

active intellectuals long committed to international norms and practices of human rights, the rule of law, and equal rights of individual citizenship—all essential for democracy and hence for making these countries partners in building societies where all faiths can live and prosper.

We are compelled to ask: Why are the Christians currently being killed or driven out? These communities represent openness to others and a desire for truth, even if inconvenient. They love learning and seek an equal share in building their respective nations. They do not believe in retaliation and embrace forgiveness. They respect individual life as an end in itself not as a means. These are attributes many Muslims also share and ones that any country would appreciate.

Even as we pledge to do all within our power to alleviate the suffering of Christians and other small religious communities in the Middle East, we urgently appeal for action from our government to recognize and act upon the unique plight of these religious communities.

It is our conviction that American foreign policy can be more effectively used to advocate for policies that protect international religious freedom for all. We welcomed President Obama's public remarks regarding his March 27 meeting with Pope Francis, concerning his reaffirmation that "it is central to U.S. foreign policy that we protect the interests of religious minorities around the world." As a matter of conscience, we, therefore, respectfully call for the following actions:

I. Appointment of the Special Envoy on Middle East Religious Minorities. A new special envoy post, filled by a prominent and knowledgeable citizen is needed for deep engagement in the issues and circumstances affecting Christians and other small religious communities in the region. Over 20 special envoy posts exist to protect a range of other groups and interests but none is dedicated to the plight of Middle Eastern religious minorities. American policies continue to be formed without adequately taking into account the impact they might have on these vulnerable communities. A high caliber envoy of stature who has the ear of the President could increase American engagement regarding Middle Eastern religious minorities, so that:

The views and interests, including physical safety and equal rights as citizens, of the members of small, defenseless groups are considered in any peace negotiations concerning Syria.

Every diplomatic effort is made to press other governments in the region to stop facilitating, harboring, and assisting any extremist groups and militias, and to foster respect for the defenseless religious communities.

Other policies to promote tolerance and respect for members of vulnerable religious communities in the Middle East are considered at the highest levels while there is still time to act.

It was just such a special envoy who helped draw attention to genocidal levels of religious and ethnic persecution in Sudan and usher in a comprehensive peace agreement to end the north-south conflict there in 2005.

II. Review of Foreign Aid. As he has done in the interest of other stated administration priorities, President Obama should initiate an internal review to ensure that American assistance programs, especially those that support national governments, uphold policies and principles that relate to religious freedom and pluralism. The review should include examining the region's national textbooks, local governmental broadcasting, statements by public officials, and national identity cards, where the inclusion

of one's religious identity is often used to deny rights. U.S. government-sponsored broadcasting, legal and constitutional assistance, and educational efforts should promote religious tolerance and protect religious freedom, including for small religious groups.

III. Refugee & Reconstruction Assistance. Our principal purpose in speaking out is to help Christian communities and other defenseless religious groups remain safely in the region. To that end, the vulnerable religious minorities, including those who are refugees in neighboring countries or displaced within their home countries, must have equitable access to American refugee, humanitarian, repatriation, and reconstruction aid. Many will need assistance to be relocated elsewhere in the region and American help could be decisive. The U.S. government must ensure that religious minorities are not discriminated against by local authorities in the distribution of aid donated by the U.S. government, as was reported to have occurred at certain junctures in Iraq, contributing to the wholesale exodus of its Christians and other small religious communities. It must also continue to reach Christians and others who eschew UN refugee camps that they perceive to be controlled by extremist groups. In some particularly tragic instances, we recognize that individual members of defenseless religious communities will never be able to return to their homes, and urge that those individuals be given fast track asylum in the United States and elsewhere in the West.

CONCLUSION

A generation ago, American religious leaders successfully mobilized support for the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. That law created the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and institutionalized regular State Department reporting on the status of religious liberty around the world. That legislation should be credited with helping to establish, as President Obama acknowledged at the National Prayer Breakfast last February, that "promoting religious freedom is a key objective of U.S. foreign policy." Now, new action is desperately needed by our churches, our government and our civil society institutions here in the United States, and by all people of good will to make that objective a reality. (Signatories are signing in their individual capacities and titles are included for identification purposes only.)

IN SUPPORT OF NATIONAL MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 19, 2014

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate National Military Appreciation Month and to honor the extraordinary bravery and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform by celebrating.

Each May, veteran and service organizations come together to hold events around the country to demonstrate their gratitude to current and former men and women in uniform and their families for their service to our country.

