continues to fight for that city that he loves and the students that have made his life's work. Tonight, I congratulate him and his wife, Charlotte, on a recognition deeply deserved.

SEQUESTRATION

(Mr. NADLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, when the Republicans refer to President Obama's sequestration, they must think that no one in the country remembers the events of the last 2 years. Remember that 2 years ago, the Republicans blackmailed the entire country by saying that they would not permit the debt ceiling to be increased and they would force the country to default on its debts—and in fact destroy the economy—unless we cut the budget by \$2.4 trillion. We cut it by \$1.2 trillion. But no one could figure out, no one could agree how to cut another \$1.2 trillion, so both parties put in the sequester to kick the can down the road on this entirely artificial demand for an extra \$1.2 trillion in cuts. That's why we're here now facing an economic catastrophe—because of the blackmail of an even worse catastrophe of failing to pay our bills, of calling into question the full faith and credit of the United States. That's what got us to this point. The only way to get us out is either to just repeal the entire sequester entirely—because we've made enough budget cuts—or to say, all right, we'll do half the budget, half the \$1.2 trillion in cuts, and half by adopting loophole-closing measures that the Republicans themselves supported last year.

SEQUESTER REBUTTAL

(Mr. FARENTHOLD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Speaker, I was sitting in the back of the House, listening to some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, and I just had to rise to answer some of the things that they just said.

The gentlewoman from Texas was talking about sequester and the effect that it would have on children. I'd like to remind the gentlewoman from Texas

that the effect that the millions—or billions and trillions—of dollars of debt we are leaving on the backs of our children is going to have an equally negative effect.

This sequester—we are accused of not doing anything on this side. We have passed two bills out of this House doing away with the sequester, but they have not been acted on by the President or the Senate. We have done our job.

The President has asked for a balanced approach. He got his increase in revenue; it's now time to come up with some cuts. Sequester isn't the way to do it, but we cannot give up on getting rid of wasteful spending here in Washington.

HONORING CONGRESSMAN SAM JOHNSON ON 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF RELEASE FROM PRISONER OF WAR CAMP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about a remarkable individual that serves with us in the House of Representatives.

We are really surrounded by remarkable people, 435 individuals who came from other walks of life. Most of them had other careers before they came to the House of Representatives. But tonight, we're going to talk about the anniversary of one individual. Because, you see, 40 years ago, Colonel SAM JOHNSON was released as a prisoner of war in Vietnam. He had spent 7 years as a prisoner of war in Vietnam.

It all started when he was flying one of his F-4s, being a pilot. This was not a new experience. I mean, after all, he had served in Korea and flew 62 combat missions in an F-86 Sabre called Shirley's Texas Tornado, after his wife, Shirley. So he flew 62 in the Korean war; Vietnam, he's on his 25th mission flying an F-4 Phantom. He left Laotian airspace, came into North Vietnam, and he was shot down by ground fire. This was not his first tour of duty in Vietnam; it was his second tour of duty. SAM JOHNSON is an American warrior.

After he was shot down on this day, April 16, 1966, his life took a turn, a different turn. When he parachuted out of his plane, his shoulder was injured—of course the Vietnamese, they didn't do anything to help his injuries, and he still carries some of those wounds from

his prisoner days and from when he crashed or when he came back down to Earth in that parachute. He was captured by the North Vietnamese Army and he was put in a prisoner of war camp.

The North Vietnamese probably developed prisoner of war camps better than anyplace on Earth. They were hard, they were tough, they were mean, and not everybody survived those camps. So he spent 7 years as a prisoner of war, and they interrogated him every day. But SAM never gave in. In fact, the Vietnamese called him "Die Hard." He was the first person that I know of that was called "Die Hard" because he would never die no matter how hard they beat him.

He was so obstinate, Mr. Speaker, that they sent him to the infamous "Hanoi Hilton"—satire, of course; it was everything but a hotel—and put him in a section called Alcatraz, where he and 11 obstinate prisoners of war were put together. SAM JOHNSON was so tough, would never break, would never give information, that they finally put him in solitary confinement.

Mr. Speaker, I want to describe the cell to you that he spent 4 years of his life in—solitary confinement. It was 3 feet by 9 feet. It's about the size of this table, 3 feet, over to about that podium, 9 feet. That was his cell. That's where he was for 4 years. They left the light on constantly. At night, they would come in and put him in leg irons—4 years solitary confinement. But he never gave up.

He learned how to communicate with other prisoners by tapping on the wall. He learned the names of the other 374 members, memorized their names so that when he got out—because he expected to get out—that he could tell their families that they were there.

But he never broke. He was never broken. He continued to do what he was supposed to do to honor America and represent America, but he never gave information to America's enemies.

So tonight, we commemorate his 40th anniversary of being released from that prisoner of war camp when the war was over. Seven years of his life he gave to this country in a camp that most of us would never survive.

At this time, I'd like to yield to the majority leader, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR).

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. Speaker, we are here tonight to honor and celebrate our friend, SAM JOHNSON, the gentleman from Texas that we all know as a friend and colleague, but that I think America knows as a hero.

SAM, as the gentleman from Texas points out, was awarded two Silver Stars and two Purple Hearts, among his many other decorations, for fighting bravely for freedom, and for 7 years SAM JOHNSON was held as a prisoner of war by the North Vietnamese—the horror of which none of us will ever know

but lies deep within the soul of this great American patriot.

□ 1930

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the 40th anniversary of his freedom is reason for celebration and is the reason we are gathered here in the Chamber tonight. SAM's heroism and bravery are acts for which all Americans owe him a debt of gratitude.

