

And I also want to commend and congratulate the president of the Cook County government, the county board, which, of course, is larger than more than 25 States in the Nation. The county of Cook is a very large county, with more than 5 million people in it. I want to commend County President Toni Preckwinkle for how the county government is trying to respond to this need.

And I especially want to commend the sheriff of our county who has more than 13,000 people in his jail. He recognizes that many of them ought not be there because they have got mental health problems and mental health issues, and he is seeking and searching and looking for ways to change that.

I want to commend the mayor of the city of Chicago, our former colleague, Rahm Emanuel, because he has established a number of programs with city agencies and with city government where they are set aside specifically for individuals who have records, individuals who have been incarcerated, individuals who need a second chance with both the city of Chicago, itself, and the Chicago Transit Authority.

So there are bits and pieces of progress being made, and I commend all of those who are helping to make it. But my final ask is for my colleagues in both the House and the Senate to join in this effort, sign on to the Second Chance Act, help us to get it renewed, help us to get it reauthorized, to get it refunded, and get it seriously implemented throughout the United States of America so that these individuals will know that our country does, in fact, believe in a second chance.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN THE MILITARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of Georgia). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. HARTZLER. 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 gentlewoman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker and my fellow colleagues, I wanted to share with you a picture that I have in my office, and it is my favorite picture. It is the famous picture of President and then-General George Washington on his knees praying at Valley Forge.

Of course, we all remember from our history lessons the story of what happened during that time. But the winter at Valley Forge was a terribly, terribly trying time for the Continental Army. They had suffered a lot of defeats that

fall, and they went into a very cold, harsh winter with very, very limited supplies, and the stories that come from that are just heartbreaking.

There were 12,000 men that were encamped. Many of them did not even have a tent or a shelter. Several of them did not even have a blanket. And as you know, here in Washington, D.C., and back home in Missouri, the weather has started to turn cold. I think it was about 30 degrees this morning. And to think about what it would have been like to have to sleep out in the cold with no blanket during that time. And of course, snow came along.

We have heard stories about how many of the men did not even have shoes. They had marched so much that fall and had gone through such harsh battles that their shoes had fallen apart. And we have all seen pictures and heard stories of how their feet bled. Even in the snow, there were foot tracks like that. And what is worse, many of them didn't even have food.

This was the situation of 12,000 men. The conditions were so bad that they ruled at one time that a third of them, almost 4,000 men, were unfit for battle. And then 2,000, over the course of those winter months, died as a result of disease and dysentery and other things that occurred during those very harsh conditions.

And during that time, we have learned a story that George Washington, the commander of this ragtag but yet valiant group of men, went to the woods and got down on his knees and prayed. And the reason we know this is because of the story of Isaac Potts who later shared the account that was later recorded.

He was a local Quaker farmer. He was riding his horse through the woods, and he heard a sound that was strange, as if a man was crying out in plaintiff prayer. So he quietly got off his horse and wrapped the reins around a sapling tree, snuck through the woods to get closer, and as came into an opening, he could see something that shocked him.

□ 1745

He said it like this:

I saw the great George Washington on his knees, alone, with a sword on one side and his cocked hat on the other. He was at prayer to the God of the Armies, beseeching to interpose with his Divine aid.

We know what happened later—and, I believe, as a result of those prayers. That ragtag group of army over the winter gained courage and strength. Supplies started to come in. General Baron Von Steuben was sent by Benjamin Franklin from the Prussian Army to start drilling the men and turn this ragtag but courageous group into a major, strong fighting force, and they came out that next spring a force ready to meet the British Army, and they did.

That was a turning point in the war. It wasn't to be decided for years to come, but at Valley Forge the whole outcome of not just the war, but of our

country, was turned, and I believe it was because of the prayer of the general of the Army.

Faith has been important to the armed services and to the people of this country from the beginning, and it is just as important now to our men and women in uniform as it was back at the beginning of our country. Yet their ability to express their religious beliefs is being attacked from forces outside and forces within.

It has been discouraging the last few years to hear accounts of some of these infringements on the basic religious rights and freedoms of our men and women in uniform. So that is why my colleagues and I are here for the next hour. We are here to, first of all, stand up for the religious rights and freedoms that are guaranteed in our Constitution.

I think it is very fitting and appropriate to remember that George Washington was there and helped craft that Bill of Rights, and what is the first right? The freedom of expression of religion.

We want to not only celebrate that and stand up for that but to also raise awareness of the concerns that we have and to implore the Department of Defense to push back on some of the negative policies that have been coming out that infringe on their rights, and to change course and to continue to remain strong as a country, preserving those basic freedoms so that we can continue to be strong in the future as we have in the past.

So now I want to invite someone who knows from very personal experience and can speak to this issue, my friend from Georgia, Representative DOUG COLLINS, who is still an active member of the Air Force Reserves, not only serving his country in many ways, but also serving his God by being a chaplain.

Representative COLLINS, I would like to hear what you have to say about this very important issue.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. I appreciate the gentlewoman yielding and being a part of this tonight and really bringing something to the forefront that we need to discuss. It is a part of our foundation. It is a part, as you have so rightly shown by that wonderful reproduction of a painting there, that—our values and our founding were founded really on a sense of prayer, and not from a prayer that led to an exclusive Nation, but a prayer that led to an inclusive Nation. I think that is something that we often many times have forgotten in this process.

