

was going to be there; and after just a couple of weeks, he was apprehended, disappeared. His family didn't know where he was for months until it was revealed that he had been tried, convicted, and sentenced to death for espionage, a charge that he is completely innocent of. In fact, the Iranian court of appeals, the appeals process, even set aside that conviction and set aside his death sentence. There was no evidence.

They did convict him and sentence him to 10 years, a conviction that is based on the fact that, under Iranian law, he is considered an Iranian citizen even though he was born in the United States and never had even been there before. But the fact that he had served in the Marine Corps created a set of facts that caused them to convict him of a crime and sentence him to 10 years.

It has been 3½ years. For 1,354 days, Amir Hekmati has sat in Evin prison, a notorious prison in Tehran.

I have introduced, along with a number of other Members, a resolution calling for the immediate release of the Americans that Iran holds. It has 28 Republican cosponsors, 27 Democrats, and we are adding them every day.

This is not even a bipartisan issue; this is a nonpartisan question. It is beyond politics. This is about the rights of a free man being held in Iran. So I am asking my colleagues and the American people to get engaged, to call upon Iran to do what is right and release the Americans that they hold. And it is really important that this Congress speak with one voice and carry the voices of all the people that we represent, asking, telling Iran that if they think they can join the global community and continue to hold innocent Americans as political prisoners, they are wrong.

So, please, for those who want to, use the hashtag #freeamirnow to send a message to thank those Members, as I will, to thank those Members of Congress who have joined this resolution. I will be sending out on Twitter a thank-you to each Member who has done so, using #freeamirnow. I hope other Members of Congress and those across the country will join us.

Later today we will consider legislation that will define how Congress will review and offer its input on the potential Iran nuclear deal. It is really important that we negotiate with those who make this world more dangerous first before attempting other methods, and it is important that we give this negotiation a chance. But it is also very clear that it will be very difficult for this Congress and the American people to consider any understanding, any agreement, with Iran without considering their other behavior, whether it is this nuclear agreement or other engagement with this country. If they continue to hold Americans as political prisoners, it is impossible for us to ignore that fact.

It is very clear that we should never trade the freedom of innocent Ameri-

cans for concessions at the negotiating table with Iran over their nuclear capabilities. Again, we should not make their freedom a part of this deal. They, meaning the American families who are worrying about their loved ones, don't want this; and I know that Amir Hekmati, himself, does not want to be part of the consideration, does not want to be traded for concessions at the nuclear negotiating table.

The onus is on Iran to do what is right, and it is critical that this body and all the people that we represent speak with a single voice and make it clear, as the Senate did in their resolution calling upon Iran to release these Americans. It is important that the people's body speak for the people of the United States and tell Iran loud and clear that you cannot hold Americans as political prisoners and be accepted into the international community.

IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, as the latest round of the P5+1 Iranian nuclear talks resume this week in Vienna, it is important for us to highlight just how weak and dangerous this deal is.

From the moment that President Obama took office, he has sought the legacy of having achieved a nuclear agreement with Iran, regardless of the cost to our national security. In his first inaugural address, he promised to unclench his fist to dictators and followed that up in Cairo, telling the Iranian regime that he was willing to move forward “without preconditions on the basis of mutual respect.”

Mutual respect, Mr. Speaker? This regime has targeted and killed Americans since the Iranian revolution in 1979. This regime was responsible for killing and wounding thousands of our U.S. troops in Iraq. This murderous regime is destabilizing the region and mocking the U.S. by blowing up a mock U.S. aircraft carrier and chanting, continually, “death to America.”

Now the President is giving Iran not only access to billions of dollars, but also international legitimacy. Countries and businesses no longer fear doing business with Iran, even though the sanctions are still in place. They no longer fear looking like international pariahs, helping one of the world's worst human rights abusers and the world's largest supporter of global terror because President Obama has telegraphed to the world that he trusts the Iranian regime, giving it the legitimacy that it would have never gotten without this nuclear deal.

