

about our energy and national security. Despite our record domestic production of crude oil, I believe it is irresponsible to use a vital national energy security asset as a budget gimmick.

Besides the fact that the math simply doesn't add up, I philosophically oppose the increasing tendency of the federal government to reallocate money intended for one purpose to then fund unrelated policy initiatives. It is disingenuous and irresponsible. And in the case of the surface transportation bill funding mechanisms, this approach is symptomatic of a larger problem.

The Highway Trust Fund was designed to be funded primarily through a user pays, user benefits model in the form of the federal gas tax. The increased fuel efficiency of vehicles, in conjunction with several policy and regulatory factors, has gradually eroded the gas tax's ability to keep pace with investment demands over time.

Mr. Speaker, it is critical that we begin work now to modernize the funding formula for the Highway Trust Fund and return to a user pays model. The longer we turn a blind eye towards addressing the user fee model, which has not been adjusted since 1993, and continue to ignore the need to build a 21st century funding mechanism reflective of the technological advancements at our disposal, the more fearful I am of passing a sustainable, long term investment to address our nation's ailing infrastructure in the future.

I applaud the chamber on its work to pass this 5-year bill, and I look forward to continuing work to ensure the next bill is more fiscally responsible, adhering to a paid for measure more closely aligned to a user pay, user benefit system.

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FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING CENTERS REFORM AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2015

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SPEECH OF

**HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 8, 2015*

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers Reform and Improvement Act (H.R. 3842). This bipartisan bill will codify and reauthorize the duties and responsibilities of Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETCs). FLETCs improve domestic preparedness, prevention, and response to terrorism by providing basic and advanced training to federal employees involved in federal law enforcement activities or homeland security operations. I am proud that this important national security work occurs in several locations across the country, including in my home state of New Mexico.

However, I have concerns about one particular provision within H.R. 3842: The ability for FLETCs to offer state and local law enforcement agencies training, which is meant for federal security personnel. Although I strongly believe that federal security personnel need to coordinate and work closely with state and local law enforcement agencies to prepare, prevent, and respond to terrorism, I have grave concerns with the ability of community

police departments to have complete and unrestricted access to military-style training at FLETCs.

For example, the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) has access to every Department of Energy National Training Center (NTC) class, which are intended for federal law enforcement personnel to protect our nation's nuclear materials. APD has completed dozens of DOE-instructed classes, including lessons on "vehicle ambush," "tactical leadership assault executions," and "how to lead a small element in a combat situation." The U.S. Department of Justice is currently reviewing APD's use of NTC classes, resources, and facilities.

I encourage FLETCs to enact sensible oversight mechanisms and restrictions on state and local law enforcement access to FLETC resources and facilities. FLETCs should have criteria to determine what training topics or classes, if any, are appropriate for state and local law enforcement. FLETCs should also consider the duty assignments and responsibilities of individual officers when determining allowing access. In addition, police departments under a Department of Justice consent decree for violating the constitutional rights of Americans or departments with a history of excessive or unnecessary force, should not receive military-style training provided by FLETCs.

I will continue to work with the Administration on strengthening the mission of FLETCs and on ensuring that state and local law enforcement have appropriate access.

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VISA WAIVER PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND TERRORIST TRAVEL PREVENTION ACT OF 2015

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SPEECH OF

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 8, 2015*

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 158, the Visa Waiver Program Improvement Act. I agree that Congress has a responsibility to carefully examine the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) and to take appropriate steps to improve the program and ensure our national security.

Yet I am concerned that this bill would allow for the arbitrary discrimination of individuals based on their nationality. According to the American Civil Liberties Union, the language contained in H.R. 158 is written so broadly that all nationals of Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan would have their VWP revoked, even if they have never resided or traveled to Iraq or Syria and only have nationality for those countries as a result of their parents.

This bill would also terminate VWP travel privileges for anyone who has been in Iraq and Syria at any time on or after March 1, 2011, including those traveling to Iraq and Syria for professional purposes. This includes anyone from a journalist to a humanitarian aid worker. Congress can take steps to improve the program and ensure our national security without putting in place blanket provisions that allow for the discrimination of individuals based on their nationality. I look forward to working with my colleagues to address these issues as this legislation moves forward.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2130, RED RIVER PRIVATE PROPERTY PROTECTION ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

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SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 9, 2015*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule for H.R. 2130, the "Red River Private Property Protection Act."

