

So, again, Roxcy, congratulations on being honored as a National Women's History Project 2014 Women of Character, Courage and Commitment. You have given countless girls and women the ability to pursue their full potential.

Congratulations to Roxcy, and may you keep fighting for many years still.

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BORDER SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'ROURKE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the bipartisan Border Enforcement Accountability, Oversight, and Community Engagement Act with my friend from across the aisle, Congressman STEVE PEARCE. This is a policy that will disproportionately impact the border and one that is humane, fiscally responsible, and rational. It is also a bill that reflects the best values, experiences, and expertise of the people who live along the border. And it is, in fact, written by people who live on and represent border communities.

Madam Speaker, today we spend \$18 billion a year on border security and immigration enforcement. That is twice what we were spending just 10 years ago. We have a surge in border security, a surge in border personnel where we have seen a doubling of the size of the Border Patrol from just 10,000 10 years ago to more than 20,000 today. But this surge in resources and personnel and enforcement has not been accompanied by an adequate regime of oversight, accountability, or transparency.

Tens of millions of our fellow Americans live along our borders with Canada and Mexico, and millions more cross them on a regular basis. In the community I represent, El Paso, Texas, we have 22 million border crossings a year; 99-plus percent are legal with people who are crossing for legitimate purposes with all of the appropriate travel documents. But when you combine the millions of people who live and cross our borders with this unprecedented surge of resources and law enforcement without the necessary oversight or accountability or transparency, this will lead to predictable abuses of power that we have seen not just at the borders themselves but at interior checkpoints that are up to 100 miles into the interior of the United States: detentions, interrogations, and retention of personal property, all without probable cause.

While the vast majority of our border protection agents and our CBP officers are professional, and all of them face very difficult challenges in their job in terms of the level of vigilance they must maintain, the territory through which they must patrol, the unpredictable threats they must guard against, our office hears on a day-to-day basis

from constituents who are harassed and hassled or otherwise treated with less than the appropriate dignity or respect. But there is no clear process that exists for these individuals to resolve their complaints. I will give you two examples, one from the northern border and one from the southern border.

Pascal Abidor, an Islamic studies Ph.D. student and one of our fellow U.S. citizens, was crossing the Canadian border on an Amtrak train when he was questioned by CBP officers. He was taken off the train in handcuffs and held in a cell for several hours before being released without charge. His laptop was confiscated and held for 11 days following his detention during which time his private messages and photos were reviewed by CBP officers.

We have a case, unfortunately, in the community I represent, a woman who has not released her name but a fellow U.S. citizen who lives in New Mexico who was crossing into the U.S. from Mexico. She was suspected of carrying drugs. She was detained, frisked, strip searched, and taken to a hospital. There she was invasively searched, X-rayed, and made to perform a bowel movement against her will by doctors at the request of CBP officers looking for drugs. At no time was she read her rights or given access to an attorney because even at the hospital, miles away from the physical border, Customs and Border Protection maintains that they are still in the process of a border interrogation. No traces of illegal drugs were found, and she was billed \$5,000 for the exams.

While stories like these are exceptional, they should never happen. As a result of a more militarized border, we are also seeing migrants who are pushed away from community ports of entry into harsher and more dangerous terrain, leading to a jump in the number of deaths. Two years ago, we saw the second-highest number of migrant crossing deaths on record, even though we saw the lowest number of crossing attempts across our southern border. We have had over 5,500 migrants die in the attempt to cross into the United States over the last 15 years.

It is not just the individuals who have been victims of unfounded searches and seizures or who have perished in the desert who are failed by our current border policy. The Border Patrol agents and CBP officers who perform these toughest jobs in the Federal Government do not always receive the training or support they need to be safe in the field or to do their jobs effectively.

For the taxpayers who deserve to have their tax dollars spent responsibly, secrecy and lack of transparency has prevented a sober accounting of whether the \$18 billion a year that we are spending on the border is money well spent. Our bill addresses these issues in five concrete ways:

First, robust oversight of all border security functions;

Second, a transparent and timely complaint process that is independent of the existing chain of command;

Third, increased and improved training resources for our agents and officers;

Fourth, engagement between CBP and border communities;

Fifth, new transparency measures.

