

the voters of my district. You are seeking a free ride through an act of congressional bullying. And that is the way we take it.

And like anybody who is bullied, we don't know how to do anything but fight back. We don't like to be patronized. We will not be bullied. And we will not have a Member tell the residents of the District of Columbia, who have no way to hold him accountable, what we may or may not do.

So I ask the Members of the House to be consistent, particularly my Republican friends with your own small Federal footprint approach as a core value, because of your own notion of local control, as opposed to Federal control, the hallmark of your values, I ask you simply to apply the same principles to me and to the District of Columbia that you are insisting upon for you and for your own constituents.

I will remind you that we are all Americans, that there are no second-class Americans, and that the Americans who live in the Nation's Capital insist upon being treated fully equally with all of you, all of us who are fortunate to be citizens of the United States of America.

I yield back the balance of my time.

#### CONGRESS HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT ON IRAQ NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 30 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I joined today with Representatives WALTER JONES and BARBARA LEE to introduce a privileged resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 105, to direct the President to remove U.S. troops from Iraq within 30 days, or no later than the end of this year, except for those troops needed to protect U.S. diplomatic facilities and personnel. We did this for a simple reason. Congress has the responsibility to authorize the introduction of American troops where hostilities are imminent.

In less than 3 weeks, in three separate deployments, the U.S. has sent at least 775 additional troops to Iraq. Now is the time for Congress to debate the merits of our military involvement in this latest Iraq conflict openly and transparently.

Do we approve of these deployments and any future escalation? If so, we should vote to authorize it. If we do not support it, then we should bring our troops back home. It is that simple, Mr. Speaker. Congress has the responsibility to act on Iraq now.

Mr. Speaker, we did not introduce this privileged resolution lightly. By doing so, we have started a process to hold a debate on our engagement in Iraq later this month. We are using the special procedures outlined under the War Powers Resolution.

While this is an imperfect tool, it requires the House to take up this bill

after 15 calendar days. Like most of my colleagues, I would prefer for this House to bring up a bill authorizing our engagement in Iraq. And nothing in this resolution inhibits such important legislation from being drafted and brought before this House for debate and a clean up-or-down vote. Frankly, I wish that were happening, but I have not heard that such authorization is even under discussion, let alone being prepared for debate.

So my colleagues and I are introducing this concurrent resolution because we strongly believe Congress has to step up to the plate and carry out its responsibilities when our servicemen and -women are, once again, being sent into harm's way.

□ 1200

The time for that debate is now, not when the first body bag comes home from Iraq, not when the first U.S. airstrikes or bombs fall on Iraq, not when we are embedded with Iraqi troops trying to take back an ISIS-held town, and—worst-case scenario—not when our troops are shooting their way out of an overtaken Baghdad.

Now, Mr. Speaker, is the time to debate our new engagement in Iraq, before the heat of the moment, when we can weigh the pros and cons of supporting the al-Maliki government—or whatever government is cobbled together should al-Maliki be forced to step down—now, before we are forced to take sides in a religious and sectarian war; now, before the next addition of more troops takes place.

Make no mistake—I firmly believe we will continue to send more troops and more military assets into this crisis.

Now is the time, Mr. Speaker, before we are forced to fire our first shots or drop our first bombs. Now, Mr. Speaker, is when the House should debate and vote on this very serious matter.

For those who say it is too early, too premature for this debate, I respectfully disagree. The longer we put off carrying out our constitutional responsibilities, the easier it becomes to just drift along. This is what Congress has done over and over and over and over, and it has to end, Mr. Speaker. Congress must speak, and Congress must act.

This resolution, should it pass the House, would direct the President to bring our troops home from Iraq within 30 days—or should that pose security questions, no later than by the end of this year, nearly 6 months from now.

It would not require those troops that have been deployed to safeguard the security of our diplomatic facilities and personnel from withdrawing. They could remain and carry out their crucial roles of protecting our civilian personnel on the ground in Iraq.

This is why we need to take up this resolution later this month, debate our military engagement in this latest war in Iraq, and have a clean vote on this resolution, up or down, about whether

we stay in Iraq or whether we bring our troops home.