But I'd also like to talk about our friend, SAM. Mr. Speaker, it's no exaggeration when I say I believe that SAM JOHNSON is the moral compass of our conference. He considers every issue fairly, and he's never afraid to reach across the aisle and work with Members there or on our side of the aisle or with freshman Members, as he did with me when I first came to Congress in 2001.

As many of us know, SAM and Shirley JOHNSON recently lost their son, Bob. All of us would like to extend our deepest sympathy to the Johnsons for their loss. Over these past weeks, we all saw anew the grace and humility that SAM carries with him every day.

Mr. Speaker, that's SAM. America and his beloved Texas are better places because of his decades-long service. And my life, Mr. Speaker, has been immeasurably enriched by our friendship.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the majority leader for his important words.

I now yield to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. PETE SESSIONS.

Mr. SESSIONS. I appreciate the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for leading the discussion tonight in honor of the great Member of Congress from the Third Congressional District, SAM JOHNSON. I want to take a few minutes tonight to not just acknowledge how great SAM JOHNSON is to the Texas delegation but really to highlight what he means to this body.

SAM JOHNSON has been a Member of this body since 1991. He came in a special election as a result of a hard-fought race in Dallas, Texas, when Congressman Steve Bartlett stepped down. And SAM JOHNSON came to the United States Congress not just with a background of 29 years of serving in the United States Air Force as being a top gun pilot and a man who had served this country in war and at the Hanoi Hilton, but he came here with thoughts and ideas about his home of Texas, representing Collin County and Dallas County, Texas.

It's not just a high honor for us to have SAM as our Member of Congress at that time and currently, but SAM came to this body with ideas that he felt like would make our country stronger and better. More than just respect for the flag and respect for the men and women that serve in our military, but really for respect for human life and individuals, he believes that individuals make our country stronger and better; and he has devoted his life, the times we fly back and forth, SAM talks about how important people are and people's dreams, people back home. He remem-

bers not just the stories about individuals, but I think he idolizes hard work and people who commit themselves to the sacrifice for others.

SAM is known in this body for several years now as the most admired Member of Congress. And he's not the most admired Member of Congress because of just being a nice man—and that he is—but really for standing up and talking about the values of this country, the values of this country, what we stand for and how he wants it to be even better.

He and Shirley have, for years, stood up across Texas and across this country and talked about how important we are if we sacrifice to make others' lives better, if we leave our country better than the way we found it. And so tonight on behalf of the people of the 32nd Congressional District, which is Dallas, which is right next to Congressman SAM JOHNSON, I stand up and applaud the life of SAM JOHNSON, his service to our country, not just the United States Air Force and the American people, but also the man that calls home Plano, Texas, and the Third Congressional District, our great friend and colleague, Congressman SAM JOHNSON.

So, SAM, congratulations. Congratulations for not just a job well done but for the 40 years that you have been back home and what you have done to your life as a result of the service for what you believe was the right thing to do.

I thank the gentleman from Texas, Judge POE, for the time.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman. The gentleman, Mr. SESSIONS, points out a little-known fact that after Colonel SAM JOHNSON got out of that prisoner-of-war camp, he stayed in the Air Force and served a total of 29 years. He also served in the famed Thunderbirds. He has quite a remarkable Air Force career.

I now yield to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. RALPH HALL, the senior member of the Texas delegation and the House of Representatives.

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. I do rise, as others, today for a great American and a very dear friend, SAM JOHNSON. It's been said over and over again about Operation Homecoming, but that's one of the great days that I remember. And I'm sure it's in SAM's mind and heart and that he appreciates all of us here getting to say a few words about him.

He served, as you know, for 29 years in the United States Air Force flying combat missions in both Korea and Vietnam, captured by enemy forces, going to spend 7 years in captivity as a prisoner of war, including 42 months of solitary confinement. Despite that confinement, SAM never lost his faith in God. He continued to show leadership and courage, helping to teach other prisoners how to survive. Through those 7 years, SAM remained committed to staying strong and helping other fellow soldiers doing the same thing.

Finally, on February 12, 1973, he returned to U.S. soil with other fellow American servicemen in what was known as Operation Homecoming. Once home, he was united with his wife, Shirley, who faithfully waited and prayed for SAM's safe return.

It's a fact about SAM's fighting for our country. He also suffered for our country. This isn't the prime reason his constituents vote for him, though it would be enough; but SAM is completely aware of the rules of the House of Representatives and one of the Speaker's leading whips. When SAM speaks, we listen.

SAM and Shirley suffered the loss of a son the last week of February. I hope they felt the love and grief we shared with them and the family. We know that grief is addressed in the Bible. Love spawns grief, and without love there's little grief. There is much love in the Johnson family for their neighbors and friends. For the approximately 7 years SAM and the others suffered in the Hanoi Hilton, a 4-letter word was always on their mind: home.

In closing, let me just say that SAM continues to fight on behalf of our veterans and members of the armed services. After 40 years, he continues to serve the American people with the same strength and resolve that he demonstrated in Vietnam. I'm truly honored to have the opportunity to serve with such an exemplary American and to call him a friend. SAM's commitment to his country, faith, and family are values that every American should live by. I ask all my colleagues, of course, to vote "aye."

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a great American and a dear friend of mine, SAM JOHNSON, in honor of the 40th Anniversary of "Operation Homecoming." On February 12, 1973, 591 American prisoners of war, including SAM JOHNSON, returned from Vietnam after being held as prisoners for seven years. SAM is the epitome of a true American hero. His unwavering dedication to freedom and to serving his country exemplifies what it means to be a patriot.

