

a group of NGOs based in Iraq who told me ISIS beheaded six Christians—then proceeded to play soccer with their decapitated heads.

This past Sunday, for the first time in 1,600 years, there was no Mass in Mosul. The head of Iraq's largest Christian community said, "For the first time in the history of Iraq, Mosul is now empty of Christians."

Mr. Speaker, ISIS has systematically and insidiously targeted Iraq's ancient Christians, and they are now nearly extinct. It can rightly be called targeted religious cleansing, and it is a crime against humanity."

And yet, we hear not a word from the President of the United States when a Christian genocide is taking place at this very moment. And we have not heard one syllable about what his administration is doing or planning to do to relieve or protect persecuted Christians in Iraq.

So, on the floor of this house, I repeat the words we wrote in a letter to President Obama a month ago, QUOTE, "we urge you and your administration to urgently and actively engage with the Iraqi central government and the Kurdistan Regional Government to prioritize additional security support for these particularly vulnerable populations and provide emergency humanitarian assistance to those affected communities. Absent immediate action, we will most certainly witness the annihilation of an ancient faith community from the lands they've inhabited for centuries." UNQUOTE

Mr. Speaker, if President Obama continues to ignore this Christian Genocide in Iraq, history will record that it was Barack Obama who idly stood around and let it happen.

TRANSPARENT AIRFARES ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 28, 2014

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to submit the following letters into the record with regard to the debate on H.R. 4156.

CONSUMER FEDERATION
OF AMERICA

July 18, 2014

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: Consumer Federation of America, a nonprofit association of consumer organizations around the country that represent the interests of millions of your constituents, urges you to reject H.R. 4156, the Transparent Airline Act of 2014. This bill may be taken up on the suspension calendar, but at whatever point it is presented, we ask you to oppose it.

There is nothing transparent, or pro-consumer, about this bill. It would allow airlines to advertise fares that do not include the mandatory taxes, hiding the true cost until consumers reach the end of the purchase process. This would make the cost of airline tickets appear artificially low and prevent budget-conscious consumers from determining upfront whether they can afford to fly and how the cost of doing so compares to other options, such as traveling to their destinations by train or car.

The argument that consumers are entitled to know how much of the ticket price is comprised of taxes is totally disingenuous—that breakdown does show before consumers complete their purchases. Unlike charges for things such as checked baggage and extra

legroom, however, taxes are not optional. Therefore, consumers do not base their air travel decisions on the amount of the taxes, which are standardized. Just as with buying gasoline, they shop for airline tickets based on the total cost including taxes. They are entitled to know that cost at the onset.

Please stand with the traveling public in supporting real truth in airfares by rejecting H.R. 4156.

Sincerely yours,

SUSAN GRANT,
Director of Consumer Protection.

JULY 15—CONSUMER GROUPS' LETTER TO U.S. HOUSE MEMBERS

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: We the undersigned consumer groups have learned that highly controversial H.R. 4156, the Transparent Airfares Act of 2014, is on the short list in the House for possible inclusion on the Suspension Calendar prior to the August recess. H.R. 4156 is contentious legislation that would harm millions of consumers by reversing a U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) rule implemented in 2012 as a cure to misleading airline advertising. We urge you to strongly object to the inclusion of H.R. 4156 on the Suspension Calendar.

Consumer groups were not alerted to the prospect of this legislation, nor were we provided any opportunity for input before Committee markup. H.R. 4156 was rushed by voice vote through the House Transportation Committee on April 9, 2014 after just 9 minutes of discussion. There were no hearings, no outreach for public opinion. This rushed process has denied other stakeholders an opportunity to inform Congress of their views and the flaws in this bill.

Now, after steamrolling the bill through Committee, airlines hope to rush the bill through the House under Suspension of the Rules. But this is not the type of unobjectionable proposal that the Suspension Calendar is designed for; rather, it is harmful and controversial special-interest legislation. There is not one consumer group or business travel organization that supports this legislation; most have publicly criticized both the bill and the rushed process.

This anti-consumer legislation serves no purpose, in our view, other than to mislead consumers about the real price of airfare—to the benefit of airlines, but at the expense of consumers.

Indeed, The New York Times Editorial Board on April 22 criticized the bill in an editorial saying: "This push to mislead consumers is particularly galling since recent mergers, like that of American Airlines and US Airways, have made the industry less competitive." Likewise, The Washington Post reported on April 24: "Consumers have reacted to this bill in the same way their advocates have: They're dead-set against it."

We urge you to stand up against this anti-consumer move by the airlines and to ask House leadership not to schedule this highly controversial bill for the Suspension Calendar, and instead insist on a fair opportunity for travel industry and consumer groups' input and proper deliberation.