We owe this much to our troops and their families, we owe this much to the American people, and we owe at least this much to our own democracy and democratic institutions that require Congress to be the final arbiter on whether our troops are sent into hostilities abroad.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join Representative JONES, Representative LEE, and me as cosponsors of this resolution. I look forward to debating the merits of the Iraq war later this month and voting on whether our troops should stay or leave Iraq.

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

#### THE THREE COEQUAL BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

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

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time, and I appreciate your being down here with me. I think about the just a couple of years that you and I have served in this Congress, and I think back, and I hope "Schoolhouse Rock" was on TV when you were coming along.

The thing I did when the Internet came out—yes, I was old enough to remember when the Internet came out—was I looked up the "Schoolhouse Rock" video, and I looked up "I'm just a bill sitting here on Capitol Hill" because it tells the tale—and we learned that before we learned all of our times tables, we learned about how a bill becomes a law.

We learned about what this great experiment in self-governance is, and it is the United States of America. It makes me sad that it comes on less on Saturday mornings than it used to, and now, parents are down on watching as much TV on Saturday mornings.

I hope "Schoolhouse Rock" is still required viewing in every family in America because the whole process of how a bill becomes a law is critically important to who we are as a people—as a people.

I know it happens to you, Mr. Speaker, like it happens to me. I go back home, and I am the Congressman. I am the Congressman. I am holding the townhall meeting. I am standing up in front of the room. Maybe I am up on the stage, I have got a big microphone.

There are all these folks sitting out there in the audience, and it dawns on me that I am the servant, and all the bosses are sitting out there. That is what is so wonderful about what goes on here. You and I have the great privilege of representing a small slice of America; and, in my case, it is the Seventh District of Georgia—but the bosses live at home.

Mr. Speaker, if we don't do this the way "Schoolhouse Rock" laid it out, if

we don't go through that process each and every time for how a bill becomes a law, the loser is each one of those individuals who show up at my townhall meetings who are actually the bosses of this country.

The loser is the citizen in America who should be sitting on the board of directors, but who gets shut out of the decisionmaking process if we don't follow that simple cartoon that we all became fond of growing up.

Mr. Speaker, you know better than I do that there was a Supreme Court decision that came out last week. It was called the Noel Canning decision, and that Supreme Court—you know, we talk about it all the time, Mr. Speaker.

I wish I had a microphone that went out to the folks back in their offices who were watching this on TV. We could do a quick telephone poll of who folks think the liberal Justices are and who folks think the conservative Justices are and who folks think the middle is, but that Court is divided.

Oh, Mr. Speaker, you know there are some hardcore conservatives sitting on the Supreme Court today, and there are some hardcore liberals sitting on that very same bench.

Nine of those folks sitting up there on the bench—and I read the decisions when they come out, Mr. Speaker, and it is 5-4 this, 6-3 that. It is these starkly divided opinions about what the direction of America ought to be, and I get that. We are a sharply divided country. We see that in Presidential elections, and we see that in congressional elections.

This decision that came out last week, Mr. Speaker, this Noel Canning decision was decided 9-0 by the Supreme Court—9-0. It did not matter how hardcore conservative the Justice was, and it did not matter how hardcore liberal the Justice was. Every single Justice agreed.

What they agreed on—and it gives me no pleasure to talk about it—what they agreed on is that the President of the United States exceeded the authority granted to him by this United States Constitution and that the United States Congress did absolutely nothing to rein that in; and so the Supreme Court, 2 years later, had to make the decision that it was wrong.

Now, I get the balance of powers, Mr. Speaker. I get it. I get that the Congress is here as article I, and we make decisions; and then our bills have to be signed by the President there in article II.

I get it that, if we pass the wrong kind of legislation and it is unconstitutional, the courts, in article III, get to make that decision—but, dadgum it, we have that responsibility as the 435 Members who serve in this Chamber who are not the bosses of this country, but who are the servants of the true bosses of this country back home, we have the responsibility to maintain the authority on Capitol Hill that the Constitution provides.

Last week, the Court said, unanimously, 9-0, that the President can't

just decide what the law is and what the law isn't, that the law exists independent of the President, and his job is to follow those laws.

