

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. PETER J. ROSKAM**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 27, 2015*

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 93, I was detained due to an unavoidable conflict. Had I been present, I would have voted aye.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 27, 2015*

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for roll call votes 86–90 due to a family emergency. Had I been present, I would have voted no on #86, no on #87, yes on #88, yes on #89, and yes on #90.

## HONORING THE LIFE OF FRANK EDWARD “ED” RAY

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 27, 2015*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Frank Edward “Ed” Ray on what would have been his 94th birthday. In a 1976 incident, Ed helped save 26 students from a kidnapping attempt in the city of Chowchilla. Recognizing such heroic actions, it is fitting and appropriate that the City of Chowchilla has chosen to name its largest park “Ed Ray Park.”

Frank Edward Ray was born in Le Grand, California on February 26, 1921. One of eight children of Frank and Marie Ray, he moved to Chowchilla with his family and graduated from Chowchilla High School in 1940. In 1942, he married his wife, Odessa, and bought a ranch where they raised dairy cows and grew corn. Ed then worked for the Dairyland Union School District as a bus driver for nearly 40 years.

Ed was the driver of the school bus packed with summer school kids that was hijacked in Chowchilla in 1976. They were later escorted into a buried moving truck in a quarry, where Ed led them to safety after he and two older boys dug their way out. During the time inside the quarry, Ray gave comfort and hope to the school children. No one was hurt and astonishingly he was able to recall significant details of the escort van’s license plates, assisting in the police investigation.

Ed was a humble and quiet man; he rarely spoke of the ordeal. He did not flaunt himself as a hero. In his final days, Ed was visited by several of the schoolchildren he helped save from the kidnapping. They will always remember him as their hero. A few years after retiring in 1988, he bought the bus for \$500 because he did not want it to become scrap metal at a junkyard. He donated it to a nearby museum in Le Grand, California. Ed’s selfless nature made him a pillar of the Chowchilla community.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I recognize the memory of Frank Edward “Ed”

Ray for his brave acts in 1976. May his brave deed and care for the children he drove to and from school every day never be forgotten.

EDUCATION WEEK SPOTLIGHT:  
THE COMMON-CORE STANDARDS’  
UNDEMOCRATIC PUSH**HON. MIMI WALTERS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 27, 2015*

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following article by Williamson M. Evers, published online on January 13, 2015.

One of the most influential books in social science in the last 50 years is economist Albert O. Hirschman’s *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*.

In this pivotal 1970 book, Hirschman discusses how individuals react when services they rely on deteriorate. The basic responses available to us are “exit” and “voice.” Hirschman points out, where exit means turning to a different provider or leaving the area, and voice means political participation.

We tend to think of these responses as stark alternatives. Hirschman, as a social scientist, wanted us to consider the interplay between them.

Exit usually has lower costs than voice for the individual. With exit, you can avoid the long slog of politics and simply turn to someone else or move somewhere else.

But there is a limiting case: Exit can have high costs when individuals are loyal to institutions—thus the third component in Hirschman’s trio of exit, voice, and loyalty.

In the 1830s, when Alexis de Tocqueville visited the United States, he found Americans intensely loyal to their local schools. Americans saw schools as extensions of their families and neighborhoods. They viewed public schools as akin to voluntarily supported charities and as part of what social scientists today call civil society.

Tocqueville described township school committees that were deeply rooted in their local communities. State control of local public education took the form of an annual report sent by the township committee to the state capital. There was no national control.

Today, Americans retain much of the sentiment about local schools they had in Tocqueville’s day. But, increasingly, parents and taxpayers view the public schools as an unresponsive bureaucracy carrying out edicts from distant capitals. Today, we are dealing with a deteriorating situation in a declining institution, namely widespread ineffective instruction in the public schools.

The Common Core State Standards have come to the fore precisely at a time when civically active individuals care much more than they usually do about exit, voice, and loyalty. But the common core has denied voice and tried to block exit.

The common core’s designers have taken the existing bureaucracy and increased its centralization and uniformity. By creating the common-core content standards behind closed doors, the authors increased the alienation of the public from schools as institutions worthy of loyalty. The general public had no voice in creating or adopting the common core.

The other approach in times of a deteriorating public service is offering better exit options. But the common core’s proponents have created an almost inescapable national cartel.

There has long been a monopoly problem in public education, which was why economist Milton Friedman called for opportunity scholarships (also known as vouchers) to create a powerful exit option. But even in the absence of opportunity scholarships and charter schools, we had some exit options in the past because of competitive federalism, meaning horizontal competition among jurisdictions.