So I urge my colleagues to join me in a humane, rational, and fiscally responsible approach to the border.

OBAMACARE'S IMPACTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BROOKS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I hope my remarks will help America better understand the damage that ObamaCare inflicts on patients, health care, the economy, and jobs.

Today, I share a letter by Dr. Marlin Gill of Decatur, Alabama, that details Washington's damage to America's health care. On March 23, 2014, Dr. Gill wrote me:

Dear Congressman Brooks,

As a practicing family physician, I plead for help against what I can best characterize as Washington's war against doctors.

The medical profession has never before remotely approached today's stress, work hours, wasted costs, decreased efficiency, and declining ability to focus on patient care.

In our community alone, at least six doctors have left patient care for administrative positions, to start a concierge practice, or retire altogether.

Doctors are smothered by destructive regulations that add costs, raise our overhead, and "gum up the works," making patient treatment slower and less efficient, thus forcing doctors to focus on things other than patient care and reduce the number of patients we can help each day.

I spend more time at work than I have at any time in my 27 years of practice, and more of that time is spent on administrative tasks and entering useless data into a computer rather than helping sick patients.

Doctors have been forced by ill-informed bureaucrats to implement electronic medical records (EMR) that, in our four-doctor practice, costs well over \$100,000-plus in continuing yearly operational costs, all of which does not help take care of one patient while driving up the cost of every patient's health care.

Washington's electronic medical records requirement makes our medical practice much slower and less efficient, forcing our doctors to treat fewer patients per day than we did before the EMR mandate.

To make matters worse, Washington forces doctors to demonstrate "meaningful use" of EMR or risk not being fully paid for the help we give.

In addition to the electronic medical records burden, we face a mandate to use the ICD-10 coding system, a new set of reimbursement diagnostic codes.

The current ICD-9 coding system uses roughly 13,000 codes. The new ICD-10 coding system uses a staggering 70,000 new and completely different codes, thus dramatically slowing doctors down due to the unnecessary complexity and sheer numbers of codes that must be learned. The cost of this new ICD-10 coding system for our small practice is roughly \$80,000, again driving up health care costs without one iota of improvement in health care quality.

Finally, doctors face nonpayment by patients with ObamaCare. These patients may or may not be paying their premiums, and we have no way of verifying this. No business can operate with that much uncertainty.

On behalf of the medical profession, I ask that Washington stop the implementation of the ICD-10 coding system, repeal the Affordable Care Act, and replace it with a better law written with the input of real doctors who will actually treat patients covered by it.

America has enjoyed the best health care the world has ever known. That health care is in jeopardy because physicians cannot survive Washington's "war on doctors" without relief.

Eventually the problems for doctors will become problems for patients, and we are all patients at some point.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Marlin Gill of Decatur, Alabama.

Madam Speaker, America should heed the warnings of Dr. Marlin Gill of Decatur, Alabama. Failure to do so risks unnecessary patient deaths while destroying the best health care system the world has ever known.

HONORING GRACIELA TISCARENO-SATO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. SWALWELL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Madam Speaker, today I rise to celebrate the work and achievements of a local Hayward veteran and businesswoman, Graciela Tiscareno-Sato. I was honored to meet with her yesterday in my office.

Before coming to my office, Graciela was recognized by the White House as one of 10 Women Veteran Leader Champions of Change for the work of her Hayward business, the Gracefully Global Group. It produces books and educational materials highlighting the positive contributions of Latinos.

The daughter of Mexican immigrants, Graciela received an Air Force ROTC scholarship to attend the University of California Berkeley, where she obtained a degree in environmental design and architecture.

Graciela then served 9 years on Active Duty in the Air Force as an officer, receiving the Air Medal for combat air operations during the Iraq war.

Graciela is also a mom, and a fierce advocate for her oldest daughter, who has been blind since birth. I asked Graciela how she has accomplished so much for being so young. She gave me one word: tenacity.