So what do we see now? Well, Russia announced that it will resume sales of its surface-to-air missiles to Iran before the ink could even dry on the framework agreement, and Putin has

said that Russia will trade assets like grain and construction equipment in exchange for Iranian oil. Iran has also announced that China is going to help it build five additional nuclear power plants.

According to reports, China and Russia have stated that they will not support snapback sanctions. Now, snapback sanctions are the cornerstone of the deal that the administration has praised as a victory. And U.S. oil executives have reportedly begun talks with Iranian officials in preparation for the opening of Iran's economy—in Iran, no less.

Now we hear reports that the Czechs stopped a potentially illegal nuclear technology purchase by the Iranians earlier this year. So I asked the administration: Did the administration know, and did the P5+1 know about this violation? Did they choose to ignore it in order to forge this framework agreement anyway? All of this in exchange for a deal that allows Iran to continue to enrich uranium and to keep every key element of its nuclear infrastructure intact.

The Iranians are winning concession after concession, giving up nothing but a few cosmetic and easily reversible changes. Since taking office, President Obama has capitulated to Iranian demands to cement his legacy of the President who normalized relations with Iran.

We won't even be able to adequately verify this nuclear agreement, despite what the President promises, because he knows that access to Iranian sites rests with the Iranian regime. Access to military sites—where they would more than likely hide some of their nuclear infrastructure—isn't in the deal either. It is foolhardy and dangerous to believe that Iran will give immediate and unobstructed access anytime, anywhere, to all of its sites.

We are not even forcing the regime to come clean on the possible military dimensions of its nuclear program, nor are we addressing its ballistic missile program, its support for terror, and its expansionist agenda throughout the Middle East. All we are doing is legitimizing one of the world's worst and most dangerous regimes at the expense of regional and U.S. national security.

Iran will use this influx of money to continue spreading terror and fomenting instability and sectarian conflict across the globe. We have seen it in Yemen. We have seen it elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, the Middle East is on the brink of collapsing, yet the President continues on this dangerous quest for his Iran nuclear deal legacy. He has ignored the reality on the ground for political considerations and, in doing so, is putting our national security in jeopardy and that of our ally, the democratic Jewish State of Israel.

HIGHWAY TRUST FUND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, recently I visited the Newberg-Dundee bypass, a highway construction project in my district that will divert traffic around two small communities that are thriving but choked with congestion. Once completed, local residents and visitors will no longer be stuck in traffic, especially on the weekends. The many wineries and farms and other small businesses in the county won't have to wait hours to get their customers in and their products out of the region. New businesses will see opportunity in relocating to the area, rather than obstacles to commerce.

For this growing county, a comprehensive transportation network is critical to its success. This isn't just true for my district; it is true across the country. Our roads, trains, buses, bridges, and ports are at the center of our economy. They are the way people get to work and businesses get their goods to market.

But unfortunately, funding for our transportation system continues to shrink. Spending on our infrastructure is now at its smallest share of GDP in the last 22 years.

In my State, in a 2014 report, the Oregon Department of Transportation estimates that the current 20-year forecast budget for the State highway system is insufficient to preserve and maintain pavement and bridges in their current condition. The report finds that not only will our roads deteriorate, but an increasing number of bridges will close to heavy trucks, forcing lengthy detours that will cost businesses time and money.

Poor-quality roads lead to greater maintenance costs, congested arteries, and traffic that delays the delivery of products; and, of course, the failure to update our trains and bridges threatens public safety. I implore this body, let us take action before another tragic accident.

The short-term extensions of the highway trust fund have left contractors and workers with uncertainty as they delay or even scrap construction plans. This costs us jobs and defers unnecessary maintenance and new construction while increasing expenses.

Recently, Ed Wytkind, president of the AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department, said: "Years of congressional inaction on a long-term surface transportation bill has harmed our economy." Congress needs to "get to work on a robust long-term bill that expands investments and job creation and is paid for with a sustainable revenue stream." I couldn't agree more.

The Newberg-Dundee bypass was decades in the making. It is a partnership with local, State, tribal, and Federal support, and, quite simply, it wouldn't be under construction without previously approved funding. The Oregon Department of Transportation couldn't make a commitment without a commitment from the Federal Government as well.