SAM served for 29 years in the United States Air Force, flying combat missions in both the Korean and Vietnam Wars. In 1966, during one of his missions, SAM's plane was shot down over North Vietnam. He was captured by enemy forces and would go on to spend seven years in captivity as a Prisoner of War, including 42 months of solitary confinement.

"After his capture, SAM was sent with 10 other POWs to a special facility where they were kept in solitary confinement from 1967–1969. Self-named the "Alcatraz Gang," they were sent there for their strong resistance against their captors. They were shackled in legcuffs every night and endured continued torture. SAM never lost hope, and remained unbreakable against his torturers. SAM, along with the other members of the "Alcatraz Gang," was moved back to the infamous Hanoi Hilton where he served out the remainder of his time in Vietnam.

Despite his confinement, SAM never lost his faith in God. He continued to show leadership and courage, helping to teach other prisoners

how to survive. Throughout those seven years, SAM remained committed to staying strong and helping other fellow soldiers to do the same.

Finally on February 12, 1973, SAM returned to U.S. soil with other fellow American servicemen in what was known as "Operation Homecoming." Once home, he was reunited with his wife Shirley, who faithfully waited and prayed for SAM's safe return.

SAM and I shared Collin County for many years in the U.S. Congress and we would often speak to constituents together. I always dreaded to compare my war service as a fighter pilot with the Navy with SAM's service. His record, every phase, was so much more admirable and dangerous than my several years, that I felt like I had run off to Canada.

As a fact, about SAM's fighting for our country, he also suffered for our country. This isn't the prime reason his constituents vote for him, though it would be enough. SAM is completely aware of the rules of the House of Representatives and is one of the Speaker's leading Whips. When SAM speaks, we listen.

SAM and Shirley suffered the loss of a son the last week of February, and I hope they felt the love and grief we shared with them and the family. We know that grief is addressed in the Bible. Love spawns grief, and without love, there is little grief. There is much love in the Johnson family, and their neighbors and friends.

For the approximately seven years SAM and the others suffered in the Hanoi Hilton, a four-letter word was always on their mind: HOME.

My dad was in WWI, and he went overseas with the same soldiers, and returned back to the USA with many of those he fought with. To show how much they loved home and the sight of the Statue of Liberty, as they entered the New York Harbor, one of my dad's friends said to the Statue of Liberty, "Old lady, if you ever see me again, you are going to have to turn around." That's what going home meant to most Veterans of the various wars.

SAM continues to fight on behalf of our veterans and members of the Armed Services. After 40 years, he continues to serve the American people with the same strength and resolve that he demonstrated in Vietnam. I am truly honored to have the opportunity to serve with such an exemplary American, and to call him "friend." SAM's commitment to his country, faith, and family, are values that every American should live by. I ask all my colleagues present today to join me in honoring such an outstanding American hero, SAM JOHNSON.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman for his wise words.

I now yield to the gentlewoman from Fort Worth, Texas, Ms. KAY GRANGER.

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, we're here tonight to honor our friend and colleague, SAM JOHNSON, a man of service, a man of faith, and a man of tremendous courage.

SAM was released from captivity 40 years ago as part of Operation Homecoming. It was a plan to bring home POWs. As part of the Paris Peace Accords of 1973, 591 POWs were brought home as part of that operation, and our dear friend, SAM, was one of those.

Sometimes there are people that do great things but very few people know about it, people in their family or a few close friends. SAM JOHNSON's life has

not been that way because it's been recognized because his achievements are so outstanding and he's been such a leader. So I think those recognitions deserve to be repeated tonight: two Silver Stars, two Legions of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, a Bronze Star with Valor, two Purple Hearts, four Air Medals, three Outstanding Unit Awards; and the Congressional Medal of Honor Society gave JOHNSON their highest civilian accolade, the National Patriot Award.

SAM, it's such an honor for all of us to serve in this House with you, be a friend of yours and learn from you. Thank you for all your service.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. MICHAEL CONAWAY.

□ 1940

Mr. CONAWAY. I thank the gentleman from Texas for setting up this evening to honor our friend and colleague, SAM JOHNSON.

SAM's career and exploits have been talked about several times now, and I won't repeat those, but there are a couple of things I would like to highlight. One, not only was he an Air Force pilot, but he was also a member of the elite Thunderbirds, which is the Air Force's best of the best. That is a demonstration team that goes across this country and around the world representing the Air Force, representing our country.

Another thing about SAM is that he had the good fortune of marrying Shirley. If you read SAM's book, "Captive Warriors," one of the most poignant parts of that book is Shirley's unwavering, steadfast belief that SAM was still alive. There was a long time while SAM was in captivity that we didn't have proof of life. Shirley was being told by some very influential folks that SAM had perished, and she just flat out simply refused to believe that, throughout all of the evidence. And so for a number of years there she held that vigil, and it was rewarded, of course, by SAM's coming home some 40 years ago this week.

I don't have a lot of heroes on this Earth. SAM JOHNSON is one of them. If I ever get around to writing memoirs and somebody asked me what am I the most proud of of service in this House, one of those things will be being able to say that I'm among the select and privileged group to have served with SAM JOHNSON. He is a warrior of the best order, and it is with the most heartfelt emotions that I can muster that I thank him for his service. If I count the years correctly, it's 29 in the Air Force, 10 years in the Texas Legislature, and some 22 years here. That's 61 years. I don't know how old SAM is, but that has got to be about half his life anyway.

So it is with great pleasure that I thank SAM for his long service to our country. Thank you, SAM.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman from Texas.

I now yield to the gentleman from Round Rock, Texas, Judge JOHN CARTER.

