

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING DONNA LEITERMANN FOR HER HARD WORK AND DEDICATION AS A PUBLIC SERVANT IN THE FIFTH DISTRICT

**HON. DANIEL T. KILDEE**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 12, 2015*

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask the United States House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Donna Leitermann as she transitions from Bangor Township Treasurer to Bay City Treasurer. She will start her new career with the city on June 22, 2015.

Ms. Leitermann began her work as a public servant as Deputy Treasurer in December 1992. Two years later, she was elected as Bangor Township Treasurer and continued to serve for five terms.

Concurrent to serving as Bangor Township Treasurer, Ms. Leitermann was the treasurer of Bangor Township Downtown Development Authority and committee member of Bangor Township Department of Public Works. For two decades, there has not been a major infrastructure project in Bangor Township for which she was not responsible.

Public servants like Donna Leitermann deserve respect and appreciation. Every day, she has done important work that has positively affected her community. Ms. Leitermann has also been a member and past president of the Bay County Treasurer's Association, member of the Michigan Treasurer's Association, and treasurer and board director of Bay Future of Bay County.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Donna Leitermann for her commitment to public service and thank her for diligently serving as Bangor Township Treasurer these past 21 years. I wish her all the luck as she begins a new chapter as Bay City Treasurer.

IN HONOR OF THE LAUNCHING OF DIRECT FLIGHTS BETWEEN HOUSTON GEORGE BUSH INTERCONTINENTAL AIRPORT (IAH) AND TAIWAN TAOYUAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (TPE)

**HON. JOHN ABNEY CULBERSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 12, 2015*

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the launch of direct flights between Taipei and Houston. The inaugural flight BR-52 is scheduled to arrive in Houston Airport at around 4:30 p.m. on June 19th, 2015. The new direct service will make it easier for my constituents to travel to Taiwan and destinations throughout Asia for both business and leisure.

The United States and Taiwan share a thriving economic partnership. The new direct

route will further enhance our close relationship by promoting business and tourism, which will result in new jobs and economic benefits for my constituents and all of Texas.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize and congratulate Houston Airport, U.S. and Taiwanese officials involved, and the large Taiwanese-American community in Houston for their years of effort to achieve this significant milestone.

RECOGNIZING DIANE GERBER

**HON. DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 12, 2015*

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the tireless dedication of Staten Island's Diane Gerber in serving our veterans.

Originally from Brooklyn, Diane currently resides on Staten Island, and as a grandmother of eight, who single-handedly raised three children, she found time to commit 25 years to the American Legion's Cespino Russo Auxiliary Unit #1544.

Ms. Gerber served on American Legion Auxiliary Unit and County committees. She later ascended to the roles of Secretary, Vice President, and President. While serving as chair of these committees, she was the model of a true American citizen: fundraising to purchase holiday gifts for hospitalized veterans and helping bridge the educational gap by granting scholarships to many students.

During her term as President, she geared her attention toward her project, "Soldier's Wish—Making Our Heroes' Wishes Come True." Through her leadership, over \$57,000 has been raised so far. These funds are dedicated to identify the un-met needs of uniformed heroes regardless of rank or branch of service.

Mr. Speaker, Diane Gerber's commitment to improving and supporting the lives of those who have served our great nation is the perfect example of a model American citizen. I commend her outstanding achievements and I am proud to honor this hero from New York's 11th District.

THE GOLDMAN ACT TO RETURN ABDUCTED AMERICAN CHILDREN: ASSESSING THE COMPLIANCE REPORT AND REQUIRED ACTION

**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 12, 2015*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, international parental child abduction rips children from their homes and families and whiskers them away to a foreign land, alienating them from the love and care of the parent and fam

ily left behind. Child abduction is child abuse, and it continues to plague families across the United States.

Every year, an estimated 1,000 American children are unlawfully removed from their homes by one of their parents and taken across international borders. Less than half of these children ever come home.

The problem is so consequential and the State Department's previous approach of "quiet diplomacy" so inadequate, that Congress unanimously passed the Goldman Act last year to give teeth to requests for return and access. These actions increase in severity, and range from official protests through diplomatic channels, to extradition, to the suspension of development, security, or other foreign assistance.