Tonight, as we talk about this, I want to discuss that on Veterans Day, the President laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. As the final resting place for so many men and women of faith, Arlington is, understandably, full of religious symbolism. It is considered this country's most hallowed ground.

Veterans Day gives Americans an opportunity to honor those laid to rest at

Arlington Cemetery, along with those continuing to serve our great Nation. Those interred in Arlington's soil gave their lives to uphold the rights we are blessed to enjoy today.

Sadly, I have become concerned about our servicemembers' ability to exercise their freedoms. Over the past year, a number of incidents have caused many to question if the Pentagon and the VA no longer embrace the religious freedoms its soldiers and patients have bled to defend.

A news report came to light just a few days ago of two military chaplains being harassed in a Veterans Affairs chaplain training program in 2012. The VA health programs employ chaplains to minister to patients receiving care, and these two seasoned officers were looking to attend to the needs of those in VA care.

I want you to understand these are not new chaplains. These are not new to the military environment. They were two who had admirably served in the military as chaplains and gone through this training, which should have been easy because it had been something they had been doing their entire career.

However, their suit claims a VA supervisor repeatedly harassed the chaplains about their Christian beliefs. The supervisor instructed the chaplains not to pray in the name of Jesus, which is an integral component of the Christian faith. Even in the context of a group discussion on faith-based topics, the two chaplains were chastised for reciting Scripture.

As a chaplain myself, I am just amazed at this process at this point—chaplains not able to use Scripture of any faith group. That is the very basis of who we are, no matter what faith background that we come from, and in ministering to those with faith or without faith, it is a structural part of who we are.

The chaplains' spiritual beliefs were belittled on multiple occasions. The harassment by the chaplain's supervisor was so filled with vitriol that one of them withdrew from the program.

The VA is designed to serve members of the Armed Forces during periods of need and hardship. If the VA bars chaplains from expressing themselves, how can we expect servicemembers suffering from private illnesses to come forward?

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated event. There are numerous reports of the DOD and VA permitting open hostility to Christian organizations and those practicing the faith in uniform.

In April, media sources reported that Army soldiers were being briefed that Christian Evangelicals were to be considered extremist organizations in the vein of al Qaeda. Similar briefings have apparently continued, with a similar incident at Camp Shelby in Alabama—get this, not a few months ago, not when this was first done—last month. As one who is a Christian Evangelical, to be described with those in a ter-

rorist organization in the vein of al Qaeda is despicable and should be stopped.

Earlier this year, the Southern Baptist Convention's Web site had issues at Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine bases. The Pentagon has subsequently apologized for the issues, and they said there was never an intent to restrict servicemembers' access to the Web site, but when you look at it from an overall perspective, this still continues to be a concern.

Then we have a gentleman named Mikey Weinstein, who is an ardent critic of Christians practicing in the military. Mr. Weinstein heads the Military Religious Freedom Foundation. Don't let the title of his organization fool you. That is what they want you to think.

Mr. Weinstein believes the phrase "so help me God" should be removed from the Air Force Academy's honor oath. This same man requested and received time to speak with top military brass to discuss religious freedom in the military. At what point in time should someone who wants to take away freedom be given the opportunity to go before our highest military officials to plead a case to remove a very constitutional right without the benefit of others getting the same courtesy?

As I continue reflecting on the meeting of Veterans Day, it troubles my spirit to think that leading military personnel may be targeting Christian organizations as a part of a personal agenda.

This country has fought such tyrants. Freedom of religion has been upheld with the blood, sweat, and tears of the U.S. military. Now there appears to be a strain inside the Pentagon and VA whose mission it is to take away the soul of our fighting force.

Are we now to tiptoe on the very soil that entombs the brave men and women who gave their lives for religious liberties and our other constitutional rights? As a military chaplain myself, I pray not.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you very much, Representative COLLINS. Well said.

The oath that you talked about, I want to expound on it a little bit so people understood that what Mikey Weinstein did has had an effect. The Air Force Academy actually removed a poster portraying the words of the Academy oath, and the committee is considered removing the phrase "so help me God" from the honor oath recited by all incoming cadets.

This is the same oath. Let me read it. This is the oath that every cadet gives when they come into the Air Force Academy. It is also the same oath of office for officers and the same oath that Members of Congress say. This is what they want to remove the "so help me God" from:

Having been appointed as an Air Force Cadet in the United States Air Force, do solemnly swear or affirm that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United

States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office of which I am about to enter. So help me God.

It is a time-honored oath.

This is a serious decision to enter the service of the country, whether it is in the military or whether it is as a Member of Congress, and to have them question whether we should remove that or not is despicable.

Now I would like to turn to a champion on these issues, and that is my friend from Colorado, Representative DOUG LAMBORN. I appreciate the letters that he has authored to push back on many of these attacks on our religious freedoms.

Representative LAMBORN.

Mr. LAMBORN. I thank the gentle lady from Missouri. I know that she is a leader on military issues. We serve together on the Armed Services Committee, and she is becoming known as a leader on military issues. Her passion on religious freedom is also evident through her getting this time here today. So I appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today again in support of religious freedom in our military. I am honored to represent tens of thousands of men and women in uniform who serve at the five military installations in my district in Colorado. Our military is made up of brave and dedicated men and women of all faiths who deserve to practice their respective religion free from harassment and malicious attacks.

