

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ERIC SWALWELL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 14, 2014

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, due to operational difficulties of the flight I intended to take, I was unable to be present for the vote taken on Wednesday, November 12. Had I been present, I would have voted “yes” on rollcall vote number 516, regarding H.R. 4194.

HONORING ROBERT W. BOGLE

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 14, 2014

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend, Bob W. Bogle, as he receives the Outstanding Community Leader Award from the Friends of Labor Committee of Laborers’ Local 332. Bob is the chairman, president, and CEO of The Philadelphia Tribune.

Bob is chairman of the Hospitals and Higher Education Facilities Authority of Philadelphia, and also serves as the Mayor of Philadelphia’s appointee on the Independence Blue Cross Board. Bob is also chairman of the Council of Trustees at Cheyney University, his alma mater, and serves on a number of boards, including the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce and the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau. Additionally, he was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as member of the National Museum of African American History and Culture Commission.

The Philadelphia Tribune is America’s oldest and Greater Philadelphia’s largest audited paper primarily serving the African-American community. Before assuming his present position, Bob held other high-level positions at the newspaper, including director of advertising, director of marketing, and executive vice president. The magazine has been honored at least five times by the National Newspaper Publisher’s Association, a trade association of 205 Black-owned newspapers across the country.

I invite you and all of my colleagues to join me in commemorating my friend Bob’s accomplishment and his dedication to the city of Philadelphia, the birthplace of America.

CONGRATULATING THE FESTUS HIGH SCHOOL BOYS CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 14, 2014

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Festus High School Boys Cross Country Team for winning the Class 3 Missouri State Championship.

I ask that you join me in recognizing the Festus Tigers for a job well done.

SPEECH BY ROBERT GHAZOOL

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 14, 2014

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share a speech given by one of my constituents, Robert Ghazool of Huntington, NY, when he introduced me during my visit to St. Peter’s Syriac Orthodox Church. It was a pleasure working with Mr. Ghazool in setting up my visit to the church.

“The persecution of Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East is an affront to human rights and cannot be allowed to endure. We must stand with this community and stand up against this violence”.

This quote was sent to me by Congressman Israel and read during our rally for our brethren in front of the United Nations.

Congressman, as in the rally in front of the United Nations, our church has been at the center of a movement that has taken on life both here and abroad. Genocide is occurring and many Christians of the world can no longer be on the sidelines of history and see it happen. As we all know this genocide did not begin in June and July as the ISIS thugs poured in from neighboring Syria. This was the culmination, a last straw if you will, in what has been happening to the Christians in Iraq since 2003. For the sake of time, instead of giving you an exact timeline here is an overview of what our brethren have endured.

They have endured over 60 church bombings, countless kidnappings and executions, our priests being killed, the massacre of the church of Sayidat Al Najat, the ethnic cleansing in Dora, which was once called the Vatican of Baghdad for the amount of churches and Christians that lived there, our Archbishops being killed in Iraq and taken hostage in Syria. Due to all this most of the Christians of Iraq have fled the persecution they endured, and what was once a population of 1.5 million is now estimated to be 500,000.

In the last few years, the perils of the Christians of Iraq are now being faced by our brethren in Syria. The Christians of the Middle East are now in a precarious situation of failed nation states that cannot or will not come to the aide of the minorities being persecuted, democratic elections being held only to see Islamists coming into power as we saw with Hamas in Gaza and the Islamic Brotherhood in Egypt. The void left by lack of strong central governments has unfortunately been filled by groups like Al-Qaeda, Al-Nusra, ISIS, and Khorasan just to name a few.

Now we come to the events that have brought us here today. ISIS came in with their black flag of hate and ignorance into Mosul and the Nineveh plains in late June. The ultimatum was clear—leave, convert or the only thing left for you is death by the sword. The conclusion for ISIS was simple; these people would simply lie over and convert to their brand of Satanic Islam. This would show the world how weak Christianity is and how powerful the Islamic State has become. I am so proud to tell you how wrong they were.

Even after the thugs of ISIS branded the homes of the Christians with the Arabic N which means Nazarene, none converted and after vicious threats and attacks and with minutes numbered they fled north to first the Nineveh Plains and then farther north with nothing more than the clothes on their

back. Everything was confiscated, deeds to their houses taken, IDs burnt, anything of value even down to a mere wedding band taken. Some walked countless miles when their cars were taken on the border of Mosul, others were beaten and unfortunately many were killed.