The President has announced that this bill will be vetoed in the event it reaches his desk.

With just one legislative day before the current continuing resolution expires on December 11, we should be focusing all of our time and attention on matters that address the real problems and major concerns of the American people.

And right now the American people are very concerned about the harm and threat posed by "lone wolf" and "franchise terrorists" that we saw in Paris last month and just last week in San Bernardino, California.

These tragedies follow on the heels of mass shootings in Tucson, Aurora, Sandy Hook, Charleston, Chattanooga, Roseburg, Colorado Springs, and now, most recently, in San Bernardino, California.

These senseless mass shootings remind us of the imperative of ending gun violence in our country.

It is past time that we come together united by our common humanity and with this simple message: the violence must stop.

And there are actions that can be taken to reduce gun violence beginning with the enactment of the bipartisan "Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Public Act of 2015" (H.R. 1076).

This bipartisan legislation, which I am proud to co-sponsor, would close the dangerous loophole that allows terrorist suspects to legally buy deadly weapons.

H.R. 1076 would bar the sale or distribution of firearms to any individual whom the Attorney General has determined to be engaged in terrorist activities.

Mr. Speaker, if a person is considered by the federal government too dangerous to board an airplane or to enter the United States, he or she surely is too dangerous to be permitted to purchase or obtain a firearm.

It is unconscionable that we have not acted to close the loophole in federal law that permits a terrorist lawfully to obtain and carry firearms.

Mr. Speaker, according to a report by the Government Accountability Office, since 2004 more than 2,000 suspects on the FBI's Terrorist Watchlist have successfully purchased weapons in the United States.

It is simply intolerable that more than 90 percent of all suspected terrorists who attempted to purchase guns in the last 11 years walked away with the weapon they wanted, with just 190 rejected despite their ominous histories.

To close this loophole, I call upon Speaker RYAN to bring H.R. 1076 to the floor immediately.

H.R. 1076 grants the Attorney General the authority to deny a firearms license to individuals for whom there is a reasonable belief that

the individual may use a firearm or explosive in connection with terrorist activity.

This legislation was originally crafted in 2007 and endorsed by President Bush's Justice Department, has bipartisan support in the House, and is supported by prominent Republicans and counter-terrorism & law enforcement experts.

H.R. 1076 greatly reduces the likelihood that a terrorist can obtain some of the most lethal weapons in America.

Right now a terrorist can buy a firearm in the parking lot of a gun show, over the internet, or through a newspaper ad without needing a background check.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot be against criminals, terrorists and the dangerously mentally ill getting guns and be against H.R. 1076.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1076 will save lives and strengthen the rights of law-abiding gun owners.

It deserves a vote in the House.

**CONGRATULATING THE FESTUS HIGH SCHOOL TIGERS FOR THEIR 2015 MISSOURI CLASS 3 BOYS CROSS COUNTRY STATE CHAMPIONSHIP**

**HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 10, 2015*

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Festus High School Tigers for their first place win in the 2015 Class 3 Boys Cross Country State Championship.

This team and their coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the Festus Tigers for a job well done.

**HONORING SERGEANT THEODORE TRAVIS, SR.**

**HON. BRIAN HIGGINS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 10, 2015*

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to pay tribute to Sergeant Theodore Travis, Sr., a man committed to duty and family, who lost his life in service to this nation.

A Niagara Falls, New York native, Theodore Travis chose active-duty to support his young family after serving in the U.S. Army Reserves. He was a member of an elite team, the 101st Airborne—a Screaming Eagle and initially traveled to Fort Campbell, leaving behind his wife, high school sweetheart Cynthia, and two young sons, Theodore Jr. and Stefan. Sergeant Travis left the United States with his unit on an assignment to aid peace negotiations between Egypt and Israel.

Following their mission, Sergeant Travis and his comrades boarded a plane in high spirits and with great anticipation of returning to their families for Christmas. Tragically they never made it home. On December 12th, 1985, Arrow Air Flight 1285, carrying homeward bound members of the 3rd Battalion, 502nd

Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, crashed in Gander, Newfoundland. On that day 248 members of the 101st Airborne Division, including Sergeant Travis, were killed in the worst air disaster in U.S. military history.