The Goldman Act is a law calculated to get results, as we did in the return of Sean Goldman from Brazil in 2008.

But a law is only as good as its implementation.

Broken-hearted parents across America waited four years for the Goldman Act to become law and still await full U.S. government implementation of the law.

The State Department's first annual report that we are reviewing today should be a roadmap for action.

The State Department must get this report right in order for the law to be an effective tool.

If the report fails to accurately identify problem countries, the actions I mentioned above are not triggered.

Countries should be listed if they have high numbers of cases—30 percent or more—that have been pending over a year or if they regularly fail to enforce return orders, or if they have failed to take appropriate steps in even a single abduction case pending more than a year.

Once these countries are properly identified, the Secretary of State then determines which of the aforementioned actions the U.S. will apply to the country in order to encourage the timely resolution of abduction and access cases.

While the State Department has choice of which actions to apply, and can waive actions for up to 180 days, the State Department does not have discretion over whether to report accurately to Congress on the country's record, or on whether the country is objectively a non-compliant.

As we have seen in the human trafficking context, (I authored both the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 as well as the Goldman Act) accurate accounting of a country's record, especially in comparison with other countries, can do wonders to prod much needed reforms.

Accurate reporting is also critical to family court judges across the country and parents considering their child's travel to a foreign country where abduction or access problems are a risk.

The stakes are high: misleading or incomplete information could mean the loss of another American child to abduction.

● 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.

For example, a judge might look at the report table filled with zeros in the unresolved cases category, erroneously conclude that a particular country is not of concern, and give permission to an estranged spouse to return to their country with the child for a vacation. The taking parent then abducts the child and the left behind parent then spends her life savings and many years trying to get her child returned to the U.S. All of which could have been avoided with accurate reporting on the danger.

I am very concerned that the first annual report contains major gaps and even misleading information, especially when it comes to countries with which we have the most intractable abduction cases.

For instance, the report indicates that India, which has consistently been in the top five destinations for abducted American children, had 19 new cases in 2014, 22 resolved cases and no unresolved cases. However, we know from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) that India has 53 open abduction cases—and that 51 have been pending for more than 1 year.

The report shows zero new cases in Tunisia for last year, 3 resolved cases, and zero unresolved cases. And yet Ms. Edeanna Barbirou testified to her more than 3-year battle to bring her children home from Tunisia. NCMEC's numbers show 6 ongoing abductions in Tunisia, all of which have been pending for more than a year.

Nowhere is the report's disconnect with reality more clear than in its handling of Japan, a country that has never issued and enforced a return order for a single one of the hundreds of American children abducted there, and was not listed as a country showing failing to cooperate in returns.

In March, nearly two months before the annual report was released, I chaired a hearing in the subcommittee which I chair featuring Ambassador Susan Jacobs in which it was made perfectly clear that, "Congress expects that Japan will be evaluated not just on its handling of new abduction cases after it joined the Hague Convention last year, but on its work to resolve ALL open abduction cases," including the more than 50 cases I and others have been raising with the State Department for the last 5 years.

Among such cases is that of Sgt. Michael Elias, who has not seen his children, Jade and Michael Jr., since 2008. Michael served as a Marine who saw combat in Iraq. His wife, who worked in the Japanese consulate, used documents fraudulently obtained with the apparent complicity of Japanese consulate personnel to kidnap their children, then aged 4 and 2, in defiance of a court order, telling Michael on a phone call that there was nothing that he could do, as "my country will protect me."

Her country, very worried about its designation in the new report, sent a high-level delegation in March to meet with Ambassador Jacobs and explain why Japan should be excused from being listed as "non-compliant," despite the fact that more than one year after signing the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, Japan has ordered zero returns to the U.S.

Just before the report was released in May—two weeks late—Takashi Okada, Deputy Director General in the Secretariat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told the Japanese Diet that he had been in consultation with the

State Department and "because we strived to make an explanation to the U.S. side, I hope that the report contents will be based on our country's efforts."