Economist Caroline Hoxby studied metropolitan areas with many school districts (like Boston) and metropolitan areas contained within one large district (like Miami or Los Angeles). She found that student performance is better in areas with competing multiple districts, where parents at the same income level can move to another locality, in search of a better education.

We have also seen competitive federalism work in education at the interstate level. Back in the 1950s, education in Mississippi and North Carolina performed at the same low level. North Carolina tried a number of educational experiments and moved ahead of Mississippi. Likewise, Massachusetts moved up over the years from mediocre to stellar.

The common core’s promoters are endeavoring to suppress competitive federalism. The common core’s rules and its curriculum guidance are the governing rules of a cartel. The common core’s promoters and their federal facilitators wanted a cartel that would override competitive federalism and shut down the curriculum alternatives that federalism would allow.

The new common-core-aligned tests, whose development was supported with federal funds, function to police the cartel. All long-lasting cartels must have a mechanism for policing and punishing those seen as shirkers and chiselers, or, in other words, those who want to escape the cartel’s strictures or who want increased flexibility so they can succeed.

The new leadership of the College Board by David Coleman, one of the common core’s chief architects, is being used to corral Catholic schools, other private schools, and home-schooling parents into the cartel. The proponents of the common core have now established a clearinghouse for authorized teaching materials to try to close off any remaining possible avenue of escaping the cartel.

What was the rationale for the common core? The name given to the Obama administration’s signature school reform effort, the Race to the Top program, promotes the idea that the federal government needs to step in and lead a race. Central to this rhetoric is the idea that state performance standards were already on a downward slide and that, without nationalization, standards would inexorably continue on a “race to the bottom.”

I would disagree. While providers of public education certainly face the temptation to do what might look like taking the easy way out by letting academic standards decline, there is also countervailing pressure in the direction of higher standards.

If state policymakers and education officials let content standards slip, low standards will damage a state’s reputation for having a trained workforce. Such a drop in standards will even damage the policymakers’ own reputations.

In 2007, the Thomas B. Fordham Institute looked empirically at state performance standards over time in a study called “The Proficiency Illusion.” The study showed that, while states had a variety of performance standards (as would be expected in a federal system), the supposed “race to the bottom” was not happening. The proponents of the common core are wrong in their claims that state performance standards were inevitably on a downward slide.

The common core, in fact, provided relief from competitive pressure from other states. Sonny Perdue, the governor of Georgia at the time that the common core was created (the initiative was launched in 2009, and the standards were released in 2010), did not like it when the low-performing students of his state were compared with students in other states with standards different from Georgia's. He became the lead governor in bringing the National Governors Association into the national standards effort.

Nationalizing standards and tests eliminated them as differentiated school reform instruments that could be used by states in competition over educational attainment among the states.

The common core undermines citizens' exit option and competitive federalism. It was designed to do so. It likewise evades and negates the voice option. But the makers of this malign utopia have forgotten a few things.

They forgot that the desire for a voice, the desire for political action, can become particularly intense when people are faced with the prospect of nowhere to exit to. They forgot that hemming in parents and teachers would create a demand for alternatives and escape routes. Alternatives to the national common-core-aligned tests have arisen. States are dropping these national tests. States are also struggling to escape the common-core cartel itself. Parents are opting out of common-core testing.

By trying to block exit and voice, the designers and proponents of the Common Core State Standards have caused blowback: A large parent-, teacher-, and community-based movement has arisen to oppose the common core and its national tests.

#### DEDICATION TO RESEARCH

### HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 27, 2015*

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Arturo Hernandez, Pearland, Texas resident and University of Houston professor, on receiving the Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Award. This award honors his groundbreaking research on how the brain processes and learns language.

Dr. Hernandez's research on language study merits such recognition not only because it is an outstanding accomplishment in its own right, but also because it opens the gate to a new and undiscovered field of study at the convergence of language processing and genetics.

I commend Dr. Arturo Hernandez on his dedication to research that promises to inform and meaningfully impact the education process. On behalf of the residents of the Twenty-Second Congressional of Texas, congratulations again to Dr. Hernandez for receiving the Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Award.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. MIKE POMPEO

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 27, 2015*

Mr. POMPEO. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 92, 93, 94 I was unable to cast my vote due to attending a speaking event on the impor-

tance of U.S. Cyber Security. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea.

#### NIGERIA ON THE BRINK?

### HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 27, 2015*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation and is the continent's largest economy. Unfortunately, Nigeria is beset by various challenges that threaten the peace and stability of this African giant. The terrorist group Boko Haram continues its bloody reign of terror, now threatening to establish a "caliphate" on the model of ISIS in the Levant. Religious and ethnic discord, which pre-dates Boko Haram's emergence, continues unabated. Lower oil prices have serious damaged an economy significantly dependent on oil revenues. Meanwhile, the prospect of a violent repeat of the 2011 post-election scene has ratcheted up tensions in Nigeria even further. A hearing that I recently held examined the situation in Nigeria and the U.S. efforts to maintain positive relations with the largest U.S. trading partner in Africa and a major ally in international peace-keeping.

