

amazing archaeological discoveries are frequently made that prove the roots of the Jewish people are in Israel.

Earlier this month a Hebrew University archaeological team unearthed an unprecedented impression of a royal seal of King Hezekiah from the First Temple period. This marks the first time that a seal impression of an Israelite or Judean king has ever been discovered, and it proves that not only is Israel the religious center for Jews, but it is their ancestral and historic homeland.

I want to thank the Ir David Foundation's Director of International Affairs, Ze'ev Orenstein, for sharing this and many other amazing discoveries with me. I look forward to visiting the city of David in the near future to see firsthand the rich history of the Jewish people.

□ 1015

REFLECTIONS ON LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY OF 2015

(Mr. ALLEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, it is hard to believe that my first year in Congress has gone by so quickly. 2016 is just around the corner, and 1 year ago the folks of the 12th District of Georgia gave me the greatest honor of my life.

This year, the House took steps to strengthen our national security, repeal regulatory overreach, and restore local control.

With my support, Congress passed and the President signed legislation that reformed our education system, repealed the sustainable growth rate formula, and provided critical funding for our troops.

The House passed key homeland security legislation to establish a robust vetting system for refugees and reformed the Visa Waiver Program to ensure the safety of the American people.

Going into 2016, it is my hope that we can scale back the presence of Washington even more by gutting ObamaCare and providing relief for the American people from more burdensome EPA regulations.

When I came to Congress, national security, job growth, and the economy were my main priorities. I will head into 2016 with the same goals of creating jobs, growing this economy, and keeping the American people safe.

It has been an honor to serve the folks of the 12th District of Georgia. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE AND SACRIFICE OF THE UNITED STATES MILITARY

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, my first task, a wonderful task, is to wish

all the men and women of the United States military a happy holiday. For your unselfishness in putting on the uniform, without question, standing in the gap, protecting the American people, we thank you, we thank your families, and we are greatly appreciative.

We ask you to be safe during this holiday season as you put yourself on the front lines of defense.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE AND PRIVATE FIRST CLASS THOMAS WISSEMAN

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me also rise today, Mr. Speaker, to thank the United States Capitol Police, founded in 1828. We know how vital they were during the tragedy, horrific incident of 9/11, and, certainly, in 1998.

I come in contact with them every day, but I rise today to particularly thank an officer and a gentleman. Over the years, after initially greeting each other every day, the greeting became a genuine friendship of respect and kindness, and even a joke or two.

I am honored today to recognize one of our first responders, Capitol Police Private First Class Tommy Wissemann. Officer Wissemann exemplifies a model officer who takes his job very seriously, but finds the time to get to know Members of Congress on a more personal level.

Officer Wissemann has given the Capitol Police 29 years of service, all 29 at the Capitol building. He has worked every Presidential inauguration since 1989; was the lead officer for the construction of the Capitol Visitor Center; one of the head trainers for the Capitol Visitor Center officers; received multiple awards and citations.

He is the father of four daughters, and married to a lovely wife, who is with the Capitol Police.

Let me thank him and salute him as I salute all of the police.

Mr. Speaker, since 1828, the United States Capitol Police have provided protection for our Congress, ensuring a safe and open environment to facilitate the legislative process and the security of Congressional Members, staff and employees, and visitors and members of the public. This protection was magnified in 1998 when a shooter entered the Capitol killing Officer Gibson and Officer Chestnut who was protecting Majority Whip Tom DeLay and also in 2001 during the 9-11 attacks when our men and women in uniform literally moved our leadership and Members of Congress to safe havens away from the Capitol. We are grateful to all of them and the more than 2000 sworn and civilian employees who serve and protect the Congress.

As Members of Congress, we come in contact with Capitol Police every day and in the course of our days on this campus and years in Congress we get to know many of them on a first name basis. That is the case with an officer and a gentleman I have gotten to know and which started initially from just a simple greeting to each other. Over the years that initial greeting has evolved into a genuine friendship of respect and kindness and even a joke or two. I am honored today to recognize one of our first responders, Capitol Police, Private First Class Thomas Wissemann. Officer

Wissemann exemplifies a model officer who takes his job very seriously, but finds the time to get to know Members of Congress on a more personal level.