From Military Spouse Appreciation Day to Memorial Day, the month of May is a time when a grateful nation acknowledges and affirms the debt owed to those brave men and women who risked their lives to preserve the freedoms we too often take for granted.

It is important that we recognize and celebrate the tremendous role military personnel have played across the globe.

Texas is home to more than 130,000 active military personnel and more than 1,600,000 veterans, 30,000 of which are from the 18th Congressional District of Texas.

It has been an honor to represent these constituents and I am extremely proud of their service.

As we acknowledge our former, current and future military men and women, it is essential that we provide them with the resources necessary to help wounded warriors, veterans, and their families transition to civilian life.

That is why I was proud to cosponsor and help shepherd to passage H.R. 1344, Helping Heroes Fly Act, that was signed into law in 2013 and which facilitates expedited passenger screening at airports for service members who are severely injured or disabled, along with their families.

I also introduced H.R. 4110, the "Helping to Encourage Real Opportunity for Veterans Transitioning from Battlespace to Workplace Act of 2014," which provides strong incentives for employers to hire, retain, and employ veterans in positions that take maximum advantage of their skills and experience.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I recognize by the name the 53 brave men and women from my home city of Houston, who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and gave the last full measure of devotion to their country.

They are: Krystal Fitts, Jorge Luis Velasquez, Cody Norris, Jacob Molina, Pedro Maldonado, Eduardo Loreda, Matthew Catlett, Zarian Wood, Andrew Roughton, Edgar Heredia, Joshua Molina, Steven Candelo, Scott McIntosh, Orlando Perez, Jeremy Ray, Benjamin Garrison, Rodney Johnson, Matthew Medlicott, Alan Austin, William Edwards, Eric Salinas, Danny Soto, Roy Jones, Terrence Dunn, Hector Leija, David Fraser, Benjamin Rosales, Kenneth Pugh, Alberto Sanchez, Walter Moss, Michael Robertson, Howard Babcock, Timothy Roark, Ivica Jerak, Phillip George, Keith Mariotti, Clinton Gertson, Dexter Kimble, Jesus Leon-Perez, Thomas Zapp, Eric Allton, Andrew Houghton, Juan Torres, Pedro Contreras, Adolfo Carballo, Scott Larson, Leroy Sandoval, Armando Soriano, Keelan Moss, A. Esparza-Gutierrez, Tomas Sotelo, Brian Matthew Kennedy, and Brian Craig.

God bless them. And may God bless the United States.

HONORING LYNN BUCHANAN,
NEWBURY PARK BREAKAWAY
FROM CANCER CHAMPION

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 19, 2014

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Newbury Park cancer survivor and my constituent, Lynn Buchanan, who has been named a Breakaway from Cancer champion.

As a Breakaway from Cancer champion, Ms. Buchanan will be honored as part of the "Amgen Tour of California," the largest cycling race in the United States. Ms. Buchanan will lead the "Breakaway Mile," a special walk to the Tour of California finish line in Thousand

Oaks, honoring the millions of cancer survivors among us and in remembrance of the lives lost to this deadly disease. She will be joined by 150 members of the local Ventura County community.

In addition to Ms. Buchanan, the Breakaway from Cancer initiative will also recognize cancer survivors in other host communities along the course, which runs from Sacramento along the California coastline to Thousand Oaks. At the conclusion of each of the six stages of the Amgen Tour, Breakaway from Cancer cham-

pions will also present the “Most Courageous Rider” jersey.

A national partnership between biotech company Amgen and four nonprofits, the Breakaway from Cancer initiative works to increase awareness of the important resources available to people affected by cancer, from prevention to education and support to financial assistance and life after cancer.

First diagnosed with breast cancer in 1988, Ms. Buchanan was diagnosed a second time in 2012. Drawing strength from her family,

friends, and her local Cancer Support Community, Ms. Buchanan persevered. Now that her treatments are complete, she volunteers to help improve the lives of cancer patients and survivors in her own community.

I ask my colleagues to join me in commending Ms. Buchanan for her courage and leadership, and to commend the efforts of Amgen and its many community partners and volunteers for empowering cancer patients and celebrating cancer survivors.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the Congressional Record on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, May 20, 2014 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MAY 21

10 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Department of Defense
To hold hearings to examine energy security and research.

SD-192

Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Personnel

Business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2015.