Mr. CARTER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

SAM JOHNSON is an American hero, and everybody in this House knows that. He's an American hero for all kinds of ways that he served this country. Many of the people here are going to talk about those ways, and every one of them are important.

I read SAM's book. It's an awesome book. It makes you cry at points; it makes you struggle. But it also expresses the kind of a man and, quite frankly, the kind of a family SAM JOHNSON has.

SAM was a guy with a broken leg, dislocated shoulders, who looked them straight in the eye and spit in their face and told them to take their best shot. And he suffered for it, he suffered unmercifully for it, but he never gave in to the enemy. He always stood his ground, to his detriment, and it harmed him in so many physical ways. And yet the thing that makes me always tear up is you read the part of the book where SAM steps off that plane, when we finally repatriated our prisoners, and saluted and said, Colonel SAM JOHNSON reporting for duty, sir. And SAM reports for duty.

People say, Who do you want to have your back in a foxhole? But people also say, Who do you want to have your back in Congress? I want SAM JOHNSON to have my back in Congress. He's a friend. He's one of my best friends in this Congress. I've gotten to know him very well. He and I go to a Christian retreat together almost every year.

And that's one of the things you notice from the book. SAM didn't talk about himself. He talked about when they took him out and he thought, This time they're going to shoot me. He prayed to God that he could stand there and be a man. And they went, Ready, aim, fire, click, and one more time they didn't shoot him. And at that time he thanked God and his Savior, because he knew he had witnessed a miracle.

Meanwhile, his sweet wife was praying and fighting on the home front because she didn't know. She got very little news about what was going on in SAM's life, but she never gave up because her faith strengthened her. And that's part of the theme of that book that you need to pick up and read, that their faith strengthened them in trials that none of us can ever imagine.

SAM JOHNSON is a hero, not just because of what went on in Vietnam and what our enemy did to him. He's a hero because he comes here every day and he fights for the people of his district and for the State and for this country. He's willing to take a risk and step out, even now after all the years of service, both legislatively and in the Congress. SAM JOHNSON is one who is willing to step out and take the shots.

I was once asked by "60 Minutes" to define what a leader is, and I said,

Well, I'm just a history guy who reads history. I always thought in the First World War how hard it would have been to come out of those trenches and charge those machine guns with a bolt-action rifle, and that the officers who climbed out in front and said, "Let's go, boys; let's go get 'em," were the heroes, and the guys that stayed in the bottom and said, "You go get 'em, boys," they were not heroes. And a special hero is one who says, "I'm going first and I'll take the shots."

There's plenty of shots to be had in this Chamber, and those are political shots. But I'm proud to say that that same hero that spit in the enemy's face, SAM JOHNSON, is still willing to stand up and take the shots in Congress. And for that reason, I today honor my good friend SAM JOHNSON and tell him I want him to keep taking care of my back, because I need it real bad.

God bless you, SAM. You're my friend.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, Judge CARTER points out something that happened to SAM JOHNSON during that 7 years that a lot of people don't realize.

When he was in that little cell, 3-foot by 9-foot, he was so obstinate, the North Vietnamese Army would take him out of the cell; they would beat him up. He would never break. They would get so mad at that, that he wouldn't break, that they would line him up against the wall and they would tell him they're going to shoot him. They would blindfold him. They would get their AK-47s ready and, as Judge CARTER mentioned, they would pull the trigger—click, click, click—then they would laugh at him.

SAM JOHNSON would say, "Is that the best you got? Is that the best you got?" He didn't take anything from the Vietnamese, even though they tried to do everything they could to break him down.

That's what makes him so remarkable. You may notice, Mr. Speaker, he's sitting back here on our scriptural row. All the Texans sit on the same row. He sits in the middle. One reason we sit back there is because that's the row he picks. So we all sit next to him. And you'll see every day when the House is in session, the Texans, we're all together sitting around SAM JOHNSON. We kind of stick together for a lot of reasons.

I now yield to the gentleman from Texas, Dr. MICHAEL BURGESS.

Mr. BURGESS. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, we are here tonight to honor Congressman SAM JOHNSON. It's also appropriate to take a moment and send our thoughts and prayers to Congressman JOHNSON's family during a difficult time that they're going through right now.

As we've heard tonight, Congressman JOHNSON is a decorated war hero. During his 29-year service in the United

States Air Force, Congressman JOHNSON flew in 62 combat missions in the Korean War and 25 missions in the Vietnam War. He endured almost 7 years as a prisoner of war in Hanoi, with a majority spent in solitary confinement, after being captured in North Vietnam.

Congressman JOHNSON persevered through this dreadful experience, returned to the United States and was reunited with his wife and three children on February 12, 1973. This week marks the 40th anniversary of his release, and we celebrate his achievements and the sacrifice for his country. In fact, 10 years ago this week, I gave what was my first speech on the House floor honoring then SAM JOHNSON's 30th anniversary of freedom, and at that time his wife, Shirley, was with us in the gallery.

□ 1950

When SAM came home, he undertook a duty to continuously support and protect every man and woman who risks his life fighting for the United States of America. This was a motivation for his decision to run for office, and it is a true statement to the character and virtues that he gained from his service to this country.

In thinking about Shirley, every summer, she does a fashion show in Frisco, Texas. SAM is my neighbor to the east from the congressional district that I represent. Shirley does a fashion show, the proceeds of which go to provide scholarships for kids in the area—true dedication to community service. We are all so honored to have SAM and Shirley in our lives.

Thank you, Congressman JOHNSON. Thank you for being my friend and my mentor, for providing me expertise when I ran for the House and when I arrived at the House. You continue to provide mentorship to me today.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I now recognize the gentleman from Tyler, Texas, Judge GOHMERT.

