

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

GLOBAL ANTI-POACHING ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 2, 2015

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, illegal poaching has hit a crisis point for many of the world's most iconic species. Nearly 100 elephants are being slaughtered each day by ivory poachers. The black market sale of rhino horn and trafficking in infant gorillas is driving these species to the brink of extinction. H.R. 2494, the Global Anti-Poaching Act, takes critical steps to strengthen the punishments for poaching and wildlife tracking.

The United States is a leader in the fight to protect endangered and threatened species around the world, and this legislation continues that legacy. This bill will ensure that the full strength of the U.S. criminal justice system can be brought to bear against those who seek to kill, trade, or otherwise profit from the furs, pelts, skins, or other body parts of protected species. The profits from this illegal trade are often used to fund terrorist or criminal activities, making the tougher enforcement in this bill an issue of national security as well.

Additionally, this bill creates important partnerships with nations around the world to lend our country's expertise in countering wildlife trafficking to local law enforcement officials on the ground. By engaging partners across national boundaries, coordinating resources, and sharing intelligence, this legislation would make anti-poaching efforts around the world more efficient and more effective.

Poaching is a big business in the criminal world that threatens species across the globe. This legislation steps up America's efforts to ensure the protection of endangered species and crack down on this black market industry. I thank Mr. ROYCE, as the author of this bill and our founding co-chair on the International Conservation Caucus, for his leadership on this issue, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2494.

HONOR OUR VETERANS

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 4, 2015

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Men and Women of The Armed Forces. We give thanks to them and their families, who live and die and carry the burdens of war for all that we hold dear. Bless them. I submit this poem penned in their honor by Albert Carey Caswell.

Honor our Veteran's
One day is not enough.
Somehow one day of the year does not seem just.

Honor our Veteran's each day of the year
For they fight and die for all of us here
For all of those freedom's that we hold dear
Honor our Veteran's not one,
but every day of the year
For they are ones,
who must live with all of those tears
For all of their Brothers and Sisters In Arms
they have lost here.
And who awake in the night with all of those
nightmares.
Whose families who must now live in fear
Not knowing whose going,
or ever coming back here
Honor our Veteran's every day of the year.
For those are ones,
who must lay in hospital beds when its all
said and done
With all of their families holding their
daughters and sons.
And their Husbands and Wives.
The Greatest Loves of their lives.
So all in tears.
Teaching Us.
Beseeching Us.
All about honor and duty,
and courage so clear.
Who against all odds now cling to life here.
The ones who have died.
Who live without arms and legs as they try.
With scars on their faces
And all places
Living in darkness losing their sight.
Carried with them for the rest of their lives.
Some how it does not seem right.
That we only take one day to make honor of
them who fight the fight.
America's most magnificent of all lights.
Who give the greatest gifts of sacrifice.
Honor our Veteran's every day and night
I bid you to please
To fall to your knee's
And say a prayer of thanks for all of these
Buy them a drink.
Buy them a meal.
Put your arm around them and let them
know how you feel.
Go up to them and their families,
and tell them how much they mean.
Because all that they ask.
Are these two words from yours lips to so
pass.
Thank you.
Yea, one day not enough.
For all of our freedoms of which they
bought.
One day just somehow does not seem just.
For all that they've taught.
Honor our Veteran's every day of the year.
Say a prayer of thanks,
and for them and their families shed a tear.
Honor our Veteran's every day of the year.

HONDURAN CIVIL SOCIETY DEMANDS INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE AND END CORRUPTION AND IMPUNITY

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 4, 2015

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, in September I traveled to Honduras as part of a

fact-finding delegation organized by the Washington Office on Latin America. Everywhere we went we heard about people's concern over endemic corruption and impunity.

An unprecedented citizens' movement has inspired thousands of Hondurans to take to the street in peaceful protest marches demanding that Honduras establish an international, independent commission with the mandate to investigate crimes of corruption and impunity and the ability to participate in their prosecution. This type of a commission is modeled on the successful work over the past decade of the "CICIG" in Guatemala.

This movement is called the "outraged position," or "Oposición Indignada." They are led, in large part, by an intelligent, thoughtful and politically diverse group of young people who organize using social media and who have come together because of their shared desire to end corruption in their country. They now face constant threats for their initiative, and I hope that the Honduran government will ensure their protection and investigate the threats against them so that they may continue to exercise their basic rights to freedom of speech and association.