Graciela brings her heritage and experience to work writing educational books for children. One of her most recent bilingual books is titled "Good Night Captain Mama," and it tells the story of a mother's service as a pilot in the Air Force, and it is the first bilingual children's book about a woman serving in the military.

Graciela is also committed to bringing jobs and economic development to her hometown of Hayward. I look forward to working together with her to

accomplish this goal. Graciela's story is truly one of resilience and determination, or, as she would put it, tenacity. Thank you, Graciela, for bringing positive examples of Latinos to schools and inspiring young students across the world. And congratulations on your much-deserved recognition by the White House.

I am proud to represent Graciela Tiscareno-Sato: veteran, business owner, daughter of immigrants, mother. Your work is inspiring to the next generation of leaders who want to dream big and reach for the stars.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BROOKS of Alabama). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of Women's History Month. Our Nation is blessed to have so many women who have played important roles in its formation across the country.

I want to highlight one particular Renaissance woman from my neck of the woods, Tennessee.

My home in Gallatin has a special significance to me in that it resides on the property that used to be known as the Fairvue house, which was eventually sold off and broken apart. One resident of Fairvue was a particularly notable woman by the name of Miss Ellen Stokes Wemyss, and to say that she lived a notable life would be an understatement.

Born in 1895, Miss Wemyss lived a long, eventful life until she passed away in 2001 at the age of 106.

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Over the course of her life, she marched in the Nashville Suffragette Parade, flew in an early airplane, and rode her horse into her eighties.

Miss Wymess was an avid traveler who explored glaciers in Alaska and bicycled in France through her eighties. She even worked her plantation farm well into her nineties.

When she wasn't working or embarking on adventures, she was giving back to our community, including giving to Volunteer State Community College, the Gallatin Day Care Center, Sumner Academy Day School, Sumner County Public Library, among many other local organizations.

I had the pleasure of meeting Miss Wymess several years ago before she passed away, and it gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to share just a peek of her wonderful life here on the House floor.

As we celebrate Women's History Month, I encourage everyone to think about a role a woman has played in our rich American history.

FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CLEANUP OF VIEQUES AND CULEBRA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, Vieques and Culebra are two island municipalities of Puerto Rico. Each is home to beautiful beaches, to rich animal and plant life, and to warm, welcoming people.

For decades, the two islands were used as military training ranges. The U.S. citizens living in Vieques and Culebra were required to make tremendous sacrifices to ensure the readiness of our Armed Forces and to enhance our national defense.

Although Vieques and Culebra are no longer used for training purposes, both islands bear the scars of their past. Some of those scars are easy to see, like the impact of bombing on the once pristine landscape or like the threat that unexploded bombs in the ground and surrounding waters currently pose to the safety of residents and visitors.

Other scars might be more difficult to discern, like the effect that bombing-related contamination may have had on public health, particularly in Vieques.

The Department of Defense is currently conducting decontamination operations in both Vieques and Culebra. The cleanup of Vieques is being conducted by the Navy, while the cleanup of Culebra is being carried out by the Corps of Engineers.

Several days ago, I wrote a letter to the Secretary of Defense about DOD's responsibilities with respect to Vieques and Culebra. The letter, which was signed by 16 of my colleagues in the House and Senate, makes three specific requests.

First, although many years have passed since the military stopped conducting training exercises on Culebra and Vieques, there are still meaningful gaps in information about the types and amounts of munitions used on both islands.

My constituents have a compelling interest in knowing which types of weapons were used, where they were used, and in what volume they were used.

Congress agrees. As a result of bicameral efforts, the report accompanying the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act encourages DOD to make public all of its historical documents related to its training activities on both islands.

Our letter to the Secretary requests an update about how DOD intends to implement this Congressional language and strongly urges DOD to collect, organize, and publish the relevant documents on the Internet in a single location.

Second, the report accompanying the 2014 Defense Appropriations Act encourages DOD to accelerate cleanup efforts on Vieques. Therefore, my colleagues and I also urged the Secretary of Defense to implement this Congressional guidance by allocating the funding necessary to complete the cleanup of Vieques as rapidly as possible.