Mr. GOHMERT. I thank my friend, a former judge as well.

It is an honor to be here and to be part of this Special Order to honor our friend SAM JOHNSON.

SAM and Shirley are public servants in every sense of the word. There were the 29 years in the Air Force. The United States service was what he was. It's what he did. There were the 7 years in Hanoi Hilton—one of the worst prisons ever concocted in the imagination of sick minds—and he spent 42 months of that in solitary confinement. There are people running around the world saying that you can't put people in solitary confinement, but they were not around to help SAM JOHNSON during that horrible time in Hanoi. This is the 40th anniversary of his release, and America has been better for SAM JOHNSON's living and serving and for Shirley's being his partner even though, for 7 years, they were apart.

I know, on the first day I was sworn in, I was sitting right over here on the

aisle, talking to another Republican, and SAM came down the aisle. His body still shows the torture and the broken bones that never healed properly and the bones that grew around nerves that they were never able to fix.

When he got even with me, I stood up and shook his hand and said, SAM, it is such an honor to serve with you in this body. SAM has always been a man of honesty and integrity, a man whose judgment I could trust.

He said, Well, it's an honor serving with you—which was a stretch—but then he said, But don't trust that fella next to you. I found out after that that SAM JOHNSON's advice was always good and always advice that could be well taken.

After some of the revelations in the Middle East of a U.S. prison camp, I said, SAM, did you hear about the torture of making people strip down and put panties on their heads?

And he said, Yeah.

I said, Was that ever a choice that you were given?

He said, If it had been, I'd be naked, wearing panties still today.

That was nothing compared to the hell that that man was put through in Hanoi.

Then I found out that in our U.S. prisons—it's open information—that we provide not only a Koran, which has never been touched by American hands, but also an arrow on the floor that points in the direction that the Islamic prisoner would want to pray, and we give him a prayer rug.

I asked SAM, When you were in Hanoi, did you have a prayer rug and a Bible, as that was part of your faith?

And he said, No. Actually, what we had was a tiny, little rod that was placed on the floor—our feet in shackles. We would be beaten on the back until we dropped, and my knees would hit that tiny rod.

It doesn't sound like much, but when you spend hours or days with your knees and all your weight on a tiny, little rod on the floor, it gets pretty unbearable. And that was some of the less torturous stuff this man went through on our behalf.

Part of his service to this country are his children and his grandchildren, and it is with great sadness that I know SAM and Shirley and this country lost Bob Johnson—Plano High School to Texas A&M. His children and grandchildren.

SAM, our hearts are with you. You have sacrificed more than anybody I know on behalf of this country, and it is an honor to serve with you.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman from Tyler, Texas.

I now recognize a gentleman from Texas, Mr. LAMAR SMITH.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. First of all, I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for organizing this Special Order tonight.

Mr. Speaker, today's Special Order is to honor our friend, colleague and a true American patriot, Congressman

SAM JOHNSON, and his 40th anniversary of freedom.

Congressman JOHNSON has a long history of serving our country. He spent 29 years in the United States Air Force and flew 87 combat missions during the Korean and Vietnam wars. He was awarded two Silver Stars, the Distinguished Flying Cross, a Bronze Star with Valor, and has received many other recognitions. Today, we celebrate Operation Homecoming and observe the 40th anniversary of his release from a Vietnamese prisoner-of-war camp.

Congressman SAM JOHNSON was captured and held for 7 years in a POW camp in Vietnam. He spent 42 months in solitary confinement—an unfortunate record. Though tested both physically and mentally, almost beyond comprehension, his unwavering love of God and country remained steadfast. A firsthand account of Congressman JOHNSON's experience in the Vietnamese POW camp can be found in his riveting and inspiring book, "Captive Warriors," which will cause you to weep.

His commitment to his country was matched only by his wife Shirley's commitment to him. Friends say she set a seat at the table every night while he was gone with the hope and expectation that he would come home.

After his release, Congressman JOHNSON started a homebuilding business from the ground up. Then he was elected to the Texas House of Representatives for 7 years, and he has now represented Texas' Third Congressional District since 1991.

It is a professional honor and a personal privilege to serve with Congressman SAM JOHNSON. Today, we thank him for his service to our country and to the American people.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize another aviator, although he wasn't in the Air Force—he was in the Navy, which still counts. He served our country as a naval aviator before coming to the House of Representatives, Mr. PETE OLSON of Sugar Land, Texas.

Mr. OLSON. I want to thank my friend and fellow Texan, Judge TED POE, for hosting this Special Order: celebrating the greatest Texan in Congress, Colonel SAM JOHNSON, on the 40th anniversary of his return home after 7 years as a prisoner of war in Vietnam.

We've heard the stories of SAM's lifetime of service to our Nation. They are the stuff of legends—the best of the best. SAM was shot down on his 25th mission over Vietnam, captured and imprisoned by the enemy. He was put in a special prison known as Alcatraz. His 2 years in Alcatraz were described by SAM as "hell on Earth."

Twenty years after SAM left Alcatraz, I began my training to become a naval aviator. Part of that training included prisoner-of-war school, also known as SERE school—survival, evasion, resistance, and escape. In SERE school, we

were locked in a dark box. We were deprived of sleep and exposed to interrogation techniques depicted in the movie "Zero Dark Thirty." The main lesson I learned in SERE school was because of SAM JOHNSON: that my duty as a POW was to resist and to resist and to resist and to resist and to resist—to my breaking point as a human being.