On September 28th, the Organization of American States presented to the Honduran president a proposal for a commission that would help the notoriously weak Honduran judicial system to gain capacity to carry out its responsibilities. Regrettably, I believe this proposal falls woefully short of what is required to break the culture of corruption and impunity that so characterizes the Honduran State. As we learned from Guatemala, to successfully bring to justice those who benefit from corruption and impunity, a commission must be truly independent with a mandate to investigate exemplar cases wherever the evidence warrants and participate in the prosecution of those cases under national law.

Last week, on October 28th, a broad coalition of Honduran civil society, the Coalition Against Impunity, issued a statement declaring that the mission proposed by the OAS and the government is itself an obstacle to creating a genuine, independent commission that can truly tackle the rampant corruption and impunity in Honduras. Earlier, on October 4th, the "Indignados" issued a similar critique, pointing out the weaknesses of the OAS proposal to independently investigate crimes of corruption and ensure their prosecution.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit a copy of the letter addressed to the OAS by the Oposición Indignada that outlines their concerns with that proposal. It is my hope that the OAS will listen seriously to this unprecedented citizens' movement and ensure that any commission that comes into being in Honduras will be truly politically and financially independent, and have the mandate to undertake independent investigations into crimes of corruption and impunity and ensure their prosecution.

(English translation of the letter written in Spanish is as follows:)

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

TEGUCIGALPA, HONDURAS,
4 de octubre de 2015.

Mr. LUIS ALMAGRO,
Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Washington, DC.

We respectfully write to you to provide an official response to the proposal made by the Organization of American States (OAS) to create a “Support Mission against Corruption and Impunity” or “MACCIH” in Honduras. We consider the proposal to contain many weaknesses and insufficient to combat corruption in Honduras.

The weaknesses we see in the proposal include:

1. It lacks an independent and impartial investigative unit capable of carrying out investigations of cases of corruption. Such a unit needs to be financially and politically independent and be comprised of international investigators and lawyers who can work with national prosecutors in the prosecution of high-level corruption cases.

2. The recommendations that will flow from the evaluations to be carried out by the MACCIH are not binding. It is essential to ensure the legal commitment of the Honduran government to implementing the recommendations. Recent history has shown that the government of Honduras often fails to comply with the recommendations of international bodies. An illustrative example was the failure to comply with the 47th recommendation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which called for the creation of an International Commission against Impunity in Honduras.

3. Since 1998, Honduras has participated in three of the four rounds of the MESICIC (Follow-up mechanism for implementations of the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption). Despite this participation, the country is in a state of deep social crisis with endemic levels of the corruption and impunity [and so the proposal to develop a plan for implementing the MESICIC does not seem likely to lead to action.]

4. The presentation of bi-annual reports by the Secretary General of the OAS represents an unnecessary delay in addressing the impunity and corruption crisis.

Considering these weaknesses, any proposal intended to lead to real results in the fight against corruption needs to have at least two essential components:

1. A politically and financially independent investigative unit able to initiate and help prosecute high-level corruption cases.

2. A mechanism by which recommendations have a binding character in order to ensure the implementation of reforms to our justice system.

If the OAS proposal fails to include the characteristics needed to make a valuable contribution to the corruption and impunity crisis in Honduras, we will ask the international community not to support the proposal financially or politically. We need a proposal that can help bring about changes in our society; we want justice and democracy.

CITIZEN MOVEMENT
“OPOSICIÓN INDIGNADA,”
PAUL EMILIO ZEPEDA,
GABRIELA LILIANA BLEN,
MARCELA ALEJANDRA
ORTEGA,
ARIEL FABRICIO VARELA.

TEGUCIGALPA, HONDURAS,
4 de octubre de 2015.

Sr. LUIS ALMAGRO,
Secretary General of the Organization of American States *Su despacho*.

Nos dirigimos respetuosamente a usted a fin de señalar nuestras observaciones a la propuesta generada por la Organización de Estados Americanos (OEA) ante la crisis so-

cial provocada por las altas tasas de corrupción e impunidad que aquejan al Estado de Honduras, propuesta denominada “MACCIH”, misma que cuenta con una serie de debilidades que nos preocupan seriamente como herramienta para luchar contra la corrupción y la impunidad en Honduras, subrayando:

1. No cuenta con un ente independiente e imparcial de investigación de los casos de corrupción. Es de vital importancia contar con una unidad con independencia presupuestaria y jerárquica donde investigadores y abogados internacionales junto con fiscales hondureños de reconocida capacidad puedan realizar la investigación y judicialización de actos de corrupción.