But there is a growing and troubling pattern of religious discrimination against our men and women in arms. Earlier this year, an Army reserve training brief listed Catholics, Evangelical Christians, Sunni Muslims, and some Jews as "religious extremists," along with groups like al Qaeda, Hamas, and the KKK. In response to this troubling report, I sent a letter, along with 34 of my colleagues, to the Secretary of the Army to express deep concern and to request information about what is being done to prevent this sort of offensive briefing from being given again.

In his response, Secretary of the Army John McHugh assured us the that this briefing was an isolated incident. Secretary McHugh also made note of a corrective measure that would require all briefings of this nature to be vetted with the appropriate unit leaders and subject matter experts prior to presentation.

Sadly, this past month, reports of additional offensive Army briefings came to light, first, at Camp Shelby in Mississippi, where an Army Reserve training briefing listed the American Family Association, a respected Christian organization, as a domestic hate group alongside groups like the Ku Klux Klan, Neo-Nazis, the Black Panthers, and the Nation of Islam, and also at a Fort Hood briefing that listed Christian Evangelical groups as a "threat"

to the United States. These disturbing reports have made clear that the offensive briefing given in April was not an isolated incident. This pattern must be addressed.

I was encouraged to learn that Secretary McHugh, after learning of the most recent incidents, issued an order to cease all briefings on the subject of extremist organizations and activities. Secretary McHugh rightly described the mislabeling of Christian Evangelical groups as “inaccurate, objectionable, and otherwise inconsistent with current Army policy.”

I commend Secretary McHugh's recent action and believe it was a step in the right direction. However, these Army briefings are small examples of what I believe is a larger issue, which is a pattern of intolerance toward people of faith in the military.

In addition to briefings mislabeling Christians, we have also seen a Christian chaplain ordered to remove a religious column he had written which simply detailed the history of the phrase “there are no atheists in foxholes.” Active efforts are underway to remove the phrase “so help me God” from the Air Force Academy oath. The President, upon signing the National Defense Authorization Act, actually called religious freedom protections for military chaplains and other servicemembers “unnecessary and ill-advised.”

I have no idea how he could say this.

Mr. Speaker, this religious intolerance is unacceptable. Our Nation was founded on Judeo-Christian principles but has always believed in freedom of self-expression and intolerance. We owe it to our men and women in uniform to defend these basic rights.

Religious freedom is an integral component of America's greatness and has been a pillar of our Nation from the very beginning. You can see the picture that Representative HARTZLER showed of George Washington. It has also been a strong part of our military heritage.

We must remain firmly committed to defending that freedom.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you, Representative LAMBORN. That was very good. I appreciate the summary of some of the concerns that we had of the pattern that has developed of the intolerance in the military of religious expression. So thank you for your leadership on that.

I would now like to turn to my friend from Texas, Representative ROGER WILLIAMS.

□ 1800

Mr. WILLIAMS. Thank you, Congresswoman. I appreciate your leadership.

Mr. Speaker, in our Nation's 237 years, over 25 million men and women have served in the Armed Forces. They wear the uniform, fight our enemies, defend their homeland, protect their fellow man in battle, honor their fallen comrades, and, perhaps most importantly, they honor their oath to sup-

port and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic.

Mr. Speaker, the First Amendment of the Constitution states:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

Freedom of religion is how we live our faith, not just where we attend worship services. Soldiers, airmen, sailors, and marines stationed domestically are able to attend their religious services; and for troops overseas who aren't able to walk off base in enemy territory to attend a service, there are military chaplains who facilitate services for them. But religious freedom doesn't just cover worship services; it covers the exercise of religion.

Regrettably, in the last few years, many instances of religious intolerance in the military have come to light, specifically targeting Christianity. Soldiers are being told by superiors that they cannot associate themselves with Christian groups and that evangelical Christians are a threat to the United States. These soldiers are told not to associate with, contribute to, or be a part of these Christian groups.

This is not only an outrage. It is un-American and a direct violation of the Constitution that these men and women have sworn with their lives to uphold. Troops do not take an oath to their superiors, the President, the government or to Congress. They take an oath to defend the Constitution, which protects their religious liberty.

The Department of Defense's rules and regulations protecting these rights need to be enforced. As a whole, the military overwhelmingly respects the rights and religious beliefs of individuals, but these so-called “isolated incidents” of intimidation and coercion must end now—immediately.

Mr. Speaker, our Armed Forces are willing and ready to answer the call of duty, and so many have made the ultimate sacrifice to preserve the freedoms and liberties we as Americans value so dearly. My district, the 25th District of Texas, is home to Fort Hood, which is the largest military installation in America. The patriots at Fort Hood deserve to have someone fighting on their behalf when their rights as Americans are violated.

Congress must ensure that every time a man or a woman makes the admirable decision to join the military, he is not signing away his First Amendment rights. Let's make sure right here, right now that our policies leave no room for interpretation when it comes to the military's right to freely practice its religion. After all, we are one Nation under God. In God, we always trust.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you so much, Representative WILLIAMS. Well said. I appreciate it very much.