In other words, Japan got a pass from the State Department and escaped the list of countries facing action by the U.S. for their failure to resolve abduction cases based on what Mr. Okada euphemistically refers to as "efforts," not results.

Sgt. Michael Elias's country has utterly failed to protect him. He has seen zero progress in his case over the last year—the 7th year of his heart-wrenching ordeal—and yet the State Department cannot even bring itself to hold Japan accountable by naming Japan an offender in the annual report.

It is disappointing, discouraging, and disgraceful. The report whitewashes Japan's egregious record on parental child abduction.

Adding insult to injury, the report table that was to show the unresolved abduction cases in Japan failed to include a single one of the more than 50 cases, 36 of which have been dragging on for more than 5 years, according to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Instead, the table listed Japan has having a 43% resolution rate.

Japan has never issued and enforced a return order for an American child. These young victims, like their left-behind parents, are American citizens who need the help of their government.

The Goldman Act is clear: All requests for return that the State Department submitted to the foreign ministry and that remained unresolved 12 months later are to be counted against Japan. Nearly 100% of the abduction cases to Japan remain open; and the report's conclusion of 43% resolution is indefensible.

Moreover, not a single left behind parent pursuing access was allowed in-person contact with their child over the last year.

The Goldman Act has given the State Department new and powerful tools to bring Japan, and other countries, to the resolution table. The goal is not to disrupt relations but to heal the painful rifts caused by international child abduction.

The question still remains, will the State Department use the Goldman Act as required by law?

I appreciate the Department's presence at yesterday's hearing to discuss ways that we can improve the report and ensure that it fulfills the purposes for which it was intended—namely, the prevention of abduction and the reunification of the thousands of American families that have been suffering forced separation for too long.

#### WELCOMING THE TAIPEI ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL OFFICE, TECO, TO DENVER

##### HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 12, 2015*

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I wish to welcome the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, TECO, to the city of Denver. The establishment of this important office in Denver is a testament to the strong relationship the people of Colorado have developed over the years with the people of Taiwan. Colorado counts

Taiwan as its 6th largest Asian trading partner and its 13th overall trading partner. Locating this office in Denver not only reflects the depth of our current relationship with Taiwan but will surely contribute to deepening our trade, education, and cultural ties in the coming years.

My district in Colorado has a growing Taiwanese population and their presence greatly enriches the district economically, culturally, and civically. Taiwanese entrepreneurs, business community, civic leaders, and students contribute greatly to our community. Over the past 50 years Taiwan has also proven itself as a significant political, economic, and security partner of the United States and I fully expect that strong relationship to grow even stronger in the years to come.

Having Taiwan as a meaningful partner clearly benefits both of our citizens, and I am proud that Colorado now has a direct relationship with Taiwan through the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office.

I look forward doing whatever I can to further enhance our close and growing relationship.

#### MIDDLE EAST WARS ARE A HORRIBLE MISTAKE

##### HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 12, 2015*

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, Thomas Sowell is one of this Nation's most-respected economists and syndicated columnists.

His latest column is about the lessons we should learn from our seemingly-endless war in Iraq.

Mr. Sowell wrote: "Going back to square one, what lessons might we learn from the whole experience of the Iraq War?

If nothing else, we should never again imagine that we can engage in "nation-building" in the sweeping sense that term acquired in Iraq—least of all building a democratic Arab nation in a region of the world that has never had such a thing in a history that goes back thousands of years."

Mr. Sowell is right.

It has been a horrible mistake for this Nation to spend trillions of dollars on unnecessary wars in the Middle East.

We should never have gotten involved in all these civil wars between Shi'a and Sunni.

Yet, we keep on pouring mega-billions down these ratholes, voting for even more billions over there as recently as yesterday. When will we ever learn?

#### HONORING THE ROTARY CLUB OF NORTH CHICAGO AND THE RECIPIENTS OF THE ROTARY HUMANITARIAN PATRIOT AWARD

##### HON. ROBERT J. DOLD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 12, 2015*

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the outstanding community service of The Rotary Club of North Chicago and to recognize this year's recipients of The Rotary Humanitarian Patriot Award.