Sincerely,

AirlinePassengers.org, Association for Airline Passenger Rights, Business Travel Coalition, Consumers Union, Ed Perkins, Consumer Advocate, FlyersRights.org, National Consumers League, Travelers United, U.S. PIRG.

TRAVELERS UNITED, INC.,
Arlington, VA, July 30, 2014.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: I write to outline the harm the Airfare Transparency Act (H.R. 4156) will cause for passengers, travel agen-

cies and corporate travel managers. And, to highlight the strong opposition to this legislation from consumers, the aviation distribution industry and corporate travel managers.

HR 4156 is completely unnecessary for its proposed impact.

Under this bill aviation will become the only industry in American permitted to add federal excise taxes and fees at the end of the ticket buying process, just like local taxes and fees.

HR 4156 will enshrine drip pricing into law, a form of deceptive and misleading pricing that has long been battled by the FTC and DOT.

This legislation makes understanding airfares less transparent, more confusing and misleading.

Airlines and their unions claim that this bill is necessary to ensure passengers know "exactly how much of their ticket price is attributable to federal taxes and fees while at the same time knowing the full price of air travel before they purchase a ticket."

The current DOT rules allow for airlines to do exactly that. Specific language in the regulation codifies how that can be done. Plus, airlines have many other opportunities to clearly outline taxes and fees paid when purchasing tickets. Airlines can explain taxes and fees on ticket itineraries. Airlines can print taxes and fees on boarding passes along with Sudoko games and the weather. However, airlines choose not to do this.

When airlines claim that they are the unjustly subjected to revealing federal excise taxes prior to purchase, they are wrong. Every other industry in the U.S. that is subjected to federal excise taxes and federal fees includes those costs in the product price. These include gasoline, liquor, beer, tires, trucks and others. The taxes and fees that other transportation and travel entities add to the final prices are state and local taxes and fees—airlines are exempt from those taxes.

The only part of this bill that would change what can be done under the current DOT full-fare regulations is the misleading and deceptive ability to advertise incomplete low prices for which no consumer can purchase air travel.

HR 4156 makes airfares more difficult to understand and purchase. It was passed out of committee and under suspension of rules with no consumer input and no consultation with the airline distribution network of travel agents and corporate travel managers that deal with the public on a day-by-day basis.

This bill has been opposed by far more than a few "talking heads."

Almost every major newspaper has opposed HR 4156 in editorials or articles over the past few months. The papers and magazines include The New York Times, Washington Post, USA Today, Chicago Tribune, Time Magazine, and many others. A change.org petition garnered more than 127,000 signatures specifically opposing this bill.

Major consumer organization, in addition to Travelers United (formerly Consumer Travel Alliance), have aligned to oppose this legislation. These organization include AAA, Association for Airline Passenger Rights, Business Travel Coalition, Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union, Ed Perkins (Consumer Advocate), FlyersRights.org, National Consumers League and U.S. PIRG.

This legislation undoes years of hard work by advocates to ensure that consumers are not duped when purchasing airfare. Transparency cannot be achieved through confusion.

Sincerely,

CHARLIE LEOCHA,
Chairman.

RECOGNIZING MR. FLOYD
BENNINGHOFF'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. JACKIE WALORSKI

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 2014

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Mr. Floyd Benninghoff, who reached the milestone of his 100th birthday on June 12th, 2014.

Mr. Benninghoff was born in Hamlet, IN as 1 of 9 brothers and sisters and spent most of his life as a Hoosier. He is the father to Ronald Benninghoff and Lynn Kline, a grandfather to 5 grandchildren and a great grandfather to 14. During World War II he served his country as an airplane technician, then spent the next several years as a delivery driver for the Jewel Tea Company before retiring from Sears. He is well known by his family and friends for his love of music and his guitar playing abilities.

I am honored to wish Mr. Floyd Benninghoff a very happy 100th birthday and to recognize his admirable life. On behalf of Indiana's Second District, I am proud to recognize Mr. Benninghoff's birthday and life and wish him good health and many more birthdays.

RECOGNIZING THE OUTSTANDING
ACHIEVEMENT OF ESCAMBIA
HIGH SCHOOL NAVY JUNIOR RE-
SERVE OFFICERS TRAINING
CORPS

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 2014

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Escambia High School Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (NJROTC) for placing first in this year's Navy League NJROTC drill team competition. This outstanding achievement is evidence of the hard work and dedication of the Escambia High NJROTC program.

After a year of three to four hour long practices after school, a combined 15,000 hours of community service required to satisfy NJROTC standards, and months of local and regional competitions, the "Gator Elite," as they're known, beat out more than 600 other NJROTC programs to achieve the highest honor and bring this prestigious recognition back to Northwest Florida.