Now I would like to yield to a real leader on this, one who has been at the forefront of ensuring that our men and women in uniform are not discrimi-

nated against based on their religious beliefs. He was the author of the amendment of the National Defense Authorization Act last year and this year, an amendment which protects those freedoms. I would now like to turn to JOHN FLEMING from Louisiana.

Mr. FLEMING. I thank the gentleman from Missouri.

I thank you for your leadership and also, tonight, for having this great time for us to come together to talk about a subject that, I think, is increasingly important.

With great foresight and clarity, the Founding Fathers enshrined religious liberty as our First Amendment right, stating:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

This is an important constitutional right that is for every American, including servicemembers who defend those very liberties with their own lives.

The ability to live one's life informed by one's faith is not just a protected constitutional right; it is also essential for the individual well-being of our soldiers. In the uniquely stressful military environment, Congress must ensure that our men and women in uniform can access religious support and practice their faith without risking career reprisals.

Servicemembers increasingly fear even mentioning their faith in the military because of restrictions, uncertain policies surrounding religious expression, and a general climate of hostility towards those with particular religious or moral viewpoints. This is not your father's military. This is not the military you served in. This is a different military when it comes to respecting religious rights and freedoms.

Last year, the House Armed Services Committee adopted an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act, section 533, that provided protections of sincerely held religious beliefs for servicemembers and chaplains. However, we have yet to see the regulations that should have been issued in accordance with this amendment.

In a March 2013 JAG memorandum, the Air Force clearly showed that it is interpreting section 533 as only protecting the religious beliefs of servicemembers and not the actual expression of those beliefs through actions and free speech. For heaven's sakes, of course the military can't say anything about what you believe because nobody knows what you believe unless you express those beliefs in some way or another.

Just as the First Amendment does not mean just freedom of worship but, rather, the free exercise of religion, servicemembers are not only protected in holding a belief but are free to live their lives in accordance with those beliefs and to give voice to them.

This June, on a bipartisan basis, the House Armed Services Committee adopted my amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act to

clarify the protections provided for actions and speech that flow from sincerely held religious and moral convictions.

My amendment provides the Department flexibility to ensure the morale and readiness needs of servicemembers are met upon the application of this provision. It clarifies that action and speech, along with the beliefs of a servicemember, are protected by the First Amendment, and it requires that the DOD consult with the faith groups, which already work with the military to endorse military chaplains, when implementing section 533.

While the military context requires good order and discipline to be maintained, “good order and discipline” cannot be wielded as a club to stifle the reasonable religious expression of servicemembers.

So what am I really talking about here? Let me give you some examples:

A servicemember received a severe and possibly career-ending reprimand from his commanding officer for respectfully expressing his faith’s religious position in a personal religious blog even though the blog included a disclaimer that his views were not official military policy;

An Air Force officer kept a Bible on his desk, along with other personal items, for 18 years. When he transferred to his latest assignment, he was told by his supervisor that he could not keep his Bible in public view, that it may offend someone if one actually saw his Bible;

Walter Reed Hospital briefly prohibited the distribution of religious materials, i.e., Bibles and scripture of any faith, from being given to wounded servicemembers;

Thousands of Army Reserve soldiers received equal opportunity training, labeling evangelical Christians, Catholics, ultra-Orthodox Jews, and others as “religious extremists” who are comparable to the KKK and al Qaeda. This training, which was memorialized in writing, further instructed the servicemembers that they may not support such extremist organizations by attending meetings, fund-raising, recruiting, helping lead or organize or distributing literature. In other words, thousands of soldiers were told that they could not go to church, lead Sunday school, tithe, share their faith or give out Bibles;

Another series of equal opportunity training sessions held for Army active components at Camp Shelby in Alabama and again at Fort Hood in Texas listed a prominent ministry, the American Family Association, as an extremist group alongside the KKK. I am pleased that Secretary McHugh, upon being made aware of these particular types of egregious training materials, canceled all future equal opportunity training until the DOD gets its act together;

There is the case of Sergeant Monk, a fine young man whom I met personally, who was relieved of his position

after objecting to his commander’s plans to punish an instructor who had expressed religious objections to gay marriage. When asked about his own support of traditional marriage, Sergeant Monk was told that he was in violation of Air Force policy. Yes, because he supported traditional marriage, he was in violation of Air Force policy, and after 19 years—almost 20 years, almost reaching retirement—he was fired;

In performing his official duties, an Air Force chaplain, Lieutenant Colonel Reyes, at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Alaska, wrote a column on the “Chaplain’s Corner” Web site, titled “No Atheists in Foxholes: Chaplains Gave All in World War II.” The column traces the history of the famous phrase used by President Eisenhower, and connects it to the idea that the military is unique in that servicemembers must confront the grim reality of death.

He writes:

Everyone expresses some form of faith every day whether it is religious or secular. Some express faith by believing, when they get up in the morning, they will arrive at work in one piece . . . What is the root or object of your faith? Is it something you can count on in times of plenty or loss? peace or chaos? joy or sorrow? success or failure? What is “faith” to you?

Finally, the column did not speak negatively of people of no faith or of people of non-faith, though the commander removed the column from the “Chaplain’s Corner” Web page. The commander later reposted the column after media attention and congressional inquiries.