Now, that is pretty clear here. You get into article II—in fact, we all take that oath when we get elected. We swear to uphold and defend the Constitution. The executive power shall be vested in the President of the United States, the legislative power vested here, and so the Supreme Court said, unanimously, that the President had overstepped his bound and that what he did was unconstitutional.

I have a quote that they used—and it is important to me, Mr. Speaker, as I suspect you hear the same thing from your constituents back home. Folks say: Why can't you get something done? Why can't you get something done in Washington? What are you guys arguing about? Why don't you get something done? Aren't there some things out there that you can do to make a difference in people's lives?

I am proud to say that you and I have collaborated on a number of those things, but folks feel the friction in this town, the friction of people who believe different things about what the future of this country ought to look like.

Here is what the Supreme Court said—and I love it in its simplicity, Mr. Speaker. The Supreme Court said last week that regardless—the Recess Appointments Clause was the clause that was being debated, this is the exceeding of his constitutional authority that the President embarked upon.

"Regardless, the Recess Appointments Clause is not designed to overcome serious institutional friction."

It "is not designed to overcome serious institutional friction. It simply provides a subsidiary method for appointing officials when the Senate is away during a recess."

Here, as in other contexts, friction between the branches is an inevitable consequence of our constitutional structure. The friction that you hear about back home, Mr. Speaker, the frustration that our constituents express about why folks can't get something done, why can't you agree, why is there a big argument going on, that friction, the Supreme Court says, is an inevitable consequence of our constitutional structure.

The concern then, Mr. Speaker, is in the name of avoiding that friction, some folks want to throw out parts of this Constitution, and my question—not just for Members in this body, Mr. Speaker, but for every single constituent who votes in our national elections—what is more important? Is it more important to get something done? Is it the ends that are the most important, or is it the means?

The means that were provided to us were provided to us in 1787, that great summer in Philadelphia, where the best minds of our land came together and laid out a structure that has successfully protected the power of the people for over 200 years.

Is it the ends, or is it the means? I tell you—and I don't attribute any bad motives to the President, Mr. Speaker, I don't. I don't want to attribute bad motives to the President.

I will tell you that, in making the recess appointments that led to this unanimous decision that what the President did was unconstitutional, the President prioritized the ends.

He knew who he wanted in these job positions. He knew the Senate would never approve these people for these job positions, and so he said: Who cares what the Senate thinks? I am going to put them in anyway.

The Supreme Court said: No, you are not. No, you are not.

Now, the great shame for us, Mr. Speaker, is that it should have been the Congress that said that. It should have been the Congress that said that.

More specifically, it should have been the Senate right across this Chamber that said that, Mr. Speaker. It should have been the Senate that stood up for the power that is not their power, but is the power of the American people to engage in this great balance that is our form of government, this great balance that has inevitable friction.

We have got to decide for ourselves, Mr. Speaker, in this Chamber and across the country: Are we Republicans and Democrats? Or are we Americans? Are we Green Party folks and Independent folks? Or are we Americans? Is this about which party wins and which party loses? Or is this about America?

America is not a place on a map, Mr. Speaker. You know this better than most. America is not a place on the map. America is an idea. America is a set of values.

There is so much more that unites us in this country than divides us. My challenge to my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, is that we rise to the occasion to protect and defend this document.

No matter how small, no matter how simple, and no matter how much it gets in the way of getting something done, this U.S. Constitution is designed to protect those freedoms, to protect those common goals, and to protect that which makes us who we are as Americans.

I am not trying to figure out who to blame, Mr. Speaker. I am trying to figure out how to solve it. When the Supreme Court—again, if you have watched the Supreme Court, these folks, they can't agree on what time to meet, Mr. Speaker. They disagree about so, so much—5-4 decision after 5-4 decision.

This divided Court—it is almost a term, Mr. Speaker, it is not the "Court," it is the "divided Court," that is the way it always shows up in the newspaper, the "divided Court"—9-0 said this Congress and the American people have abdicated their responsibility to rein in this executive branch and ensure that the law was followed.