All of them no matter what the circumstance said with one voice NO. NO, we will not convert, no we will not pay a Jizya, and if you kill us, we will be with a full heart knowing that we died for our Lord and Savior. You see my brethren these last souls were and are the bravest of our brave. They were the ones that no matter what the circumstance stayed to preserve our heritage, our language, our culture, and my God probably the last chance of civility in a land that frankly has little of it. Our Savior told us to leave everything and follow him. Our brethren in Nineveh have reminded us all what it is to be a true Christian. They are the modern day bearers of the cross, like our forefathers who themselves carried the cross as in 1890 Dierbekkar and the Christian Genocide of 1915. We cannot let their sacrifice go in vain. For if we do, we lose the voice of moderation that the Christians have always had in that region. We lose the teachers that taught literacy to the people that came after us. We lose a part of Judea-Christian History that once lost will be difficult to find once again. Today for the first time in over 1600 years no Christians are in Mosul. The sounds of the church bells are replaced by the sounds of war, our crosses, statues and signs of peace and love in the 45 Church facilities taken over by ISIS, now replaced by their black flag of hate, death and destruction. We are the indigenous people of that land and we deserve and want better.

Congressman Israel you have been a leader in Congress when it comes to issues of human rights and religious equality. You were influential in the response and letters about Darfur. You sit on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, and were quick to stand with us and acknowledge what was transpiring to the minorities of Iraq and Syria as was evident in your statement that was read in front of the UN. You have visited Iraq and Afghanistan nine times which puts you in a unique position to be our voice in Congress. Our people are in harm’s way, they have endured more than any people should and we need your help.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the great sacrifice that our Armed Forces are enduring to bring the fight to ISIS. Their heroism makes us all proud to be Americans. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and for the families of the four American and British citizens that have been beheaded by these cowards vultures.

Without further ado, on behalf of Reverend FR. Gabriel Adde, the board of trustees, and the congregation of St. Peter’s Church please help me in welcoming the Honorable Congressman Steve Israel.

RECOGNIZING THE DE LA SALLE HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PROGRAM

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 14, 2014

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the outstanding record of a remarkable high school football program and Mr. Bob Ladouceur, the coach who, for 34 years, brought out the very best in his players both on and off the field. Under

Coach Ladouceur's guidance, the Spartans of De La Salle have recorded a historic 151-game winning streak over a 12 year period and are the inspiration behind the recently released film, "When the Game Stands Tall".

In 1979 at just 24 years of age, Bob Ladouceur was hired as both a religious studies instructor and Head Coach of the De La Salle Varsity Football Team to mold an athletic program in the early stages of development. Coach Ladouceur masterfully shaped an outstanding program and by 1995 he was named the National Football League's first National High School Coach of the Year. In 2001, he was inducted into the National Federation of State High School Associations Hall of Fame and has been named "Coach of the Year" by both ESPN and USA Today.

In addition to the winning streak, the statistics for the De La Salle Spartans are quite simply amazing:

—399–25–3 overall record

—20 undefeated seasons, including 12 in a row, resulting in the 151 game winning streak

—49–7 average margin of victory during the streak

—28 CIF North Coast Section titles

—No. 1 in national rankings seven times

—A dozen future NFL players began their careers as Spartans.

But the story of De La Salle football is more than touchdowns and field goals. To quote Coach Ladouceur, "I always placed the huge value in our program in how our kids treat each other; what kind of students they are. Are they learning things under our care?" He masterfully developed this outstanding program to guide his students to excellence not just on the field but through life.

Mr. Speaker, I invite this chamber to join with me in recognizing Coach Bob Ladouceur for his tireless service to the students of De La Salle and to congratulate each of the members of the Spartans Football Team for their dedication to the game and to values they have carried with them off the field.

RECOGNIZING CONGRESSIONAL CERTIFICATE OF MERIT RECIPIENTS

HON. MICHELE BACHMANN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 14, 2014

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to proudly honor thirteen high school seniors from the Sixth Congressional District of Minnesota who earned the Congressional Certificate of Merit for their exemplary citizenship and academic excellence. The award winners include: Spencer Clark, Andover High School; Kevin Bloch, Immaculate Conception Academy; Brooke Volpone, Monticello High School; Brandon Fabel, Central High School; Carissa Nelson, PACT Charter School; Cole Anderson, Becker High School; Natalia Velenchenko, Buffalo High School; Austin Schmitt, Royalton High School; Grant Tesdahl, Elk River High School; Abbey Halonen, Dassel-Cokato High School; Jiahui Jiao, Delano High School; Gino Fraboni, Princeton High School; and Luke Anderson, Legacy Christian Academy.

