

the processing of disability claims that has been so backlogged over the last few years, education benefits, including the instate tuition bill that passed unanimously out of this House, that has sat, languishing with the other 11 bills in the Senate that are waiting to be brought up for a vote. The Senate could pass these bills and send them straight to the President, and they would become law right away.

Again, to my colleague from California, I would remind you that H.R. 357, the GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act, did pass this House unanimously, and you were a cosponsor of the bill that passed by 390-0 in February. It gives States the incentive to provide all veterans instate tuition rates. It is very similar to the provision in the Senate bill that Mr. PETERS wants our conferees to recede to in conference. Once again, this bipartisan bill could be sent to the President if the Senate would just bring it up for a vote.

We are trying to work out a deal with the Senate, but I submit to this body today that these motions to instruct are clearly becoming unproductive, are slowing down our process, and unfortunately, I think they are being used as nothing more than a political ploy. I find it very interesting that not one member of the minority side on our VA Committee has offered over the last four times a motion to instruct conferees.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on the motion to instruct, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PETERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In closing, first, I lament the notion that this is motivated entirely by politics; although, I understand that would not be entirely unusual in this body. It was 80 degrees in San Diego today—a beautiful day. I don't fly all the way over here to the 91-degree heat that feels like 100 not to do something, and veterans are a top priority for me.

The point of this motion is that we have something right before us that would deal with the culture of complacency that has failed our veterans, and we could pass the bill supported both by Senator BERNIE SANDERS and Senator JOHN MCCAIN, which was passed by a vote of 93-3—I don't think you could get more bipartisan than that—and it would not raise the issues that Chairman MILLER has discussed because, if we wanted to add more money, as Senator SANDERS may want, we could take that up later.

There are very, very many points of agreement in the Senate bill, and it would incorporate many of the things we did here in the House if we would pass it just like this. So it makes all the sense in the world to go ahead and have that bill before us so that we could pass it. It could be on the President's desk tomorrow, and at least many of the points of agreement, like the instate tuition, for example, would

be on their way to helping veterans right away.

Last week, I attended part of the stand down for homeless veterans in San Diego. The Veterans Village of San Diego organized the first stand down in 1988, and there are more than 200 similar programs nationwide that help provide a hand up, not a hand out for homeless vets. No one at the event asked me whether I thought the House or the Senate or the President had the best plan for keeping our promise to America's veterans. They want action, and they want it now. They don't want to hear about how the procedural rules of this place are some way to hide behind our lack of action.

They fought for our country in the jungles of Vietnam, in the deserts of Iraq, and in the mountains of Afghanistan. The fact that this House can't put aside partisan politics to do the right thing for our veterans is even more messed up than anyone can imagine.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PETERS of California. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, surely, the gentleman did not insinuate that I, as the chairman of the most bipartisan committee in this Congress, was being partisan in anything that I have said or done.

Mr. PETERS of California. Absolutely not, Mr. Chairman. What I am suggesting is that the effect of our inability to vote on this Senate bill, which passed 93-3, sends the message that we just can't get it together.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PETERS of California. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that I do know one bill that is much more bipartisan than the Senate's 93-3 vote, and that was the House's bill that passed 430-0.

Mr. PETERS of California. Mr. MILLER, I could not argue with you. The only other point I would make is that the provisions of that bill are contained within the Senate bill that I hope we are able to vote on. That is why we could kill two birds with one stone.

Mr. Speaker, frankly, if we can't get this kind of thing done, it is no wonder that the approval rating of the body is at 9 percent. It is a shame.

I do urge my colleagues to adopt the motion to instruct so that we can get this effort moving and provide our veterans with the educational opportunities that they deserve, with the support they deserve, and with the opportunities that they deserve because they fought so hard and so bravely for us.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. PETERS of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

#### RECOGNIZING HELEN MADDOX ON HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

(Mr. BARTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, it is very rare that you have a constituent who reaches the century mark, but I have one, a young lady named Helen Maddox in Arlington, Texas, who will be celebrating her 100th birthday later this week.