U.S.-Nigeria relations were understandably rocky during the military rule of Sani Abacha in the 1990s. However, the advent of democracy with the 1999 elections ushered in an improved atmosphere of cooperation. Nigeria consistently ranks among the top recipients of U.S. bilateral foreign assistance and is the second-largest beneficiary of U.S. investment in Africa. In recent months, though, our relations have deteriorated. Apparently, some in the government of President Goodluck Jonathan feel the United States is meddling in their internal affairs, especially when it comes to our noting deprivation of the due process rights of citizens by Nigerian military and security forces. Our view is that friends don't just stand by when friends commit human rights abuses.

The subcommittee that I chair held a hearing last July 10th to examine the complaints that human rights vetting was a major obstacle to U.S. counterterrorism. What we found was that the State Department estimated that half of Nigerian forces would pass our vetting process, which we found is slowed by too few staff working on these important issues. Still, the Nigerian Government must be more cooperative. Some units in larger divisions may have human rights issues, but if replaced by units without such baggage, there would be created an entirely acceptable division for training. Late last year, the Nigerian Government cancelled the counter-terrorism training of one of its battalions, which now places the entire training program on hold. We are making arrangements for discussions in the near future with Nigerian Military officials and Members of Congress and the Obama administration to overcome the current stalemate and resume the cooperation necessary to meet the challenge posed by Boko Haram.

This terrorist group has wreaked havoc on the people of Nigeria, particularly in the northeast. It is estimated that more than 5,500 people were killed in Boko Haram attacks last year alone, representing more than 60% of the more than 9,000 deaths caused by this group

in the past five years. As many as 2,000 people may have perished in the Boko Haram attack on the town of Baga and nearby villages last month. More than a million Nigerians have been displaced internally by the violence, and tens of thousands of others are now refugees in neighboring countries. Clearly, Boko Haram violence is escalating drastically.

Boko Haram has become part of the global jihadist movement and threatens not only Nigeria, but also Cameroon, Chad and Niger. While the terrorist group may not be an official affiliate of al-Qaeda or ISIS, they appear to be trying to create an Islamic caliphate in Nigeria. Various press reports estimate that the group has seized as much as 70% of Borno state, with additional territory under its control in neighboring Yobe and Adamawa states. In fact, Reuters calculated that by mid-January of this year, Boko Haram was in control of more than 30,000 square kilometers of territory—an area the size of the state of Maryland. For approximately two years, I pressed the administration to designate Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist organization (FTO). I argued that, like cancer, early intervention can mitigate its spread, severity and duration. I traveled to Nigeria twice and convened three hearings during the last Congress on why an FTO designation might help, only to be told by then-Assistant Secretary of State Johnnie Carson that "the phenomenon of Boko Haram is one of discrediting the Central Government in power for its failure to deliver services to people."

On the very day of our hearing to consider a bill on FTO designation, the state Department, led by Secretary of State Kerry announced that Boko Haram was being designated a Foreign Terrorist organization.

Meanwhile, Nigeria faces the prospects of post-election violence after presidential voting. The race pits President Jonathan against former Nigerian military ruler General Muhammadu Buhari in a re-run of the 2011 elections. This time, however, Buhari's All Progressive Congress (APC) is a coalition of major opposition political parties and includes defectors from President Jonathan's People's Democratic Party (PDP), such as Speaker of the National Assembly Aminu Tambuwal.

Some PDP officials have referred to their opponents as "Nigeria's Muslim Brotherhood," while APC officials accuse the Jonathan administration of representing only Christian southerners. Party spokesmen on both sides have warned of potential violence if their candidate doesn't win. Out of nearly 69 million registered voters in Nigeria, political observers believe this race could be decided by as few as 700,000 votes. Lack of action by the government to ensure that internally displaced voters can participate in the elections, delays in the distribution of voter cards and in the recruitment and training of poll workers places in question the effectiveness of the February elections.

Moreover, the election laws require that a winning presidential candidate must achieve a majority of the votes and at least 25% of the vote in two-thirds of the states. With so much territory in the control of Boko Haram or under the threat of their violence in the North, the northern-based APC likely would question a loss even though they have refused to accept a delay in voting to ensure that pre-election preparations are complete.

According to a recent Gallup poll, only 13% of Nigerians have confidence in the electoral