When I visited the construction site last week, it was clear that this project

is putting people to work: contractors, construction workers, people down the supply chain, and many others.

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Now with just a few days until the current transportation bill expires, I call on my colleagues to take up a robust, multimodal, long-term transportation bill. Funding transportation provides our communities with an economic boost now and reinforces our infrastructure in a way that will sustain and strengthen our economy years from now.

Mr. Speaker, there have been many discussions in this Chamber about global competitiveness and the U.S. role in the world. World class infrastructure is critical to securing and maintaining this role. We need to act. We need to act now.

IRAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT REVIEW ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act. While I wish it were stronger, it does force the administration to bring it before this body to review any deal. Last week, I traveled to Israel on a weeklong mission to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship and convey the message that we stand with our Israeli partners on the security challenges that are in front of us.

The threat posed by Iran's pursuit of a nuclear weapon was at the forefront of literally everyone's mind. The Israeli leaders that I met with, individuals across the political spectrum, all reiterated what I have said all along: concern about the direction of the P5+1 nuclear talks with Iran is not—I repeat, is not—a partisan issue. In fact, there was multipartisan support and appreciation in Israel for Prime Minister Netanyahu's outspoken opposition to a bad deal.

Mr. Speaker, this is not just an American and an Israeli issue. A nuclear Iran threatens the Middle East, and, I would argue, the entire world.

Our allies in the Gulf Cooperation Council are also skeptical of the deal taking shape. The leaders of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates have made their displeasure known by choosing to skip the President's Camp David summit this week.

Saudi Arabia, already fighting a proxy war with Iran in Yemen, will not sit idly by if we agree to a deal that legitimizes Iran as a nuclear threshold state. The last thing anyone in the P5+1 wants is a nuclear arms race further destabilizing the Middle East and, I believe, increasing the chance of a nuclear war.

Mr. Speaker, I implore my colleagues to vote in favor of this important legislation today to ensure that the Amer-

ican people have a say in any final agreement with Iran.

The legislation today guarantees that Congress will have an up-or-down vote on the future of any deal. It is that vote—the one which will occur after a deal is reached—that will be the pivotal moment in our efforts to stop Iran's nuclear program. That will be the vote that decides whether Iran has an internationally accepted and legitimized path to a bomb or whether we will hold the administration accountable to its assertion that no deal is better than a bad deal.

Looking ahead to that vote, we must withstand the pressure and unequivocally reject any deal that leaves intact Iran's nuclear infrastructure; cements Iran's position as a nuclear threshold state; unwinds the sanctions architecture, giving Iran an infusion of literally billions of dollars that it will use to finance terror against Israel and around the globe; and legitimizes a sure-to-fail inspection regime that falls short of "anytime, anywhere" inspections. Mr. Speaker, we must not be fooled into false choices, and Iran must not be left with any path to a nuclear weapon.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to highlight something very concerning related to Syria which, I believe, has significant implications for any Iran agreement. Recent reports indicate a clear violation of the deal that this administration struck with Bashar al-Assad 2 years ago to remove chemical weapons from Syria. Unfortunately, these serious violations are not receiving the attention and scrutiny they deserve. According to reports, an international monitoring body found traces of chemical weapons in Syria and reported this breach to the administration earlier this year.

Former U.S. Ambassador to Syria Robert Ford is quoted as saying: "The Syrian revelations shouldn't be a surprise given the regime's track record. It is a violation of the deal we struck with the Russians, and it is a violation of the deal the Syrian regime struck with the U.N."

Mr. Speaker, we cannot let history repeat itself with a bad deal with Iran. This deal, if done incorrectly, has far-reaching implications not just for the United States, Israel, and our allies, but for the world and future generations.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the legislation coming before this body today so that we can give the American people an opportunity to review what the deal is and have an opportunity to vote "yes" or "no" based upon what is in this agreement.

Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. I strongly support the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, and encourage my colleagues to join me in voting yes later today.

I am extremely skeptical of the framework agreement released in April because, as written, I believe it will legitimize Iran's status as a nuclear threshold state. This is unacceptable, and we should not support any deal that permits this.