Helen was not born a native Texan, but she got there as soon as she could. She and her husband moved to Arlington, Texas, over half a century ago, and she has lived there ever since. Her husband is now deceased.

Helen has been very active in the Republican Women, in numerous civic clubs, and has been a very strong personal friend of mine and also a political supporter. She will be celebrating her 100th birthday this week.

On behalf of the United States Congress, I want to wish her the absolute very best birthday and hope that the next 100 are as happy and positive as her first 100 have been.

Happy birthday, Helen Maddox, of Arlington, Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to add to what I just said.

#### HONORING HELEN MADDOX ON HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a very special woman on a very special day—her 100th birthday. Helen Maddox was born on her family's small family farm in Romulus, Michigan on July 28, 1914.

She was the youngest of three and admits that while she was surrounded by love, life back then wasn't always easy. There was always a long list of chores that included taking care of the animals and helping with the crops.

Helen worked at a roadside stand selling fruits and vegetables and says her curly hair was a great marketing tool. People would stop because of her cute curls, and then buy something.

Her parents were community leaders and that is a trait that rubbed off on Helen.

Like many people who weren't lucky enough to be born in Texas, she moved there as an adult. She immediately became involved in the small, but growing community of Arlington, Texas. Back then it was a town of just 15,000, now it is close to 400,000. Helen Maddox played a role in making it a big city with a small town feel.

She started attending city council meetings so she could keep up with what was going on

and support city leaders. Helen founded the Arlington Women's Club in 1957 and it is still going strong. She also worked with longtime Mayor Tom Vandergriff to organize the YMCA.

She and her late husband loved to travel, many times hitting the road in their Winnebago.

Helen slowly got more involved in Republican politics. In 1986 she got an invitation to have tea at the White House with Nancy Reagan.

When Arlington became part of my district 20 years ago, Helen was one of the first people to welcome me. She was 80 at the time, but still full of life and her love of Arlington and America was infectious.

As she hits 100 she is still active in the community. I am proud today to say Happy 100th Birthday to my friend—Helen Maddox!

#### CHRISTIAN GENOCIDE

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to yield to a friend, a colleague, a guy I came in with in the class of 2004, my friend, Mr. FORTENBERRY.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. I thank the gentleman from Texas, my good friend, Congressman GOHMERT. I appreciate your yielding, and I appreciate your willingness to engage in the most important dialogues facing our Nation night after night. Thank you again for allowing me to intrude a bit on your time.

I wanted to raise something of the utmost urgency, Mr. Speaker.

Mosul is Iraq's second largest city. For 1600 years, Mosul has been a center of Christian life, and, today, not a single Christian remains.

Now, who could have imagined that 1 month ago—just a month ago—large swaths of the country of Iraq would be invaded—conquered—by an army of religious fanatics who would fly a flag that is a black banner of death.

After capturing Mosul, this group, known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, commonly called ISIS, issued an ultimatum to the Christians who lived in this city. They said three things: you must depart; you must convert to Islam—or you will die by the sword.

They did more than that.

Mr. Speaker, they did this: this is the Arabic letter for “N,” and it is pronounced “none.” It is a symbol that stands for the word “Nazarene,” which is a denigrating term used to describe Christians in the area by some. In their brutal campaign against Christians and other religious minorities, ISIS spray-painted this letter on the doors of the remaining Christians' homes, their businesses and their churches, except they didn't do it in gold. They did it in red—blood red.

Leave, convert, or die.

Mr. Speaker, Iraq's Christians have just as much right as anybody else to

be there. That community has traditionally served—even in a minority status—as a leavening influence, often-times trying to build bridges where there were ethnic or religious tensions.