I would just like to say in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that we are seeing an assault on religious liberty, not just on religion—not just on Christianity—but on religious liberty in a way this Nation has never seen before. Bear in mind, why did our forefathers—why did our ancestors—come to this Nation? They came for different reasons—economic freedom, freedom of speech and other things—but primarily for religious freedom.

That is the one freedom that appears to be slipping away in the most important venue that we have, and that is in the military, because who pays a heavier price for that freedom than our uniformed members who stand in the gap, who protect us each and every day in our own freedoms?

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you so much Representative FLEMING. Your leadership has really made a difference and appreciate your comments.

I know another colleague from Texas who is a captain in the Army probably has a few things to share about this so I would like to hear from my friend LOUIE GOHMERT.

Mr. GOHMERT. I thank my friend from Missouri for yielding and for setting up this time that we could share about what is going on.

Just in contrast to my friend from Louisiana’s examples of the abuses of military members’ First Amendment

rights, the government is not supposed to prohibit the free exercise of religion. Of course, we know in the military—I knew—that there are some things you give up when you are in the military. You can’t assemble when you want to, and you can’t speak when you want to, but Commanders in Chief have always known that when it comes to religious liberty, you should not infringe upon people’s religious beliefs, especially when they believe they are fighting for a country in which people could have First Amendment rights to utilize and to worship God.

In fact, of course, in my 4 years in the Army, we didn’t have a Commander in Chief who had issued an order—attributed to George Washington—that people should not take the name of the Lord in vain, because how can we ask God’s blessing on our military at the same time and in the same mouth as one’s taking God’s name in vain? That was not the order of the day when I was in the Army; but by the same token, you saw crosses at chapels on military installations. You saw crosses inside of chapels and outside of chapels. Now they have been removed, we have been told, from the insides and outsides of chapels on military installations. It is outrageous.

We hear people call the generation in America that won World War II—making the world safer for democracy—the Greatest Generation. Yet, if you look at what occurred during World War II, you had a President of the United States who went on national radio on D-day and prayed about the evil forces that our troops were trying to defeat. He prayed God’s blessing openly for several minutes on national radio.

I was given by my aunt a New Testament with a metal cover. There are all kinds of stories about these metal covers actually stopping bullets when they were placed in pockets, but on this metal cover, it says, “May the Lord be with you.”

Under the new rules, I haven’t seen anything that this Commander in Chief has signed or said of “you can’t practice your Christian beliefs” or “we are not going to afford you conscience exemptions” like have always been provided throughout our country. I haven’t seen that.

□ 1815

But as Harry Truman said, the buck stops with the Commander in Chief. Whether it is actually stopping with Valerie Jarrett, or wherever it is stopping, the Commander in Chief has the power to get the buck, bring it to his desk, and make these decisions.

Well, here is what Franklin D. Roosevelt did. Here in this New Testament, it says, “May the Lord be with you on the front.” Inside, at the top, it says, “The White House, Washington.”

As Commander in Chief, I take pleasure in commending the reading of the Bible to all who serve in the Armed Forces of the United States. Throughout the centuries, men of many faiths and diverse origins have found

in the Sacred Book words of wisdom, counsel, and inspiration. It is a fountain of strength, and now, as always, an aid in attaining the highest aspirations of the human soul.

Signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt.

I have been trying to find a Bible in recent days that has an inscription or signature from the current Commander in Chief who has said he takes such great inspiration from Franklin Roosevelt. Instead, not only do we not find Bibles being encouraged and handed out, we see crosses being taken back, people being told they can't even have their own Bible where people might see it. It is an outrage.

I worry for our Nation, just as George Washington did. How can we expect God to bless a nation that is not being allowed to even praise God publicly in our military? It is a sad day. But what is more, if George Washington is right, we are stripping our Nation of the opportunity to have our military blessed because of what was done in prior militaries that brought about blessings.

Even if you don't believe in God whatsoever, why wouldn't you want to at least have an insurance policy that maybe the reason they were blessed was because of things like this done for our military in our military, signed by the President of the United States? Obviously, this is a stamp of the President's signature.

But again, I appreciate my friend from Missouri. #MilitaryFreedom—we encourage people, Mr. Speaker, to utilize that, to get us information, because we want to help our military protect us.

I thank so much Mrs. HARTZLER for this effort and for this hour and encourage all of our colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to stand up for what is right for our military—their freedom of religion.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you. I really appreciate you bringing your Bible and sharing that story. I think that really brings home how things have changed and how we need to go back to having an administration and a Department of Defense that protects and preserves and promotes the exercise of religion among our troops for the protection and blessing of not only them, but our country.

Now I would like to turn to my friend from Illinois, just a little ways to the east here, RANDY HULTGREN, to share on this important topic.

Mr. HULTGREN. Thank you, Congresswoman HARTZLER, for putting this together. I appreciate your important work on this. This is such an important subject for us to be talking about.

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight troubled by what appears to be growing attacks on the religious freedom of those serving in our military. Our great Nation, as you all know, was founded on the principle that all men and women have a natural right to freely practice their respective faiths. These rights extend equally to the brave men and women who serve in our Armed Forces. Our

founding documents were written with the express purpose of protecting the inalienable rights of American citizens, including that of religious liberties. The First Amendment states:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

In 1785, the father of the Constitution, James Madison, said:

The religion then of every man must be left to the conviction of conscience of every man, and it is the right of every man to exercise it as these may dictate.