□ 2000

When I hit that point, my duty was to bend a little, give some incomplete and vague information, regroup, and start anew—to resist, to resist, to resist, to resist, and to resist.

Because of SAM JOHNSON's experience, every U.S. military pilot who follows in his footsteps, like me, knows in his heart if we're captured, we will never stop resisting our captors, and we will always come home with honor, like SAM did.

The heart of SAM JOHNSON, the SAM JOHNSON I know, can be summed up in the first sentence SAM reportedly said to his fellow POWs after he left solitary confinement: Lieutenant Colonel SAM JOHNSON, reporting for duty, sir.

I imagine that our POW in charge responded to SAM with a slow, crisp salute saying, Colonel JOHNSON, take charge, and carry out the plan of the day.

SAM has been taking charge and carrying out the plan of the day his whole life. I wasn't there to greet SAM when he came home 40 years ago, so I say it to my friend now: Welcome home, SAM. Welcome home.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman from Sugar Land, Texas, for his insightful words. You pointed out, Mr. OLSON, that he spent 4 years in a prisoner-of-war camp. During those 4 years, he didn't talk to another American for 4 years. He could tap on the wall to contact them in codes that they'd developed over the numerous years they'd all been in confinement. They tapped out the names of the other prisoners, the 374 other prisoners that had been in the Hanoi Hilton at one time. They all memorized the 11, the Alcatraz Gang, as they called themselves. They memorized those names because they all expected that they were going to escape and get back and be able to tell those families who had come into the camp. A remarkable story.

I now yield to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. ROGER WILLIAMS.

Mr. WILLIAMS. I'm honored to stand here today and say a few words about one of my personal heroes and friends, and one of America's greatest patriots, SAM JOHNSON. This month is cause for celebration as it marks 40 years since nearly 600 American POWs, including Congressman JOHNSON, stepped foot on American soil after enduring years of captivity during the Vietnam war.

Many of us couldn't endure for one day what SAM JOHNSON endured for 7 years, much less endure it with unbreakable strength, unending faith in God, and constant hope that this incredible man has.

His captors knew him as a die hard, one of the few POWs who refused to give in and cooperate with their anti-American propaganda. His fellow American prisoners knew him as a leader, one whose spirit could not be broken, whether he was in leg stocks or solitary confinement, for 4 years. And his family knew him as their hero, a man who loved serving his country and was willing to sacrifice his life in defense of freedom.

I'm honored to know him as a friend. Throughout his 29-year career in the Air Force, he earned many distinguished decorations, awards, and merits. But for those who have had the pleasure of sitting at the dinner table with SAM, you know those years were also filled with laughter and antics. After all, he did fly with the legendary Thunderbirds before the FAA existed.

Men like SAM JOHNSON are what have made our military great—and our country—the greatest force on Earth. He has built a remarkable legacy with his lifelong service to America, to the great State of Texas and, most importantly, to his family and loved ones.

Colonel JOHNSON, thank you for your service to our country and for your example to us all. And I'd like to remind people, America doesn't give because it's rich; America is rich because it gives. And it's given us SAM JOHNSON, and for that we're very grateful.

Luke 6:38 says:

A good measure be given to you, pressed down, shaken together, put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.

SAM, you gave it all to us, and you deserve every great thing that happens to you. So may God bless you, and may God bless our troops.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman.

I now yield to the gentleman from Lubbock, Texas, Mr. RANDY NEUGEBAUER.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I thank the gentleman. It is indeed an honor and a privilege for me to participate in this recognition of our colleague but, more importantly, my friend, SAM JOHNSON.

You know, when I got to Congress, you get to know people, and particularly because SAM was in the Texas delegation, and people started saying, they'd say you know SAM's story, and they would begin to tell me a few things about SAM JOHNSON. So some of the things that you're hearing tonight are things you would have never heard from SAM JOHNSON because SAM doesn't talk about what he does. He just goes about doing the right thing.

In fact, he's got a history of serving this country. When you think about SAM JOHNSON, you think about service. You know, a lot of people serve. SAM has served in our military. He served in our Texas House, and now in the United States Congress, but not everybody serves with equal sacrifice. And when you think about SAM JOHNSON's life, you think about sacrifice.

How I learned more about SAM was an interesting trip that I took with

then-Speaker of the House, Denny Hastert. We flew to Vietnam to be one of the first delegations to have a Speaker of the House be in Vietnam since the end of the Vietnam war. And so I decided on that trip that I would read SAM's book. So all of the way over there, I read SAM's book, and it was just by fate that I read the last page as we landed in Hanoi.

Tears streamed down from my eyes as I had been on this journey that SAM takes you through his book of sacrifice and pain, but also a man that had faith. And it was his faith that he relied on on a daily basis, and his commitment to his country and his commitment to those who were with him, and the fortitude that he showed of taking those sometimes daily beatings, and this quietness of solitude. As we landed there, I was thinking about SAM and his spending 7 years in those conditions and then coming back home.

But as you read that book, what you also know is another hero, and SAM would be quick to point out, and that was his wife, Shirley, who never gave up hope, never gave up on SAM because she knew the SAM JOHNSON that we've been talking about tonight. She knew that SAM wouldn't go down easy.

SAM, we're so proud of you and so glad to serve with you. One of the memorable points of that trip is just a few months before that, SAM himself had traveled back to Hanoi, the first time since he had left, and he had signed the guest book just a few pages over:

Sam Johnson back again, where I spent 7 years of my life.

It was an honor for me to sign just a few pages over. For a great American hero but, more importantly, for a great friend: God bless you, SAM JOHNSON, and God bless the United States of America.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman.

