

House of Representatives from the time they first elected me in 1988 until 2014.

I pay special tribute to them and to the late Paramount Chief A.U. Fuimaono, who served as American Samoa's first elected representative to Washington, D.C. Paramount Chief Fuimaono gave me the opportunity to serve as his chief of staff from 1973 to 1975, and I am grateful for all he taught me.

From 1975 to 1981, it was my honor to serve with the late Congressman Philip Burton, who was chairman of the House Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs. During my service as his chief counsel, he instructed me with drafting legislation providing for the first elected Governor and Lieutenant Governor of American Samoa and for American Samoa to be represented by a Delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives. I will always be grateful and thankful for the opportunity that I had to participate in such an historic undertaking for and on behalf of the people of American Samoa.

After my service with Chairman Burton, the late Senate President, Paramount Chief Letuli Toloa encouraged me to come home and ai le pefu ma savali le ma'ama'a, which means, come back home to "eat the dust and walk on the rocks" so that I could feel the people's pains and sufferings and so that I might be able to serve them with more meaningful purpose.

I followed his advice, and as I look back over my life of service, had I not returned to American Samoa to live among our people, it would have been impossible for the people of American Samoa to have entrusted me to serve them for nearly four decades at home and abroad.

As I now leave this great institution, Mr. Speaker, I once more express my love for the people of American Samoa and to all my fellow Americans. I also want to express my love to my dear wife, Antonina Hinanui, who is from Tahiti, and our children for standing beside me throughout my years of service.

I express my love for my late father, Eni Fa'aua'a, Sr., and my dear mother, Taulalaitufanuaimaataamali'i. I also want to thank my siblings for their unwavering support.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I publicly want to thank my colleagues, both Republicans and Democrats, in the House and the U.S. Senate. We have worked together in close cooperation for many years, and I will always be grateful for their steadfast friendship, as well as their constant support for the initiatives I put forward on behalf of the people of American Samoa.

I especially want to thank our fellow Democratic leader NANCY PELOSI. My service with the late Congressman Phillip Burton, who was like a father to me, led to my friendship with Congresswoman PELOSI. Congresswoman PELOSI and I have been family since our Burton days, and I am grateful

that she has been a part of my life for all these years.

I am also proud that Congresswoman PELOSI became the first woman in U.S. history to serve as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. Congresswoman PELOSI will always hold a special place in my heart.

I thank my friends from around the world, including diplomats and world leaders from Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos, Taiwan, both North and South Korea, China, India, Hong Kong, and elsewhere, for their friendship and support.

I also want to thank my staff in Washington, D.C., and in American Samoa for their loyalty and dedication to me, to our Nation, and to the people of American Samoa.

Above all, I thank my Heavenly Father for his guidance and protection.

I go forward, Mr. Speaker, knowing that the best is yet to come and hoping that I will be remembered for trying my best. For the times I fell short, I ask for forgiveness.

To each of my colleagues and to you, Mr. Speaker, I extend my kindest and highest regards. May God be with you always. Fa'afetai ma ia Soifua, meaning, in the Samoan language, thank you, and may peace be with you always.

CRISES IN VENEZUELA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, stability in the Western Hemisphere is in jeopardy due to the political and economic pressures occurring in Venezuela. Misguided financial decisions, attacks on entrepreneurship, and socialist policies have led the economy in Venezuela to a free fall.

With oil prices continuing to decrease, Venezuela is suffering from large budget shortfalls due to its large dependency on oil sales. To try to make up for the deficiency, the Venezuelans have a foreign debt of over \$100 billion and have had to cut its oil shipments to some Caribbean and Central American nations.

This paradigm shift can lead to an opening for the U.S. to get more involved in the region and deter the large democratic setbacks that we have experienced in recent years.

Venezuela's economic crisis is combined with its political problems and, Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge this body to stand in solidarity with the freedom-seeking people of Venezuela. Nicolas Maduro's intransigent, brutal regime continues to desperately and violently silence dissonant voices who believe in freedom, in democracy, and in respect for human rights.