SD-G50

Committee on Finance
Subcommittee on Social Security, Pensions, and Family Policy
To hold hearings to examine strengthening Social Security to meet the needs of tomorrow's retirees.

SD-215

Committee on Foreign Relations
To hold hearings to examine authorization for the use of military force after Iraq and Afghanistan.

SD-419

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Business meeting to consider an original bill entitled, "DHS Cybersecurity Workforce Recruitment and Retention Act of 2014", S. 2113, to provide taxpayers with an annual report disclosing the cost and performance of Government programs and areas of duplication among them, H.R. 1233, to amend chapter 22 of title 44, United States Code, popularly known as the Presidential Records Act, to establish procedures for the consideration of claims of constitutionally based privilege against disclosure of Presidential records, S. 1045, to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that persons having seriously delinquent tax debts shall be ineligible for Federal employment, S. 1744, to strengthen the accountability of individuals involved in misconduct affecting the integrity of background investigations, to update guidelines for security clearances, S. 1691, to amend title 5, United States Code, to improve the security of the United States border and to provide for reforms and rates of pay for border pa-

trol agents, S. 675, to prohibit contracting with the enemy, S. 1820, to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the costs of official portraits of Members of Congress, heads of executive agencies, and heads of agencies and offices of the legislative branch, H.R. 1036, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 103 Center Street West in Eatonville, Washington, as the "National Park Ranger Margaret Anderson Post Office", H.R. 1228, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 South 9th Street in De Pere, Wisconsin, as the "Corporal Justin D. Ross Post Office Building", H.R. 1451, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 14 Main Street in Brockport, New York, as the "Staff Sergeant Nicholas J. Reid Post Office Building", H.R. 2391, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5323 Highway N in Cottleville, Missouri as the "Lance Corporal Phillip Vinnedge Post Office", H.R. 3060, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 232 Southwest Johnson Avenue in Burleson, Texas, as the "Sergeant William Moody Post Office Building", and the nominations of Sherry Moore Trafford, and Steven M. Wellner, both to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, Julia Akins Clark, of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Federal Labor Relations Authority, and Tony Hammond, of Missouri, and Nanci E. Langley, of Hawaii, both to be a Commissioner of the Postal Regulatory Commission.

SD-342

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

SD-226

Special Committee on Aging

To hold hearings to examine the role of health care providers in advance care planning.

SD-106

Joint Economic Committee

To hold hearings to examine women's retirement security.

SH-216

2 p.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2015 for the Small Business Administration and the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund.

SD-138

2:15 p.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

Subcommittee on African Affairs

Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs with the Subcommittee on African Affairs to hold joint hearings to examine the escalating international wildlife trafficking crisis, focusing on ecological, economic and national security issues.

SD-419

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Closed business meeting to markup the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2015.

SR-222

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine delivering better health care value to consumers, focusing on the first three years of the medical loss ratio.

SR-253

Committee on Indian Affairs

Business meeting to consider S. 1474, to encourage the State of Alaska to enter into intergovernmental agreements with Indian tribes in the State relating to the enforcement of certain State laws by Indian tribes, to improve the quality of life in rural Alaska, to reduce alcohol and drug abuse, S. 1603, to reaffirm that certain land has been taken into trust for the benefit of the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatami Indians, S. 1622, to establish the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children, S. 1818, to ratify a water settlement agreement affecting the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, S. 2040, to exchange trust and fee land to resolve land disputes created by the realignment of the Blackfoot River along the boundary of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, S. 2132, to amend the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act of 2005, and H.R. 2388, to take certain Federal lands located in El Dorado County, California, into trust for the benefit of the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians; to be immediately followed by an oversight hearing to examine Indian education, focusing on the Bureau of Indian Education.

SD-628

MAY 22

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Closed business meeting to continue to markup the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2015.

SR-222

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Subcommittee on Housing, Transportation, and Community Development

To hold hearings to examine bringing our transit infrastructure to a state of good repair.

SD-538

Committee on the Judiciary

Business meeting to consider S. 1720, to promote transparency in patent ownership and make other improvements to the patent system.

SD-226

10 a.m.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine access and supports for servicemembers and veterans in higher education.

SD-430

MAY 23

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Closed business meeting to continue to markup the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2015.

SR-222

JUNE 4

3 p.m.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

To hold hearings to examine military service to small business owner, focusing on supporting America's veteran entrepreneurs.

SR-428A