I would ask the Speaker how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RADEL). The gentleman has 17 minutes remaining.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the Speaker.

I yield to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. BLAKE FARENTHOLD.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Thank you, Congressman POE.

I'm honored today to stand up here to honor the bravery and commitment that Congressman SAM JOHNSON has shown his country. SAM lived through an experience that would bring even the toughest soldier to his knees. He was in the Air Force for 29 years and was a prisoner of war for 7 after his F4 plane was gunned down in North Vietnam.

Now today, 40 years after he was released from captivity, we celebrate his freedom. He was beaten and tortured and kept in a small cell; yet he refused to give up or disclose any information to the enemy. The sacrifice and peril that SAM went through is on the heart

of every young man or woman who commits himself to serve the Armed Forces. SAM and his family just suffered a tragic personal loss. I have no notes here; you can read about SAM and his accomplishments and his heroics on the Internet. Or better yet, buy the book.

I want to talk for a minute about my experience in the slightly over 2 years that I have been in the House serving with SAM.

There is nobody that has the respect of this Congress the way SAM JOHNSON does.

□ 2010

I don't know a single person on either side of the aisle that doesn't appreciate SAM's service and sacrifice and hold him in the highest esteem. And that's saying something, when we're serving in a body that's constantly bickering, that has an 8 percent approval rating. But if all of us who serve were half the man that SAM JOHNSON is, we would have a 100 percent approval rating here in Congress.

I'm honored to serve with SAM. I thank him for his service, though that seems just too little for what he has done and given up for this country. But I'm proud to call him a friend.

God bless you, SAM. God bless Texas, and God bless the U.S.A.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman for his comments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. STEVE STOCKMAN.

Mr. STOCKMAN. Mr. Speaker, when I got here 18 years ago, when I first got here I was wet under the ears, and I started looking at different people's voting patterns. And I didn't know, you know, which way to go or whatever. All I know is SAM in private is the way he is publicly. And privately, SAM, you're a hardcore American patriot. And I started to learn a lot from you.

But reading your history and what you did, I just can't imagine being in that confinement for that period of time. It seems like it would be beyond what anybody could take. Yet, time and time again, you stood up, and there was only 11 of you that resisted the torture and resisted the torture of the Vietnamese, which broke every Geneva Convention protocol.

And SAM, in this area in which you've served our Nation, I understand—I think it was five rows across and five rows down. So A A would be tap, tap, B would be tap, tap, tap—in other words, they would do the alphabet five five that way, and they would tap out at night. And that's all the communication they had.

And serving with SAM, and watching SAM go through his service and his commitment to the American people, I don't know if we actually read all of his medals, but he has two Silver Stars, two Legions of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, a Bronze Star with Combat Valor, two Purple Hearts, four Air Medals, three Air Force Outstanding Units, and he was also awarded the Prisoner of War Medal.

That's just one individual having all those medals, and he's served our Nation and our country and continues to serve our Nation and our country.

I'm honored to serve with SAM. And at this time, when he's lost his son, you're in our prayers. God bless you.

And thank you for offering the opportunity to say a little bit on behalf of SAM.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman.

I now yield to Mr. BILL FLORES from Texas.

Mr. FLORES. I thank the gentleman from Texas for organizing this very special evening.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deepest admiration and respect for Congressman SAM JOHNSON. Tonight, America has heard many accolades for and compliments dedicated to SAM JOHNSON, and I'm not going to repeat those in my comments.

Rather, I want to say that our country needs more SAM JOHNSONS during these difficult times. We need more persons like SAM to bravely move and serve in our country's military today. We need more persons like SAM to serve as statesmen.

We need more people like SAM who put principle ahead of politics or personal gain. We need more persons like SAM to be knightly gentlemen in an unstable society. We need more persons like SAM who are devoted husbands and loving fathers.

Mr. Speaker, America needs more heroes like SAM JOHNSON. I pray that America continues to produce men and women of strength and perseverance and character like SAM JOHNSON.

God bless SAM and his wife, Shirley, and his family, in particular. We remember their son, Bob Johnson, this evening.

I'm honored and humbled, and I have to say deeply humbled, to serve with my good friend from Texas, Congressman SAM JOHNSON.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman for his comments.

Mr. Speaker, SAM JOHNSON is a remarkable individual. The nickname that the Vietnamese gave him of Diehard, he's still that way. He's hardcore. He is opinionated, and he can back up everything he says. But that's a good thing. He does represent the best that we have in this country.

His military background: We have, in the House of Representatives, Members of Congress, both sides, that have served in our military, all branches, in the Reserves, the National Guard, they served in World War II, they served in Korea and Vietnam, like SAM JOHNSON. They've served in both Iraqi wars, the Afghanistan war, and they're still serving today.

We have Members who have lost their limbs for this country while on active duty serving this country. And SAM JOHNSON is among that elite that have represented America, the flag, and our country when our country needed our military.

He's married, three kids—you now know that one of them died recently—and he has 10 grandkids.

He served in the war, the second war, not the Korean War, but the second one, the Vietnamese War, came back home. Americans didn't treat our war veterans from Vietnam very well. They were treated real bad, in fact. Some of our American troops, when they came back home from serving in Vietnam, they wouldn't wear the uniform because Americans would ridicule them for what the country asked them to do.

America has learned since Vietnam. We treat our warriors a lot better now. We treat them like they ought to be treated when they come back home from Iraq, Afghanistan, and other parts of the world.

Our warriors from Vietnam didn't get the appropriate welcome back, as already mentioned. Tonight, we welcome back one of them. We welcome back Colonel SAM JOHNSON, United States Air Force, reporting for duty.