Officer Wissemann has given the Capitol Police 29 years of service—all 29 at the Capitol Building. He has worked every Presidential Inaugural since 1989, was the lead officer for the construction of the Capitol Visitors Center, one of the head trainers for Capitol Visitor Center officers, and has received multiple awards and citations for his leadership and tenure of service. He is the proud father of four daughters and is married to his lovely wife Amber who is also a Capitol Police officer here at the Capitol.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to recognize our first responders and men and women in uniform today. Officer Wissemann is an example of the dedicated men and women in uniform.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KATKO). The Chair will recognize Members for Special Order speeches without prejudice to the possible resumption of legislative business.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF MRS. REVA MAE JENNINGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time.

At 1:00 today, back home in Georgia, we are going to lay to rest Reva Mae Jennings.

Reva Jennings is an institution in my part of the world, Mr. Speaker. This photo here, you can see, is in the midst of a parade. She helped to found the Republican Party in Forsyth County back when it could meet in a telephone booth. She used to say that she never minded being the only one who was right in a room.

From the moment I decided to pursue this position, Mr. Speaker, Reva has been a fixture by my side. She passed away a week ago in a traffic accident.

She graduated from the University of North Carolina, Mr. Speaker. And even though she was passionate about Georgia, she was passionate about her Tar Heels. If I had a Tar Heel blue suit, I would have worn it down here to the floor today in tribute to her.

She defined her life by passion, Mr. Speaker. She has had every leadership position you can imagine in the Republican Party in our part of the world; president of the Georgia Federation of Republican Women, Mr. Speaker. She earned the title of Republican Woman of the Year. She traveled as a delegate from Georgia to the Republican National Convention.

She believed in our community. She believed in our party. She believed in America.

Mr. Speaker, I came to know Reva through her political activities, but they did not define her. Passion defined her, and there is nothing that she was more passionate about than her family.

The wife of Dr. Bruce Jennings, Mr. Speaker, who passed away far too soon, the mother of three, the grandmother of her beloved grand twins.

Mr. Speaker, the entire community is gathering this afternoon to say goodbye. It seems so cliché to talk about folks who are irreplaceable, but Reva truly is.

You can't put a marker on commitment, Mr. Speaker. There was never a responsibility, never a responsibility in the community that Reva didn't step up and say: Pick me. It characterized the community.

As Forsyth County became one of the fastest growing counties in the Nation, Mr. Speaker, her commitment was contagious.

When car accidents take our loved ones, Mr. Speaker, it happens when you least expect it. No one was prepared to say goodbye to Reva. No one had said all the things that they had to say to Reva.

But she used to pull me aside and take a picture out of her wallet, show me that beloved dentist that she married back during the Vietnam War. It was a picture they had taken in Hawaii, as I recall.

I never remember her dating. She never remarried. She said: "ROB, I got it right the first time."

As the entire community is struggling with Reva's loss, this is the image that I am left with, Mr. Speaker. She has waited decade upon decade to be united with her beloved husband, Bruce, and today, Mr. Speaker, we lay her to rest so that they can be together with their Maker once again.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I offer my heartfelt condolences to the Jennings family.

I yield back the balance of my time.

OUR JUDEO-CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, this will be the last session before we enter Christmas. And, Mr. Speaker, I have noted from a couple of articles that have been in the news this week, this one from December 17, a story from Minnesota, the title: "Parents Question Choice to Sing 'Allahu Akbar' at Holiday Concert."

It is intriguing that, in an age when groups are attacking our Judeo-Christian heritage, trying to rewrite our history, trying to prevent any mention of our Christian heritage—I am looking at the full face of Moses directly above me in front of me because we have, in this Chamber, profiles of people who were considered to be the greatest law-

givers of all time. And until recent years, Moses was considered the greatest lawgiver of all time. The Founders believed that.