2. Las recomendaciones producto de los diagnósticos a realizarse no tienen carácter vinculante. Es necesario que exista obligación por parte del Estado de Honduras para el cumplimiento de las recomendaciones a través del documento legal pertinente, la historia reciente ha demostrado que el Gobierno de Honduras no cumple las recomendaciones de organismos internacionales, resaltamos como ejemplo la recomendación numero 47 de la Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación, que expresaba el establecimiento de una Comisión Internacional Contra la Impunidad en Honduras, hecha pública en Tegucigalpa, el 7 de Julio de 2011, en acto al cual asistieron el presidente de dicha comisión, Sr. Eduardo Stein, el Secretario General de la OEA en ese momento Sr. Jose Miguel Insulza y el entonces Presidente de Honduras, Sr. Porfirio Lobo Sosa.

3. Los resultados de la participación de Honduras desde 1998 en 3 de las 4 rondas del MESICIC, es un estado en crisis profunda de Impunidad y corrupción consecuencia de lo señalado anteriormente, por la falta de voluntad de los gobernantes en el cumplimiento de recomendaciones no vinculantes.

4. La creación de informes de manera semestral al Secretario General de la OEA para señalar obstáculos no resueltos por el enlace de gobierno, representa una dilatación enorme a la solución de la crisis de impunidad y corrupción en Honduras, sobretodo porque al carecer de vinculación el obstáculo no podrá resolverse aún este se vea reflejado en dichos informes.

En vista de lo anteriormente expuesto, consideramos que toda propuesta que busque resultados reales en la lucha contra la corrupción, debe contar con dos elementos esenciales:

1. Un ente de investigación independiente política y económicamente, que se encargue de esclarecer y llevar a juicio a los implicados en los casos de corrupción que sacuden nuestra sociedad.

2. Carácter de cumplimiento obligatorio a las recomendaciones que resulten de los diagnósticos al Estado de Honduras, si no hay una obligación no hay seguridad que las recomendaciones se ejecuten y por consiguiente la crisis continuara.

En caso de que esta iniciativa no logre implementar características que le permitan aportar a resolver la crisis de Impunidad y Corrupción que enfrenta Honduras, rechazamos formalmente dicha propuesta.

Finalmente, señalar que la propuesta de una Comisión Internacional Contra la Impunidad (CICI) se mantiene vigente como una herramienta eficiente y como un caso de éxito internacionalmente comprobado, ya que cuenta con características de investigación y fortalecimiento de las capacidades nacionales para la lucha contra la Impunidad y Corrupción, en contextos institucionales similares a los que tenemos en Honduras, a diferencia de la denominada MACCIH que aun es solo un ensayo no

comprobado y que carece de las características previamente señaladas.

Sin otro particular y expresando nuestras más altas muestras de respeto y estima, nos despedimos de usted.

Atentamente,

OPOSICIÓN INDIGNADA,
PAUL EMILIO ZEPEDA,
GABRIELA LILIANA BLEN,
MARCELA ALEJANDRA
ORTEGA,
ARIEL FABRICIO VARELA.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 4, 2015

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, on Tuesday, November 3, 2015, I recorded an erroneous vote on the amendment offered by Mr. RIBBLE of Wisconsin. I intended to vote “no” on roll call vote No. 588, on agreeing to the Ribble Amendment to H.R. 22.

IN RECOGNITION OF JEAN MRASEK

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 4, 2015

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work of an outstanding Texan, Jean M. Mrasek, as she recently concluded her distinguished work as Chairman of the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC).

This conference represents 26 sororities with a member base of more than four million women at 655 campuses and 4,500 alumnae chapters in the United States and Canada. Sororities and fraternities are the largest values-based organizations on college campuses and among the most successful leadership development programs for college students. National sororities are the largest women’s leadership organizations on hundreds of campuses and they continue to grow because of the value they provide in helping collegiate women become better scholars, leaders, and citizens.

As Chairman of NPC, Jean was a leading voice on contemporary issues of sorority life and for all collegiate women. As a proud University of Tulsa alumna and past national president of her sorority Chi Omega, Jean’s unyielding passion for Greek life is reflected in her lifetime commitment to serving others. Under her leadership, NPC has increased their membership, developed a new visual identity as part of a new communications plan, created new forms of risk-management education, and furthered the organizational effectiveness of the sorority world, speaking for the interests of college women everywhere. Jean’s long-term commitment to her Chi Omega chapter, its international organization, and the entire Greek community make her a role model for women who aspire to make a difference in the lives of other women.

I have personally had the opportunity to work with Jean over the years as she has come to Washington to tirelessly advocate for students across the country on issues ranging