After spending 7 years in a prisoner-of-war-camp, 4 years in solitary confinement, as I pointed out, 9 feet by 3 feet for 4 years, 24 hours a day, leg irons at night, taken out in the daytime and beat. Never broke. Diehard. Never gave in. He was never broken.

Remarkable individuals, these Americans who serve and wear the uniform. It's a rare breed, but it's the American breed, and that's what makes us free, those people, those remarkable people who wear the uniform and serve, and serve overseas, and serve in prisoner-of-war camps, if necessary.

So we thank SAM JOHNSON. We thank all who have served and are serving today for their service to our great country. But especially tonight, we welcome home SAM JOHNSON of the United States Air Force. And that's just the way it is.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 40th anniversary of "Operation Homecoming," which made possible the release of hundreds of American heroes held captive in North Vietnam.

One of those courageous POWs is my friend and our distinguished colleague, Congressman SAM JOHNSON of Texas, who didn't see his family for seven years as a prisoner of the North Vietnamese. Forced to endure severe torture, solitary confinement, malnutrition, and attempts by their captors to force confessions for propaganda, SAM JOHNSON and countless other American POWs conducted themselves with uncommon courage and heroic strength of character.

In SAM's book, "Captive Warriors," he writes about a phrase found scribbled onto the walls of his cell: "Freedom has a taste to those who fight and almost die that the protected will never know." Because of men like SAM, I know that my nine-year-old son and my ten-year-old daughter sleep in a freer and a safer America tonight.

President Calvin Collidge once said, "The nation which forgets its defenders will itself be forgotten." I, for one, am committed to ensuring this nation never forgets the sacrifice Congressman SAM JOHNSON and the countless

American POWs who have endured such extreme hardship—and in many cases paid with their lives—to protect the freedom we cherish.

Mr. Speaker, as a Texan and as an American, I am proud to salute patriot SAM JOHNSON.

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of Congressman SAM JOHNSON's 40th anniversary of freedom. On February 12, 1973, Congressman JOHNSON and 590 other American POWs were released from captivity in Vietnam. With 29 years in the United States Air Force, nearly seven of those spent imprisoned, and 22 years of service in Congress, Congressman JOHNSON has been selflessly dedicated to the betterment of our nation for more than 50 years. As we celebrate his 40 years of freedom today, we must also recognize that his half century of dedicated service has helped to preserve the freedom and prosperity of all Americans. It is a great privilege to represent Texas alongside such an inspiring patriot. I am proud to call SAM JOHNSON a true friend and a personal hero.

CBC HOUR: VOTING RIGHTS ACT, SECTION 5

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HORSFORD. The Congressional Black Caucus is proud to anchor this hour, and I'm pleased to be here with our chair, the Honorable MARCIA FUDGE, from the 11th Congressional District of Ohio, and to yield her such time as she may consume.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you so very much. And thank you, as well as Mr. JEFFRIES, for anchoring these CBC hours. It is wonderful to have new Members come to the House floor and do the work that we've been doing for so long. I am so proud of them and appreciate of the work they do, so thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to send a clear message to those who would seek to undermine our constitutional right to vote: You will not win. The race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong. This is not the first time section 5 of the Voting Rights Act has been challenged, and there is a very good chance that it will not be the last.

□ 2020

The Congressional Black Caucus and many others, even a number of Members from the other side of the aisle, have continually reauthorized and worked to protect section 5. In a matter of days, the Supreme Court will review the constitutionality of section 5. If the Supreme Court does not ulti-

mately decide to protect the uninhibited right to vote for all voters, no matter their race, the Court will not and must not have the last word on this matter.

The 15th Amendment provides that the right of citizens to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State on account of race, color, or previous servitude. Despite the passage of the 15th Amendment and ratification by the States, Congress has been forced to act in order to protect African American voters from violence and intimidation.

Prior to the Voting Rights Act, the courts' attempts to protect voters proved inadequate. In 1965, at the height of the civil rights movement, when vicious dogs and poll taxes were used to block the ballot, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act. This law was necessary then, and the last two Federal elections have shown, without a shadow of a doubt, that section 5 remains essential today.

The right to vote is among the most important rights we enjoy as Americans. Because of its importance, because of the power behind the vote, it is the one right most often compromised; and for the same reasons, it is a right that we must do everything in our power to protect.

Martin Luther King, Jr., once said:

So long as I do not firmly and irrevocably possess the right to vote, I do not possess myself.

As the Supreme Court prepares to hear arguments in *Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder*, we must remember the words of Dr. King and the importance of section 5.

Since 1982, approximately 2,400 discriminatory voting changes have been successfully blocked by the section 5 preclearance process. After the 2010 midterm elections, 8 of 11 States that were a part of the former confederacy passed new voting restrictions. These laws require government-issued photo ID to cast a ballot, proof of citizenship to register to vote, many cut back on early voting, and several disenfranchise ex-offenders. These laws are specifically designed to make it more difficult for minorities and other traditionally marginalized eligible voters to participate in the political process.

The recent assault on voters was not restricted to the States with a history of voting discrimination. In my home State of Ohio, and in many other States and jurisdictions not covered by section 5, there were attempts to pass restrictive laws. Leading up to the 2012 election, 22 laws and 2 executive actions restricting voting rights were passed in 17 States, and 176 restrictive bills were filed in 41 States.

The Federal Government should be doubling down on the Voting Rights Act by expanding and strengthening Federal protections. The long lines in Florida and the voting scams in Arizona were no coincidence. Section 5 is as necessary today as it was on the date of its inception in 1965 and should include more States and jurisdictions.