Just last week, democracy advocate Maria Corina Machado was summoned to a kangaroo court in Caracas. This courageous woman was, until recently, a member of the Venezuelan National

Assembly until she was illegally removed from her seat in Congress by the Venezuelan thugs. Why was she removed from that seat? Because she spoke up for the people of Venezuela.

Before she was removed unjustly from her legislative seat, she was physically assaulted on the floor of the National Assembly. Yes, on the floor of the Venezuelan Congress, she was beaten up.

Maria Corina, despite being banned from leaving her country, continues to use the power of her voice to spread awareness about the violence and the corrupt nature of Nicolas Maduro's brutal regime.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, her case is not an isolated incident. Earlier this year, savage repression met the thousands of students who peacefully demonstrated, seeking a better Venezuela. Maduro, in desperation, used his National Guard and paramilitary forces to savagely quash the protest. During that time, innocent people were injured, arrested, and even killed, unarmed demonstrators killed by Nicolas Maduro. Seventy-two of those students remain in prison today, as well as two mayors who are in prison and opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez, another brave voice for freedom like Maria Corina.

Here is Leopoldo Lopez. He remains in solitary confinement in Ramo Verde military prison under the poorest of conditions and without regular access to visitors and all denying his due process. His wife, children, family, and friends are not allowed to freely visit him, Mr. Speaker.

His case caused international outcry from Amnesty International, stating that the charges against him are politically motivated and an assault on dissent in Venezuela.

More recently, the United Nations working group on arbitrary detentions, along with that body's top human rights officials, demanded the release of Leopoldo Lopez as well as the release of all of those who have been detained for exercising their legitimate right to express themselves freely.

In response, the Venezuelan regime stated that the U.N. body's decision was nonbinding on them, and so these innocent civilians remain in prison.

The Venezuelan people have been met with intimidation, with violence, with imprisonment for simply calling for respect for human rights and democratic freedoms in their own country.

So the United States must stand with them in their struggle for freedom. That is why this body passed H.R. 4587, the Venezuelan Human Rights and Democracy Protection Act, in May, a bill that I authored. The bill targets Venezuelan officials by denying them visas to enter the United States, blocks their property, freezes their assets, and prohibits financial transactions of these thugs responsible for committing human rights abuses against the people of Venezuela.

I call on the Senate to pass the Venezuela sanctions legislation immediately to send a signal that these abusive tactics by the Maduro regime will have consequences.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Venezuela are sending us a distress signal, and the United States must stand ready to act for the cause of freedom, democracy of our own hemisphere. Democracy leaders like Leopoldo Lopez and Maria Corina Machado are counting on us.

HONORING HARRIET TUBMAN'S LIFE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. MAFFEI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MAFFEI. Mr. Speaker, in this Nation's great history, the life of Harriet Ross Tubman is certainly a life worth recognition by this Congress and this country.

Harriet Tubman, born Araminta Ross in 1822, dedicated her life to the emancipation movement as a leader of the Underground Railroad that provided enslaved African Americans a pathway to freedom in the North. She served for the Union Army during the Civil War and as a caregiver for the elderly by establishing the Tubman Home for the Aged in Auburn, New York, where she lived out her life.

She suffered from traumatic brain injury throughout her life after she was hit as a teenager with a heavy weight by a slave overseer who was trying to subdue another enslaved person. She was an advocate for women's rights and worked to get women the vote. After settling in Auburn, she dedicated much of her life and effort to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church there.

In 2008, the National Park Service completed a special resource study to determine the most appropriate way to recognize the life of Harriet Tubman. The Park Service eventually came to the conclusion that a park should include two geographically separate units. One would be a tightly clustered set of buildings in Auburn, New York, and the other would include large sections of landscape that are evocative of Tubman's life both as a slave and as a conductor of the Underground Railroad on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

The Harriet Tubman National Historical Parks Act, which I introduced, aims to further commemorate the life of Harriet Tubman by establishing the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park in Auburn and the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park in Dorchester County, Maryland.

Harriet Tubman Historical Park is located in Auburn, New York, and the part of that that includes historical structures like the Tubman home, the Tubman Home for the Aged, the AME Zion Church that she went to, and the Fort Hill Cemetery where she is buried.