□ 1215

And here is the thing, Mr. Speaker, and you know what I am talking about:

I signed up to be on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee. The Oversight and Government Reform Committee, that is the committee that is responsible for going in and making sure the laws are followed and faithfully executed. And I joined that committee, Mr. Speaker, and you may think it foolish, but I joined that committee because I thought Mitt Romney was going to be the next President of the United States. And for too long, I had seen Republicans in Congress protect Republican Presidents and Democrats in Congress protect Democratic Presidents, and I haven't seen enough folks protecting the Constitution, protecting article I, protecting the power that the Constitution vests in each and every one of our constituents back home, and so I said I am going to sign up for this Oversight and Government Reform Committee because I am a hardcore Republican and I want to be the hardcore Republican who rides herd over the Romney administration, because you don't get a free pass because we are from the same party. You don't get a free pass because the Constitution doesn't give you a free pass. You don't get a free pass because my obligation is not to you as a fellow Republican, my obligation is to my constituents and to my country as an American.

I wanted to bring back that idea that we as a Congress, not we as Republicans and Democrats in Congress, but we as a Congress, not we as the House, but we as the House and the Senate, we as the Congress have a common goal and a common responsibility when it comes to the future of this country.

Now, sitting over there on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, folks just think I am a political hack. I try to give advice and counsel to the administration about what they are doing wrong. Folks say, he is just a Republican, that is why he doesn't like what is going on. Nonsense; 9-0, the entire United States Supreme Court said what is going on in the administration is wrong; not wrong as in a mistake, but wrong as in the Constitution prohibits it. Wrong as in it is not allowed by that most powerful law that governs this land, the United States Constitution, and everybody in this town knew it. They knew it the day that the President took that action. And yet, too many in this town were silent.

We have got to do better, Mr. Speaker. We have got to do better. There is still more that unites us than divides us. Love of this Constitution that protects our freedoms is one of those things.

So where can we start, Mr. Speaker? Where can we start? I have one recommendation, and it is a small one. I have had the experience in my 3½ years in Congress, Mr. Speaker, and you may have had the same experience, that if you can begin to agree on the little things, then the bigger things get a little easier to agree upon. You sort

out those things that you have agreed on first, you lock those in as part of the final deal, and then you go out and you tackle the bigger things. So you start small, and you build. That is true. It is true of exercise, it is true of almost anything. Start small and build.

I am thinking about the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Mr. Speaker. You may think, Rob, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, for Pete's sake, that is just some little-bitty agency over there under the Federal Reserve. Well, it is not. It is a big agency. It is a growing agency. But the most important part is what I said finally in that sentence, it is under the Federal Reserve. This is what happened.

The year was 2010, and this body, this body, led by the Financial Services Committee chairman at that time, Barney Frank of Massachusetts, passed what has come to be known as the Dodd-Frank Act, named after Chairman Frank on this side and Chairman Dodd over on the Senate side, and it went after Wall Street. It went after Wall Street, and this was in the aftermath of bank failures. This was in the environment when folks were concerned about what the economic future of America would be, much like they still are today, and this purported to solve so many of these challenges through more regulation.

Now, we can argue about whether or not that was a good plan or was a bad plan. I think it was a bad plan. I think it is costing us economic growth, not helping us with economic growth, but that is not my point here today. My point here today is, as a body, as a U.S. House of Representatives, when we passed that Dodd-Frank bill, which went over to the Senate and was passed, and which went to the President's desk and was signed and is now the law of the land, we created an agency called the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and we specifically and exclusively decided that this agency would not be accountable to the Congress in any way, shape or form.

I want you to think about that, Mr. Speaker. Here we are, we have been charged individually and collectively with protecting the United States Constitution, which divvies up power in this country. And what is so unique about this country is that the power does not come from government and is given to the people; the power comes from the people and is lent to government for a short period of time. The power belongs to the people, and it is lent to the government for a short period of time.

Yet in our collective wisdom, and I certainly use that term loosely, we decided to create a brand new Federal agency, capable of spending hundreds of millions of dollars per year, capable of implementing hundreds of billions of dollars in regulations on America's small businesses, that we would create this agency out of the air. It had never

before existed, and that we would create this brand new agency and we would place it somewhere beyond the oversight of this body. That we would bestow it with powers to crush businesses, to enable businesses, give it these powers and place it somewhere beyond the control of this institution.