This year, as we recognize the 30th anniversary of this disaster, family, friends and the community will gather at New Hope Baptist Church in Niagara Falls to remember Sergeant Travis, known to all as a "giver." He gave help to his community, gave his faith to the church, gave his love to his wife and children, and gave himself in service to the military in defense of this country, in the name of peace abroad, and in hopes of giving his family a better life.

So today, on behalf of a grateful nation, with a heavy heart we remember Sergeant Theodore Travis, Sr., who in selfless service to the United States of America, gave until he could give no more. Sergeant Travis, his family, and the others who lost their lives on Flight 1285 will be forever remembered for the great sacrifices they have made.

**CONGRATULATING THE BRAHMA KUMARIS AND SISTER JENNA ON THE GRAND OPENING OF THE MEDITATION MUSEUM II**

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 10, 2015*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Brahma Kumaris and Sister Jenna on the grand opening of the Meditation Museum II in Tysons Corner, Virginia.

The Brahma Kumaris is a non-profit organization with over 9000 branches in 120 countries. Founded in Hyderabad, Sindh in 1936, the Brahma Kumaris seeks to help individuals re-discover and strengthen their spirituality through self-reflection, meditation, and participation in activities of social and humanitarian concerns.

Sister Jenna began her spiritual journey with the Brahma Kumaris and is the founder and director of both the original Meditation Museum in Silver Spring, Maryland as well as this new location in Tysons Corner. Sister Jenna and several of her colleagues created the "Pause for Peace" campaign which has expanded into new programs including the Pause for Peace in the Classroom and Pause for Peace Spaces. Sister Jenna's commitment and influence have been recognized with numerous awards and proclamations including the President's Lifetime National Community Service Award, the Every Day Hero Award, and the Friendship Archway Award.

The benefits of meditation are scientifically proven. According to Psychology Today, meditation has been shown to increase immune function, decrease depression and anxiety and even positively affect higher-order cognitive functions in the brain. Perhaps the most profound aspects of meditation are those that cannot be measured scientifically. Self-awareness, inner-peace and tranquility, becoming one with your surroundings and your faith, and true acceptance of and respect for all others regardless of age, race, gender, religion, or economic status are but a few immeasurable and invaluable benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Sister Jenna and all who

have worked to make the grand opening of the new Meditation Museum II a reality and in wishing them continued success.

**TRIBUTE TO LARRY AND CAROL ANDRESS**

**HON. DAVID YOUNG**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 10, 2015*

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Larry and Carol Andress of Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary. They were married on September 25, 1965 at St. Patrick's Church in Council Bluffs.

Larry and Carol's lifelong commitment to each other and their children, Dave, Teresa and Deb, along with their grandchildren, truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Andress family that make me proud to call myself an Iowan and represent the people of this great state. I commend this great couple on their 50th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

**HONORING MAUREEN NICHOLSON FOR HER SERVICE TO THE TOWN OF POMFRET, CT**

**HON. JOE COURTYNE**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 10, 2015*

Mr. COURTYNE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to salute Maureen Nicholson's more than thirty years of service to the Town of Pomfret, Connecticut. Maureen has served in all corners of local leadership since she moved to Pomfret in 1988, most recently as the town's First Selectman.

From her start in Pomfret, Maureen was involved in the Parent Teacher Organization, Recreation Commission, Democratic Town Committee, Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Finance, and Tree Warden, among many more town and regional organizations. In 2009, she was elected to the Board of Selectmen, and in 2012 was elected First Selectman.

During her years as First Selectman, Maureen secured almost half a million dollars in grants for the Town of Pomfret. She secured the town's emergency shelter and began work to bring large-scale solar power to the town. Maureen saw the potential cost-savings in collaborating with neighboring towns to share accounting and auditing services, and launched an innovative initiative with the Town of Brooklyn. It is this enterprising spirit that delivered forward thinking policies to Pomfret, and the town and region have benefitted.

Maureen also worked to increase awareness for residents of Pomfret by founding and editing the Pomfret Times, and redesigning the town's website to promote and inform residents of the town's resources and news. Her other non-governmental achievements include service on the Day Kimball Hospital Women's