He recognized that one's faith contains dictates that, barring harm to others, demand obedience from adherents. And obedience not only in thought and behavior, but also by speech and action as well. An individual's faith is inseparable from the way in which he or she lives and acts.

If the Federal Government would curtail the religious speech and action of military members, they would be clearly overstepping the bounds of the Constitution. Unfortunately, over the past several years, a string of aggressive government actions has chilled the religious practice of members of our Armed Forces. These soldiers defend our freedoms abroad but did not expect to lose those freedoms at home.

Earlier this year, an officer in the Air Force was asked to remove the Bible he kept on his desk. He was told his displaying his Bible made others uncomfortable and that he could, as a superior, be seen as forcing his religion on others.

Does this mean that President Obama has forced his religion on others when he put his hand on President Lincoln's Bible as he swore the oath of office on inauguration day? When did freedom for religion become conflated with freedom from religion?

While attempting to avoid elevating one faith above the rest—an admirable goal—the government has stifled all religion. The so-called “protection” from religious expression extends further into servicemembers' personal lives.

An Army chaplain's assistant was reprimanded for expressing her views informed by her faith regarding human sexuality on her own private Facebook profile. Her post was created in her free time and was only visible to her friends and family. Yet, once the post was discovered, a superior demanded she remove it or potentially face disciplinary action, including loss of rank and pay. She eventually was forced to acquiesce and remove the post.

These are not isolated incidents, but reflect an institutionwide problem.

Take, for example, a memo released September 14, 2011, to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Here is an excerpt from a section regarding visits by religious leaders:

No religious items (i.e. Bibles, reading material, and/or artifacts) are allowed to be given away or used during a visit.

So the memo prevented a priest visiting an ailing parishioner from bringing his Bible—or imam, his Koran—

with him to the hospital. This sparked a national outcry and the memo was quickly rescinded under the claim that it was an “accident.” So the memo was “accidental.”

But what about military briefings? Are they “accidental” as well?

Last month, several dozen U.S. Army Active and Reserve troops were advised to treat the American Family Association as a hate group. Apparently, the Christian ministry's support for traditional marriage was enough for the instructor to slap on the “hate group” label. Fortunately, again under public pressure, the Pentagon later retracted the label.

Similarly, a West Point think tank released a report at the beginning of the year labeling “far right” conservative groups, specifically those holding pro-life values, as extremists and domestic terrorists. Because a few radical and disturbed activists have used violence to further their cause, the report lumped in everyone who believed in the sanctity of all life as terrorists. It is dangerous and disingenuous to paint with such broad strokes, blaming entire groups for the terrible actions of a few individuals.

These stories are just a few examples of rising sentiment that attacks the expression of religion in our military first and then asks questions later. Taken individually, these incidents are cause for concern. Taken together, we must wonder whether this widespread activity is more than just coincidence.

We must also wonder why a distinguished institution has taken a political position in opposition and opposing those who have long championed the very values the military purports to uphold. Soldiers are being told with more frequency that religion has no place in the military. If they hope to rise in the ranks or escape punishment, they must leave their faith at the door.

The military is unique in its power to make broad demands over individual servicemembers, demands that can't be made over civilians. No one should be forced to choose between service to country and his or her faith. We must ensure that men and women in uniform have the ability to practice that faith without fear of reprimand.

The First Amendment secures the freedom of religious expression for all Americans, including those who protect our freedoms. How could we allow this liberty to be stripped away from our soldiers, our sailors, our pilots? Our brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers in the Armed Forces all deserve the same rights and liberties that we enjoy—the very ones that they fought to protect. Let's defend them at home as they defend us abroad.

Again, thank you Congresswoman HARTZLER for doing this.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you, Congressman HULTGREN.

I think that is a very good point—that we should defend their rights as they are defending us.

I am looking forward and very much appreciate my colleague from Michigan, who is here tonight as well, because he has put his life on the line, starting after high school, going to serve in Vietnam—I believe you were an infantry rifleman to start off with—and then ended up all the way serving with the military police over in Iraq.

First of all, thank you for your service. Thank you for what you are doing to defend freedoms even today as we talk about this important issue. So I yield time to you.

Mr. BENTIVOLIO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentlewoman from Missouri for the opportunity to speak on this very important topic.

Mr. Speaker, a few months ago, I read a report that really bothered me. The story said that Army briefs labeled Evangelical Christians and Catholics as “extremists.” That really disturbs me, and it should disturb everyone in this room—in fact, everyone in this country.

We have to remember that the men and women in our Armed Forces represent a microcosm of America. Although they have a variety of beliefs, they work together to defend us. On the battlefield, the enemy doesn’t care what you look like or what God you worship. I serve God and country in that order, as did many of my fellow soldiers.

It was the greatest honor of my life to serve my country, first as an infantryman, as you said, and later in the Michigan Army National Guard for more than 20 years. I can say without a doubt that the soldiers I served with represented the best America had to offer. That is still true today as well. Millions of them are Christians. It is wrong and disrespectful to equate those who believe in traditional values with members of a hate group. Our military should grant mutual respect to everyone in the armed services, because that diversity is what makes America great.