In addition to the normal academic coursework, the members of Escambia High's NJROTC program were required to comply with rigorous procedures to maintain discipline through uniform inspections and strict grooming standards, while also mastering the core components of drill team exercises, through marching practice and adroit handling of rifles in showmanship fashion. The "Gator Elite" achieved these tasks with the highest degree of excellence, as evidenced by their first place performance at the NJROTC national championships.

On behalf of the United States Congress, it is my privilege to congratulate the Escambia High NJROTC "Gator Elite"—Corey Abercrombie, Joshua Aguilar, Alexander Apin, Nigel Archer-Shee, Alexis Cannon, Michael Cox, Faith Doby, Audrey Ferrand, Emerald

Francis, Julia Freeman, Ruben Gardner Jr., Christopher Gibson, Cassandra Harrison, Katelin Hayes, Daniel Helms, Thalezondra Hill-Dowdy, Matthew Holmes, Brenda Jernigan, JoseRafael Kaibigan, Angelique Le, Jared Lyon, Jason Mitchell, Andrew Nicolle, Austin Odell, Jeremiah Renfro, Destiny Seladones, Jimmie Simmons, Alfonso Sosa, Antonio Stone, Brian Thompson, Kenny Tu, Alphonso Williams, Erik Williams, Nicholas Willig, Alex Wilson and Brieonna Wilson and their instructors, LCDR Eddie Thompson (USN, Ret.), SCPO Ruben Gardner (USN, Ret.), and SGTMAJ Andre Francis (USMC, Ret.). My wife Vicki joins me in wishing them all the best for continued success.

TRIBUTE TO DR. WILLIE WILSON,
CHAIRMAN OF OMAR MEDICAL
SUPPLY COMPANY

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 2014

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, July 27th, 2014, Dr. Willie Wilson celebrated the 27th anniversary of Singation, his nationally syndicated gospel television show at the Apostolic Pentecostal Church of Morgan Park, where Apostle William A. Ellis is Pastor and spiritual leader.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Dr. Wilson, not only for the longevity of this production, but also for his business success and for his humanitarian work with faith-based organizations.

Dr. Willie Wilson is no ordinary man. He is basically a man of great religious faith. Self educated, self made, high school dropout, multi millionaire business man, a great philanthropist who contributes somewhere in the area of a million dollars annually to small churches and provides financial support to many other charities.

In addition to running his businesses (Omar Medical Supply Company), he serves as Chairman and Chief Fundraiser for the Chicago Baptist Institute, a college level educational and training institute for clergy and lay individuals who want to learn how to more effectively practice Christian principles and practice in their everyday lives.

Dr. Wilson is well known for his hobby and passion for singing gospel music. On practically every Sunday afternoon, he, along with his gospel singing group and orchestra can be found at a small church singing gospel music, after which he always leaves a sizeable donation for the church.

A man among men, a giver from his heart, and a leader of leaders.

I commend and congratulate Dr. Willie Wilson as he and his friends celebrate 27 years of Singation.

DENOUNCING USE OF CIVILIANS
AS HUMAN SHIELDS BY HAMAS
AND OTHER TERRORIST ORGANI-
ZATIONS

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 30, 2014

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 107, a resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in support of the State of Israel as it defends itself against rocket attacks launched by Hamas.

These deadly rocket attacks launched from Gaza into Israel by Hamas against unarmed civilian populations are deserving of the condemnation of this House and the international community.

Mr. Speaker, since the most recent air-strikes began, hundreds of persons—Israelis and Palestinians—have been killed and many hundreds more injured.

No sovereign nation can be expected to stand idly by while unprovoked acts of violence are perpetrated against its citizens by terrorists or foreign entities.

Israel has, as do all countries under the law of nations, the right to exist and the right to self-defense. This means Israel is allowed to take all necessary, appropriate, and measured actions required to keep its people safe. Hamas should cease using their fellow citizens as human shields.

But at the end of the day, the peace and justice we all seek will come from the parties acting in good faith to find a just and lasting peace that recognizes Israel's right to exist, renounces violence and terrorism, and achieves the two-state solution.

Among the most important things that can be done to bring peace and the two-state solution into being and to halt the suffering is for the Administration to redouble its efforts to mediate a peaceful resolution of the conflict and for the President Mahmoud Abbas to exercise stronger leadership in rallying and uniting the Palestinian people under the banner of peace with justice.

Mr. Speaker, I condemn launching rockets into civilian populations. In addition to death and destruction, such attacks instill fear and cause suffering to innocent men, women, and children.

Finally, I offer sympathies for the loss of life among the Israelis and the Palestinians.

As the great theologian St. Augustine reminds us, "peace is the necessary condition in which people can be free to work out their eternal destiny."

RECOGNIZING THE WORK OF
JOHNPAUL JONES

HON. DEREK KILMER

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2014

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Johnpaul Jones for his distinguished architecture, his commitment to honoring our natural world and cultures, and his accomplishments as a recipient of the 2013 National Humanities Medal.