The Supreme Court now has relegated Moses to the ash heap of history. His revelation that he said came from God, that a man shall leave his father and mother, a woman leave their home, the two shall become one flesh. Jesus doubled down on that. He said not only is that what marriage is, what God joined together, let nobody pull apart.

So we have relegated Moses to the ash heap. We have had the Supreme Court, for years now, saying, first, you can't have prayer in public, even though the Founders started each day of the Continental Congress with prayer; and although the Constitutional Convention didn't start each day with prayer, when they hit a brick wall and could go no further, Benjamin Franklin made his powerful speech about how they had begun each day with prayer, as he said, his exact words: "In the beginning contest with Great Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayer in this room. Our prayers, sir, were heard and they were graciously answered."

He went on to say: "If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable an empire could rise without His aid? We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writing, that 'except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.'"

He said: I also firmly believe that without His—God's—concurring aid, we will succeed in our political building no better than the Builders of Babel: We will be confounded by our local partial interests and we, ourselves, shall be bye words through time.

So I know our heritage. They didn't have money to pay for a chaplain that they could all agree on to do the prayer every day. He pointed out in the debate that we agreed on a chaplain. We didn't agree on any specific person here to do the prayer for all the different denominations. But we don't have a treasurer. We don't have money. We can't hire a chaplain.

And that is when Randolph made his motion. Okay, basically, they had hit a brick wall. They were making no progress. As Franklin had said, we have more noes than ayes on virtually every vote.

So he moved that they recess—here it was the end of June—they recess and reconvene to celebrate the country's birthday in early July, and worship together. So they did. That one passed. They reconvened to worship God at the Reformed Calvinistic Church there in Philadelphia.

You can go online, Mr. Speaker, and find what is reported to be the prayer that he gave. It had a powerful influence. And when they reconvened, there was a new spirit. They were able to come together and end up arriving at the Great Compromise.

Founder after Founder, including Washington himself, pointed out that

clearly God's hand was upon them in the preparation of the Constitution, and then, ultimately, resulting in the Bill of Rights.

□ 1030

The first right within the Bill of Rights was basically to make clear that government would never interfere with religion.

Basically, we have come to a place after all these years where the United States Supreme Court has said not only can you not have the Judeo-Christian God as part of any government—the same God that the Founders were giving credit to and praying to—but now this year the Supreme Court took the ultimate step of saying: Forget Moses. Forget Jesus. We are the new God and here is what we pronounce in place of Moses and Jesus and our founding principles. So this is a big year.

I know the President says we are not a Christian nation, and I won't argue that point with him. I won't debate him. I think he is right. I know where we started, and I know every time, according to my staff, I mention God here where—in this Capitol, God's name has been invoked from the very beginning of this Capitol and before this Capitol and when it was in Philadelphia and when the first Congress was sworn in and President George Washington was sworn in at Federal Hall in New York City. It was his idea to bring his Bible and put his hand on the Bible, his idea to add the words "so help me God."

It was all their idea that the first thing they would do as a Congress together, after being sworn in, was to walk down, basically, Wall Street to St. Paul's Chapel there in New York and dedicate this country there in 1789 to God Almighty.

I won't debate the President saying we are not a Christian nation, but the Bible has been quoted over our history in this Chamber more than any other book as a reason for or against legislation passing. It is a part of our heritage, to a much lesser extent in more recent years, as the Supreme Court—at least the five majority in the Supreme Court becoming our God instead of the God that was acknowledged by Ben Franklin, George Washington, basically every President.

Mr. Speaker, we have a job to represent our constituents. We have an oath to the Constitution. I know we take that seriously. Part of our job in representing our constituents is to educate people on the issues and what has been important and what has been our strength, what has been our weaknesses. If you don't know our history, then, as the saying goes, those who refuse to learn from history are destined to repeat it. It is important to know history.

It is important to note the official words of the United States' highest magistrate, our President. Jefferson was asked once as he rode his horse