Mr. Speaker, last week this House passed legislation as part of the armed

services authorization bill to establish a park in Tubman's honor. This week I hope the Senate will also pass this legislation and send it to President Obama for his signature.

It is completely appropriate that this provision should be included, for, though not as well known as her activity on the Underground Railroad, Harriet Tubman was one of our first African American women military veterans. She volunteered her time and efforts, traveling to the South to help the Union war effort by helping fugitives and serving as a nurse to Union soldiers in Port Royal, South Carolina.

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Eventually she was leading bands of scouts through the land around Port Royal, where her ability to travel unseen and fool her adversaries made her an ideal spy. Her group, working under the orders of the Secretary of War, made maps and collected important intelligence that aided the Union capture of Jacksonville, Florida.

Subsequently, Tubman became the first woman to lead an armed assault during the Civil War. When Union Colonel James Montgomery and his troops attacked plantations along the Combahee River, Tubman went with them and guided three steamboats around confederate mines in the waters leading to the shore. More than 750 enslaved African Americans were rescued in the Combahee River raid and, according to the newspapers at the time, most of those newly liberated men went on to join the Union Army, largely due to Tubman's recruiting efforts.

Mr. Speaker, Harriet Tubman lived for freedom and worked hard to extend freedom to hundreds of others. In doing so, she earned the Nation's respect and honor. A century after her death, I am proud to have worked so hard to establish a fitting memorial to her.

I truly believe that Harriet Tubman's example of inner strength, persistence, her love of freedom, and her dedication to the Nation based on the principles of freedom makes her as relevant today as she was in her own time.

Mr. Speaker, our time is filled with too much cynicism and people feeling powerless to do much to better our society. We should look to the example of Harriet Tubman, a true American patriot. She was someone for whom liberty and freedom were not just concepts but were principles worth working for and fighting for.

According to Tubman's authorized biographer, Sarah Bradford, when Tubman had escaped from slavery in the Northern States, she said, "I looked at my hands to see if I was the same person. There was such a glory over everything. The Sun came up like gold through the trees and over the fields, and I felt like I was in Heaven."

We, Mr. Speaker, should look to Harriet Tubman, an enslaved African American woman of slight physical stature and suffering from head trauma,

and realize that the glory and heaven that is American freedom is there for us all if we are willing to work for it and to fight for it and to believe in it, as Harriet Tubman did.

SOUTHERN PRESTIGE INTERNATIONAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, in October, I had the privilege of visiting Southern Prestige International to view firsthand the company's creative and innovative manufacturing solutions.

Based in Statesville, North Carolina, Jim Wilson, one of the most creative and remarkable people I have ever met, started the company in March 1979 as Southern Prestige Industries. In 2013, this family-owned business joined with partners Jeff Eidson and Joey Chambers to form a new company, Southern Prestige International, and focus on future opportunities.

Currently, Southern Prestige International has two operating companies, ProEdge Precision and Specialty Perf. ProEdge Precision is an advanced manufacturer of precision machine components for the aerospace, defense, medical, energy, and commercial industries. Specialty Perf is a soft-goods perforator, producing specialty products for signage, advertising media, and food packaging, as well as one-way vision, energy diffusion/control, and medical products.

Although its business has taken on different forms over the years, today Southern Prestige International is a place where experience and confidence have prevailed to forge an advanced manufacturing business that understands the needs of its customers.

During my visit, I had the opportunity to meet with employees as well as local leaders in workforce development before touring the company's two manufacturing operations. ProEdge Precision currently employs about 35 people, and during the visit, Mr. Chambers told me he could see the company doubling its workforce in the next few years to keep up with increasing demand. However, he also said one of the company's greatest challenges is finding the qualified workforce it needs to be a competitive manufacturer in today's marketplace.

It is my hope that Southern Prestige International will have an easier time finding these employees with implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which aims to close the skills gap by modernizing and reforming our country's workforce development system. By streamlining the jumble of paperwork and red tape that has been prevalent in Federal workforce education programs, this law will provide direct access to education and skills development for in-demand jobs.

During the tour, I saw firsthand the cutting-edge equipment and methods