It is unique, Mr. Speaker, as you know, in that its funding stream comes directly from the Federal Reserve. That would be the guys who print the money. It turns out when you can print the money and lend the money, you end up making a lot of money. So accountability over that money is almost nonexistent.

There is a renovation going on at the CFPB right now. This is an agency that has been around for 3 years, and it has a renovation going on. The most recent inspector general's report tells us they are spending \$215 million to renovate their building, almost a quarter of a billion dollars, just to renovate, just to renovate a building.

Now, when I try to evaluate building space, I try to do it on a square-foot basis. What is it costing per square foot to renovate, because you do have to renovate. That is a fair business decision. According to the Financial Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, this amounts to a \$590 per square foot renovation cost, \$590 per square foot. Well, if you are in the real estate business, your jaw has already dropped. But if you are not in the real estate business, let me give you that comparatively.

I don't know if you have ever been to Trump World Tower in New York, Mr. Speaker, but \$334 per square foot is its cost. The most expensive city in the country, \$334 per square foot, compared to \$590 with what the CFPB is doing.

I don't know if you have ever been out to Las Vegas, Mr. Speaker, but you have probably seen Ocean's Eleven a time or two, and the big Bellagio hotel and casino with all those big fountains out front. It is the backdrop of so many movies Hollywood puts out these days, and it is really kind of the definition of decadence in that part of the world—\$330 per square foot versus \$590 at the CFPB. Now, why do I bring that up? Maybe \$590 is the right answer. Maybe it is. Maybe whatever is going on over at the CFPB is so important that it has to cost twice as much to build their offices as any of the most luxurious office spaces or hotel spaces in the country. Maybe that is true, but I can't tell because I'm not allowed, as a Representative here in this body, to do oversight over that institution. Why? Because its funding comes directly from the Federal Reserve, not from this Congress.

How does all of this come together, Mr. Speaker? Well, the answer is still in this little old book, still in these little pages. From the summer of 1787, there is a fabulous painting right outside these Chamber doors, Mr. Speaker, of that summer in 1787. George Washington is presiding, Ben Franklin is

seated there. All of the Constitutional Convention delegates are there as they craft this document. And what they decided was, we were going to have to have an executive to execute the laws. You can't execute the laws by committee. It was going to be too complicated, you need an executive to execute the laws. But an all-powerful executive is what those constitutional delegates had been fleeing in England. That is what the revolution was all about, so they were suspicious of an all-powerful executive, so they created the Congress first, article I, and said the power of the purse, the power of the purse, spending of the money, will reside here. Because if you cut off the money to that executive who has run amok, he won't be able to run amok any longer. That was the theory. That was the plan.

And yet this body is creating institutions—and by “this body,” I mean before you and I arrived here, Mr. Speaker, not on our watch—but just 4 short years ago, this body began to create government agencies and institutions that were beyond the reach of our oversight, beyond our ability to defund and beyond our ability to control.

It may be the best agency on the planet, but it shouldn't be beyond the control of the people.

Mr. Speaker, I will end where I began. Are we Republicans and Democrats first, or are we Americans first? Are we northerners and southerners, are we Independents and Green Party? Are we MoveOn and Tea Party? Who are we first? And the answer for me has always been I am a citizen first. I am an American first. This great country that I have inherited—I didn't build it, I didn't sign my name to the Declaration of Independence pledging my life and my fortune to success, no. Can you imagine? Can you imagine what it took in a time of great uncertainty when the die had not been cast for freedom to stand up and say, My name is ROB WOODALL and I pledge my life and my fortune that freedom will come to this land?

No, Mr. Speaker, that is what I have inherited. That is what you have inherited. That is what every single child born on these sacred shores inherits, what every immigrant who travels from far and takes that oath, what they inherit, and it is our responsibility to preserve it.

When we concern ourselves with the end and believe the end justifies the means, we will trample this Constitution at every occasion—at every occasion. And you need to look no further than the Supreme Court decision last week, Mr. Speaker, where unanimously these men and women entrusted with upholding this Constitution said friction between the branches is an inevitable consequence of our constitutional structure. I dare say an intentional consequence of our constitutional structure.