These students have made significant contributions to their schools and communities and stand out to faculty as the "cream of the

crop." They have shown they can set and achieve goals, work as team members, be leaders, and volunteer—all while maintaining a proper school work/life balance.

I ask this body join me in congratulating them and wishing them the best in their assuredly bright futures. They are the pride and joy of Minnesota, and I expect they will continue to astound us.

HONORING AMBASSADOR U KYAW MYO HTUT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF MYANMAR

HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 14, 2014

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Myanmar for its positive developments in political transition and economic affairs.

After decades of isolation, Myanmar started a series of drastic political and economic reforms under President U Thein Sein in 2011 that present a promising opportunity for sustainable development toward democratization, freedom, rule of law and peace—crucial factors for a life of dignity.

President U Thein Sein was welcomed to the White House in May 2013, the first Myanmar leader to visit the United States in 47 years. He updated President Obama on key developments since Obama's visit to Yangon half a year earlier and both leaders praised Myanmar's political and economic progress. A year after U Thein Sein's visit to the U.S. 49 companies were registered in Myanmar, among them GE, Chevron, Coca-Cola and Colgate-Palmolive. In November 2014, President Obama joined regional leaders for the 25th ASEAN summit in Myanmar and met both President U Thein Sein and opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The Myanmar government is represented in the U.S. by His Excellency U Kyaw Myo Htut, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Union of the Republic of Myanmar to the United States. Ambassador U Kyaw Myo Htut has been the Myanmar Ambassador to the United States since September 2013. Prior to that he served as Ambassador of Myanmar to the United Kingdom (2011 to 2013) and in this role played a crucial part in the lifting of the European Union's sanctions on Myanmar.

Ambassador U Kyaw Myo Htut aims to promote trade and strengthen bilateral ties with the United States. An essential part of his job is to push for more U.S. investment in Myanmar while addressing human rights issues. In that regard, he works towards re-allowing the Generalized System of Preference (GSP) for trade with Myanmar, which Congress stopped extending in July 2013.

In his role as Ambassador, U Kyaw Myo Htut also serves as an economic facilitator and regularly advises U.S. investors and companies wishing to enter the Myanmar market. U Kyaw Myo Htut takes a strong stand toward the improvement of human rights in Myanmar and shows continuous efforts to encourage the United States to acknowledge ongoing reforms.

Since 2011, the Myanmar government has strongly welcomed private and foreign investment. The Myanmar government revised sev-

eral outdated laws, granted licenses for airport construction and telecommunication projects and began to rebuild its infrastructure in a bid to attract foreign capital. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) estimates that the current growth rate of 6.5% could triple per capita income by 2030 on the grounds that Myanmar will overcome the challenges ahead. These figures are supported by the McKinsey Global Institute, which estimates that Myanmar's economy will quadruple by 2030 to over USD 200 billion.

Being a resource-rich country with a single market of 60 million people and a developed private sector and middle class, Myanmar's economy suffers from an outdated financial system and banking sector. In 1990 the Central Bank Law reestablished the country's own Central Bank. Although new commercial banks were established, Myanmar was affected by Western sanctions. Due to these sanctions, the banking system could not be connected to the rest of the world at that time.

In 2013, President U Thein Sein signed a new Central Bank Act giving the Central Bank more independence while local banks expanded their branches and services rapidly. The opening up of the financial sector was further strengthened by the country's decision in September to grant a provisional banking license to nine institutions, providing them with the authorization to deal with foreign companies, local banks and—in cooperation with a local institution—with Burmese companies. Among the nine banks that have been selected from a total of 25 applications are the three major Japanese houses: Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking and Mizuho Bank. Singapore is also well represented with the OCBC and UOB. Further banks taken into account are Australia and New Zealand Banking (ANZ), Malaysia's Maybank, the Bangkok Bank and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC). American banks did not participate in the application process.

The Myanmar government hopes that the admission of international financial institutions will provide an important impetus to the expansion of direct investment, as the nine selected institutions represent the major investor countries. This is important considering the many challenges faced by the banking sector. The country is still struggling to recover from the 2003 banking crisis, which had a lasting impact on the now mainly cash-based economy. It will require a strong regulatory framework, updated information technology infrastructure and skilled personnel to be ready for the challenges ahead.

Much more could be said about the work of Nobel Peace winner Aung San Suu Kyi, about President U Thein Sein's policy of openness, and about the country's positive developments in regard to religious freedom, healthcare and education. However, the policy of openness is not irreversible and the international community must do all it can to ensure that Myanmar's course is set right for sustainable development. It is essential that stability is achieved through economic and social prospects for all people, and I commend all who are working towards this goal.