Before I close, I would like to remind everyone about that famous prayer that was addressed or mentioned in the gentleman from Texas’ speech. A great general said before the soldiers embarked on that great, great battle on D-day:

Good luck. And let us all beseech the blessings of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you.

We have another friend from California here, Representative DOUG LAMALFA. We are so glad that he is here, and I want to yield time to you to hear what your thoughts are on this very important topic of religious freedom in our military.

Mr. LAMALFA. Thank you, Mrs. HARTZLER. I really, really appreciate you leading the charge on this very important issue that is probably not noticed by a lot of Americans these days, but is certainly being noticed by those members of the military that wish to

express their religious freedoms as they see fit.

Indeed, that was really one of the cornerstone issues of the Founders on several items: on taxation, of course, on private property and private property rights, and very importantly, the ability of Americans in the new country to express their religious views as they see fit, to have the freedom to do that.

So it is rather amazing, and certainly appalling, that in our own military we see this going on where those rights are being suppressed, especially what we are hearing tonight with some of my previous colleagues’ speeches about Christianity. Having a Bible on a desk somehow is a problem for somebody? How have we gotten to this point here? How can people be labeled somehow as part of a terrorist organization when actually these are peaceful enterprises where you are trying to bring people together under the grace of God?

□ 1830

I have, in my Washington, D.C., office and in one of my district offices, this portrait here of General Washington as a reminder, as a way for me to continue to seek humility myself. General Washington, Valley Forge, what a man of principle, of humility, of grace. This picture captures so much. He knew it was important that he bow to God, and it certainly served him well and served the founding of this country at a very perilous time when the fledgling Revolutionary War could have gone either way at the time. He is an example for all of us back then and right now. That is why I like that portrait so much, and I am glad you brought it here tonight.

The reasons, as put by the Founders for our religious freedom, have been mentioned here. It is a right guaranteed by the First Amendment. Those who were willing to lay down their lives for us fought for that for all Americans, and we should be guaranteed this right without any questions asked.

So I feel it is a duty for me, as one Member of Congress, and my colleagues here tonight in speaking about this to work to fight to uphold that right. Who has taken over in our military that thinks that this is acceptable, to suppress this freedom of expression of religion? I don’t understand it. So we are here to protect those servicemembers as well and that ability to have that freedom.

We know that the chaplaincy was formed in 1775 at the behest of General Washington, who knew and acknowledged at that time how important religious freedom was to our soldiers. The chaplains exist to facilitate the free exercise of religion under the First Amendment for servicemembers, and they faithfully administer to servicemembers of all faith, or of no faith. I think that is a key thing to mention here.

We have all heard the story mentioned earlier as well about “there are

no atheists in foxholes.” You may have heard that phrase. It goes back to a story by Father Cummings, who was a civilian Catholic priest in the Philippines. The phrase was coined during the Japanese attack at Corregidor. During the siege, Cummings had noticed that non-Catholics were attending his services. Some he knew were not Catholic; some were not religious. Some he knew were atheists. Christ just brings out a desire for something greater than ourselves and a need to look within or above. With the pending surrender of Allied forces to the Japanese, Cummings began calming men down by reciting The Lord’s Prayer and offering up prayers on their behalf. He then uttered the famous phrase, “there’s no such thing as an atheist in a foxhole.”

Well, we all know there are all different types of religions in this Nation and people who practice no religion. They choose to have their own way of looking at things. And we embrace all that. Everybody has that right. Everybody has that ability.

So atheists are still allowed to be atheists, but to have a group of people dictate to everybody else—how many times have we seen these battles, such as a high school graduation, somebody wants to sue to stop a prayer or a nativity scene? If you don’t like it, don’t pay attention to it, because the rest of us sure see a lot of offensive things in TV and commercials and the T-shirts people wear, even people’s hygiene, and we don’t go around being able to stop them from expressing themselves that way.

So it certainly goes against the founding of this country to be oppressing people’s views; and, indeed, it is contributing to, I think, a breaking down of our military and its strength to have this kind of oppression going on.

So being able to join Mrs. HARTZLER tonight here and my other colleagues and pointing this out to the American public and then doing something about it here in these Halls of Congress is a necessary thing. I thank my colleague for bringing this topic up tonight and allowing me to speak.

Mrs. HARTZLER. I thank you for your kind words expressing how important it is we stand strong for our military. We want our military to be strong, and their ability to be able to pray and hold on to their faith, to express their faith is what makes them strong. It is part of it, so we don’t want to undermine that. Thank you for those words.

Now I turn to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. NUNNELEE), from Mississippi’s First District, to hear his thoughts on this and thank him for his letter that he authored to the Secretary of the Army that got a very positive response. So thank for your leadership.

Mr. NUNNELEE. Thank you, Mrs. HARTZLER, and I appreciate your leadership in this area.

You know, when the Framers of our Constitution put together this government and submitted it to the people, the American people looked at it and said, You did a good job, but it is not perfect. There is something that is missing, and that something is a Bill of Rights guaranteeing individual freedoms for all Americans. And so those 10 planks were constructed and added as part of the ratification process. I am convinced that if those 10 planks had not been added, the Constitution would not have been ratified. I do not believe it is insignificant that the first sentence of the First Amendment guarantees freedom of religion:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

And our men and women in the military take an oath of office to support and defend that very Constitution, but they do not surrender that First Amendment right immediately when they put on a uniform.