I know there is a lot of pressure on folks, Mr. Speaker, from their con-

stituents back home to get something done, but implicit in that is to get something done the right way—to get something done the right way.

There are serious men and women on both sides of this Chamber, Mr. Speaker; there are serious men and women on both sides of this Capitol; there are serious men and women working in the administration who all love this country and want it to be better tomorrow than it was yesterday. We cannot allow our zeal for results to trample the document that has enabled the results that we have had so far.

And so I challenge my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, whether you are the most conservative Republican or the most liberal Democrat, or anywhere in between, I challenge each and every one of us to decide that if we have a bad process, we are going to end up with a bad product. But that our Constitution, no matter how cumbersome, our Constitution, no matter how deliberate, our Constitution provides that framework where, whether we win or lose on a particular policy, our principles of freedom and opportunity will forever be preserved.

I want to get good policy out of this Chamber, too. I want to get policy out of this town. I want to make a difference in the lives of people back home, but not at the expense of the birthright that I have inherited, which is this great country and the experiment in self-government. I believe we are worthy of that birthright. I believe we can rise to that occasion, but it is not going to happen by accident, and it is not going to happen just inside the four walls of this building. It has got to happen in the hearts and the minds of every single family in this country, who are the true leaders of this Nation, and I hope those will be their instructions to us each and every day.

With that, Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1230

#### PLIGHT OF CHRISTIANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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

Mr. BENTIVOLIO. Madam Speaker, there is a lot of uncertainty and instability in the Middle East. Violence and chaos are persistent themes, and political uprisings, revolutions, insurgencies, and waning democracies have controlled the dialogue on the Middle East for the last couple of years. But, if you dig a little deeper, you will find another story just under the surface, a story that we don't hear quite enough about: the plight of Christians as a religious minority in the Middle East.

Just the other day, I had a meeting with a few of my constituents who are

Coptic Christians, and we discussed many of the issues facing the Copts in Egypt. Copts are the native Christians of Egypt, who have been a part of the Egyptian community since the 5th century A.D. They are still one of the largest Christian minorities in the Middle East.

Copts in Egypt face growing threats of persecution, violence, and restrictions on religious practice. They have been targeted for kidnappings. In 2013, St. Mark's Cathedral was attacked during a funeral ceremony for Copts and a Muslim who were killed in prior violence.

After President Morsi was removed from office in July 2013, a wave of violence against Christians ensued. Hundreds of churches, homes, and businesses were attacked. Violence against Coptic Christians in Egypt is nothing new, and I fear that it will persist unless something is done to resolve the issue.

Madam Speaker, in Iraq, Chaldean Christians are facing a dire situation as well. I just read a report that two nuns are believed to have been kidnapped while they were visiting an orphanage for girls. They are believed to have been kidnapped by ISIS.

Chaldeans are fleeing Iraq at an alarming rate, as many of them have sought refuge in my home district in Michigan. They are concerned about what is happening in Iraq, as many of them still have family there. Churches and homes are being looted and destroyed, and this leaves no other option for much of the community than to flee. If the situation in Iraq doesn't reverse, it is likely that the majority of Iraq's remaining Christian community will have to seek refuge elsewhere.

Madam Speaker, Assyrians are also continuing to face troubling times in the Middle East. Since the beginning of the war in Iraq in 2003, Assyrian Christian communities have been targets for attacks. Churches and monasteries have been targeted for bombings.

Assyrians have long been persecuted for their Christian beliefs, and they suffered greatly during the Assyrian genocide of the early 1900s when nearly 300,000 Assyrians were killed. Like many other Christian populations in the Middle East, they have fled and sought refuge elsewhere.

Madam Speaker, in Iran, the harsh persecution of Christians continues. According to a UN report, Iran has continually imprisoned Christians, citing “national security” as the justification.

Pastor Saeed Abedini is currently the most visible example of Christian persecution in Iran. Although there have been numerous calls for his release from Congress and from the President, he is still sitting in prison. He was sentenced to prison by a judge who has been known for religious freedom violations. His trial was decried by human rights groups as unfair and unflawed.

Ethnic Christians, such as Armenians, are often under surveillance or