People all around the world, fortunately, are recognizing the grotesque injustice that is happening. Even though we are busy here, debating all types of other concerns, nonetheless, in a land very, very far away, people are being told that they must leave their homes—their ancestral homelands—and go to who knows where or they will die.

Fortunately, there is a movement that is now happening. Many people around the world are taking that red symbol of death that was painted on those Christians' homes, and they are turning it into this gold symbol of solidarity, saying that, if we are going to find peace in the world—if we are ever at least going to find a bit of stability—we are going to have to come to some deeper awareness of understanding of the nature and dignity of all human persons and of that most sacred right of religious liberty: to be able to express one's faith tradition, particularly an ancient faith tradition which has existed in this area for 1600 years.

□ 2045

We must find a way to elevate that value. So, in the midst of this chaos, this horror, this grotesque injustice, there is a little bit of glimmering light, in that people all around the world are starting to use this symbol on Facebook and social media.

Mr. Speaker, all I wanted to do tonight is say I stand with them in solidarity.

I yield back to my good friend from Texas.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend. I am immensely grateful to my friend, Mr. FORTENBERRY, for bringing this point home. It is a point that has been brought home repeatedly to me in different places in the world.

In Afghanistan, where this country helped with a constitution that would be shari'a law-based, my country, my country, where Americans have fought and died for freedom, my country, where the most valuable commodity we have, human life, has been sacrificed on the altar of freedom because we believed where there was a threat like Afghanistan to us as Americans, we could repel the Taliban, and the world would benefit and certainly America would benefit, and Christians around the world would benefit, who were being so persecuted by the Taliban in control in Afghanistan.

But we weren't alone. Moderate Muslims in Afghanistan were being persecuted. That is why there were plenty, there were plenty of groups willing to rise and fight with America, for America, against the radical Islamists of the Taliban.

The moderate Muslims didn't want radical Islamists running their coun-

try. They were perfectly willing to allow Christians or Buddhists or secularists, Jews, to live and worship or not worship as they saw fit in their country.

So the people that some in this administration call war criminals, the Northern Alliance, fought for us, and they defeated the Taliban in a matter of months.

It was in October of 2001, a month or so after the worst attack on the United States in our history killed over 3,000 people here in our homeland. We finally figured out that planning and preparation occurred in Afghanistan.

And there did have to be some diplomatic negotiations to get some of the tribes to be willing to fight together because they didn't like each other sufficiently, at least, to work together and be under each others' control and command.

Diplomatically, there may have been some money that changed hands, we are told, to get one tribal leader to subjugate to another.

General Dostum, legendary in the region, in the whole continent, for courage, led. We had less than 500, around 300 or so, embedded military, special ops guys, as well as intelligence. And within about 4 or 5 months, the Taliban were totally routed, totally defeated.

Then the administration, under the leadership of the State Department, decided the best thing for Afghanistan would be to have a stove-piped, centralized, top-heavy government, even though this was a regional, tribal country, had been for millennia.

That was a mistake that was not the Obama administration's; that happened before President Obama took office.

But, from those I talked with, they could see problems, and I believe, if there had been a President Bush clone he would have been willing to admit we needed a change.

But the new President accepted Afghanistan, with its top-heavy government, where the President can appoint the governors, appoint the mayors, appoint the police chief, appoint the highest level teachers, appoint a slate of a big portion of the legislature. Incredible powers.

If you were looking for a formula that would help you create corruption, we helped provide it to the Afghans. If you were looking for an environment that could be created that would encourage corruption, we helped provide it to the Afghans.

Well, everybody makes mistakes. But the important thing is, after you have made them, recognize them and correct them.

Instead, this administration came in and really doubled down and bet on the top-heavy, corrupt Karzai administration. As a result, synagogues really can't be found in Afghanistan. Christian churches—you would be hard-pressed to find a church in Afghanistan, not that they are not there somewhere.

But the Taliban, one of whose leaders has been on national television in Afghanistan, on behalf of the Taliban,