The trend of military instructors and officers portraying Christians and socially conservative nonprofit organizations as “extremists” and potential threats to our Nation is unconscionable. Recently, they labeled the American Family Association, a group in my district that by their very name indicates that they are committed to the preservation of the American people. The fact that they are labeled as an extremist organization, unbelievable.

These developments are part of what appears to be a mounting culture for religious intolerance and hostility towards Christians within the military. I do not believe that adequate steps have been taken to address the root cause of these incidents, and that is why I put together the letter that Mrs. HARTZLER referred to to the Secretary of the Army, along with a number of my colleagues, to communicate our concerns regarding these developments and ask for the details on what the Army is doing to foster a culture of religious liberty among our men and women in our military.

While our Founding Fathers prohibited the establishment of a State-established religion, they purposely did not restrict references to God or personal beliefs in civic dialogue, military service, or everyday life.

Mr. Speaker, the dais on which you sit, over which you preside this great House, has behind it the American flag. Above that flag are the four words of our national motto: “In God We Trust.”

Congress has a responsibility to fight attempts within our military to restrict the religious liberty of those who serve our Nation and work to safeguard these freedoms. It is intolerable for those brave men and women serving our country to be denied these very freedoms they are putting their lives on the line to defend.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you very much for your leadership, and for bringing up those excellent points.

Now I would like to turn to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. HUELSKAMP) to share his thoughts on this important topic, the military and religions freedom.

Mr. HUELSKAMP. Congresswoman HARTZLER, I appreciate your leadership on this topic. It is so essential, not just to our brave men and women serving in the military, but also to our foundation as a Nation.

I would like to identify two stories that occurred in the last month and a half in the military. They are very troubling.

During the government slowdown in October, the administration, it was reported in some parts of the media, required all chapels that were serviced by contract chaplains to be closed.

In particular, I visited with Father Ray Leonard, who served a naval base in South Carolina. He was not informed ahead of time. He showed up for Saturday evening mass to a locked door at the chapel. Door locked. It said, Come back. Shut down. Go away. People from his congregation were pouring into the parking lot and were forbidden, a locked door, not allowed to enter. He said, I want to volunteer. I want to do it for free. I want to say mass. The government said no.

Father Ray Leonard had a long history. He just had come back from serving as a missionary in China. His words were:

I expected that in China. I expected a locked church door in China, but not in America, not on a military base.

The Department of Defense decided they were going to punish men and women of faith by locking those doors.

Another case of a chaplain in Texas, the first day of the government slowdown, he was ordered to come to the office. By 10 a.m., his BlackBerry was taken from him. All of his contact information was taken from him, as was his computer. He was forbidden to answer any private calls. He was forbidden to answer emails. He was forbidden to communicate with any of the folks he was in the middle of counseling. Those are folks suffering from PTSD. During the entire shutdown, the government forbade him to serve as a chaplain.

It is those kinds of things that you are wondering what they are thinking at the Department of Defense in this administration because, as James Madison wrote, “conscience is the most sacred of all properties”—but if you refuse access to chaplains, the folks who are putting their lives on the line.

I was in the White House in April when the Congressional Medal of Honor was granted to Father Emil Kapaun from Kansas, and the President talked about his great history and how he inspired Catholics and Protestants and Jews and Muslims at that death camp, and he received an award and a tremendous honor. He was a tremendous man and a tremendous leader, but he is the very type of person that I believe today would not be allowed to serve in our

U.S. military. That is a shame. But most devastating, it is not just a shame; it is a loss to the men and women who are looking for that type of support, that type of encouragement, that type of inspiration. This was a Nation founded with his blessings, and then we turn around and lock the church door. We turn around and kick chaplains out who actually have views that differ with the administration. This is an attack on religious liberty in the military. Who will be there to defend the religious liberty of our members of the armed services? We are there.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you very much. We started off with a poster of George Washington praying at Valley Forge. We have come a long ways in this country. You have heard the stories tonight of how that freedom to express religion is under attack. It is time for the pattern of intimidation and intolerance and coercion to stop. It is time to preserve and defend religious freedom to keep America strong and keep our armed services strong.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

PATENT LAW

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

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, I first would like to associate myself with the remarks of my colleagues that I have just heard. The struggle for freedom is a continuing struggle that started back with our Founding Fathers and will not end with us. Every generation has to pick up the torch or the light of liberty and justice will be extinguished and it will never be returned. Reagan always told us, it just takes one generation not to do their job, and we will have lost our freedom forever.

Tonight I would like to talk about a very significant part of our freedom and liberty, and it deals specifically with patents and intellectual property rights. I know sometimes over the years when they hear somebody is going to talk about patent law, there is a big yawn, but this has been a significant part of the success of the United States.

Our Founding Fathers believed that with technology and freedom and, yes, with profit motive, that this was the formula that would uplift humankind and that would make America a great country in which all of our people benefited from this greatness and the prosperity we would have here. They believed it so strongly that they wrote into our Constitution a guarantee of the ownership rights of inventors and authors. It is the only place in the body of the Constitution where the word “right” is used. The rest of the rights that we have just been talking about were part of the Bill of Rights.