

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.

□ 1215

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

used by Southern Prestige International and how they take advantage of industry innovations and develop proprietary advances of their own to give customers a competitive edge.

It is clear we need to stop Washington from telling employers every little jot and tittle of what to do and turn the American workforce loose to be productive and innovative, as it has been in the past.

The underlying philosophy of Southern Prestige International is that of customer service and high-quality products. It is clear that there is more wisdom in Iredell County than in Washington, D.C.

A PIECE OF HOME THIS CHRISTMAS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the United States has our military all over the world, and we have for a good number of years. In fact, the United States has been at war for a long, long time.

This year, as we approach Christmas, families across America will gather around to enjoy homemade apple pie and turkey and each other's company, but our men and women in uniform, those volunteers, are still all over the world, protecting and representing the United States. These are America's best. It is the best we have in our country.

In 2005, I had the opportunity to go over to Iraq and see our military during the Christmas season. But before I left, I decided I would ask local schoolchildren and their teachers to help make some homemade Christmas cards and holiday cards to give to our troops when I arrived in Iraq.

So that year, after I landed, I took about 5,000 handmade Christmas cards—made primarily by schoolchildren—to our servicemen and -women in Iraq and also in Kosovo. Since that time, children in southeast Texas have been making handmade Christmas cards and holiday cards for our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq and other parts of the world every year, and these cards are either taken overseas by me or they are shipped.

This year, the community in southeast Texas and the schools rallied, and the result is quite outstanding. I am proud to say that this holiday season we will be sending 96,000 handmade Christmas cards and holiday cards to our troops in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other parts of the world, primarily made by schoolkids in southeast Texas. Remember, Mr. Speaker, these are handmade cards. These are not store-bought cards.

These cards were received from various Texas residents. Just to name a few: Kingwood High School, Sterling Middle School, Timberwood Middle School, Goose Creek Memorial High School, Alamo Elementary, Horace Mann Junior High, the Hi Neighbor

Club in Kingwood, Houston Methodist Hospital, Baytown Chamber of Commerce, the Baytown school district, the Baytown Housing Authority, Victory Hospital, and Boy Scout and Girl Scout clubs in southeast Texas.

Mr. Speaker, 80,000 of these came from the city of Baytown alone. So a big "thank you" to Rikki Wheeler, the executive vice president of the Baytown Chamber of Commerce, as well as to the Baytown schools, hospitals, and organizations for their remarkable contribution and organizing and managing the collection of these cards.

The patriotic spirit of those folks in southeast Texas to me is quite heartwarming, and the outpouring of support from Texans, primarily schoolchildren, is quite exceptional.

I want to thank all of those who have taken the time to bring joy to our troops in lands that are far, far away, those troops who will be separated from their families this Christmas. It is because of the schools, the teachers, and the schoolchildren that this is all made possible every year.

This is a way that people in southeast Texas show appreciation to our troops who are separated from their families this time of the year. Remembering to thank them and send them special greetings is very important.

Many of these schoolchildren have family members overseas who are serving in the military, and this small gesture brings comfort and cheer to all of those involved. A piece of home will mean so much to those who are representing us overseas, and it is possible only because the community volunteers to do this each year.

The simple act of making a handmade card shows the connection between our warriors and our schoolchildren who are thinking about them this time of year. So this Christmas, as Americans celebrate, we remember to say a prayer for those who safeguard America's freedoms.

We thank our volunteers in uniform, and we thank our volunteers who made this season quite special for our military by making these cards.

And that is just the way it is.

Mr. Speaker, at this point, I will also include for the RECORD a list of other groups who have made holiday cards for our troops.

Advanced Aromatics/GCM High/Chevron Phillips
Aramark/Stuart Career Ctr.-Culinary Arts
Awards & Engraving/St. Joseph's/Byt
Draft'g/Staff'g
Bayer/Clark Elementary
Baytown GMC/Bowie Elem.
Baytown Sun/GCCISD Public Relations
Beacon FCU/Ashbel Smith Elem.
CenterPoint/Gentry Jr.
Chevron Phillips/Crockett Elem.
CRCU/Lamar Elem.
Community Toyota/Highlands Jr.
Crespo & Jirrels/Peter Hyland (ALP)
ExxonMobil/RE Lee High
ExxonMobil/Walker Elem.
ExxonMobil/Travis Elem.
ExxonMobil/San Jacinto Elem.
ExxonMobil/Baytown Jr.
ExxonMobil/Cedar Bayou Jr.

Highlands C of C/Hopper Primary
Highlands Rotary/Highlands Elementary
Houston Methodist San Jac Hosp/RS
Sterling High
Kiwanis Club/Alamo Elem.
LCY/Harlem Elem.
Legacy/Point Alternative
Rotary/DeZavala Elem.
Shine Dental/Impact Early College High School
SNC-GDS/Horace Mann Jr.
Solvay/Carver Elem.
Texas First/SF Austin Elem.
GCCISD Special Olympics
Stuart Career Ctr.
Woodforest/Banuelos Elem.
BCA 2nd Grade Class

AMERICA'S SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BYRNE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask for a moment that my colleagues imagine a situation. Imagine a few years down the road that a Republican President announces he has instructed the Justice Department to no longer enforce the Clean Air Act, that he has told the Justice Department to no longer prosecute violations of the Clean Air Act.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle would rise up with frustration and indignation. They would say the President has failed to faithfully execute the laws passed by Congress, as he has been constitutionally required to do, and they would be right to do so.

Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what is happening in our country today. President Obama has chosen unilaterally not to enforce our Nation's longstanding immigration laws. He has made this decision without any consultation with Congress and entirely on his own.

Think for a moment about the precedent this action sets: that a President can alter longstanding law simply through an executive memo and his words, a President can simply say that he is not going to enforce the law. That would be frightening to all Americans, regardless of political belief.

Let's be clear what this action is not. It is not prosecutorial discretion.

No one doubts that the President has prosecutorial discretion. But this goes far beyond that power and enters into new territory that, frankly, has never before been touched.

I believe this issue was settled long ago, before our country was even founded. You see, in the 17th century in Britain, during this big fight between the King of England and Parliament, the King said that he had prerogative powers, the ability to override Parliament. And there were battles. There were wars in Britain about how this was going to be settled. And the Parliament determined, in consultation with the courts, that the King couldn't, on his own, do that, that he couldn't just simply say, I am going to dispense with the laws or suspend their operations for a period of time.