

equality and justice and opportunity for all, we ought to remove that flag from our national parks, the cemeteries where our veterans rest and, I would say further, all public places. That includes the United States Capitol.

And I support my friend Representative THOMPSON's resolution that sits now in the House Administration Committee that would remove the flag of Mississippi, which contains the Confederate battle flag, until such time as Mississippians, as South Carolinians did yesterday, make a statement and remove that from their flag.

I urge my colleagues, my fellow Americans, the 434 of my colleagues that have raised their hand and sworn to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States of America, I urge my colleagues, let us do the right thing and reject this amendment and send a powerful message about what America truly represents: equality, justice, respect for one another, freedom for all.

Let us make America—every American—proud of us this day and reject the amendment adopted in the dead of night.

NEGOTIATIONS ON IRAN'S NUCLEAR CAPABILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the negotiations taking place right now in Switzerland over Iran's nuclear capability. With all that has been going on lately, I fear not enough attention is being paid to what I believe is one of the most important issues facing our country right now.

Last week, the Obama administration quietly announced yet another deadline extension to the multilateral negotiations over Iran's nuclear capability, and this week, negotiators blew past that deadline once again.

Of course, the goal for the United States and our allies must be to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. However, recent reports out of Switzerland have raised concerns that our negotiators have already conceded too much on major points like uranium enrichment, economic sanctions relief, and inspection access.

Mr. Speaker, the very fact that we keep extending the deadline tells you all you need to know about the priorities at play for this administration. It seems that President Obama and Secretary Kerry are so concerned with striking a deal—any deal—that they are unwilling to walk away from a bad one as deadlines keep passing.

The Boston Globe reported that negotiators have spent their downtime speculating which movie stars would play them in a Hollywood movie about the Iran deal.

If this is true, Americans should be outraged. This is an extraordinarily important issue that will have an extraordinarily far-reaching effect on

this country and the world for many years to come.

The fact is we have had extension after extension and concession after concession to the point that I am not sure a good deal is even possible at this point.

A few months ago, I traveled to the Middle East with the Speaker as part of his delegation to the region, and we visited countries that would be directly affected by dealing with a nuclear Iran—Israel, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia.

Our allies in the region are rightfully concerned that what is being brokered isn't good at all.

□ 1045

We cannot forget how high the stakes are here. If a bad deal is ratified, we aren't just talking about a nuclear armed Iran.

We are talking about setting in motion a nuclear race, a chain of events that could allow multiple countries in this very volatile region of the world wanting to become nuclear as well.

And after seeing the international community reward Iran's hostility and obstinance with a nuclear deal, who would blame them?

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the leadership of my colleagues in this Chamber and in the Senate. And I agree with Senator CORKER, who is the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who wrote a letter to the President, "Walking away from a bad deal at this point would take courage, but it would be the best thing for the United States, the region, and the world."

We may not be able to control the outcome in Switzerland, but we can control how we respond if a bad deal is put forward.

This Congress can have the final say whether or not to lift sanctions in Iran. It can have the final say on the deal, itself, by way of a resolution of disapproval.

I believe Members of Congress must prepare to stand up and have the courage that it would take to stop a bad Iranian deal from happening. For some, this will take a lot of courage, but it is necessary.

We cannot allow President Obama and Secretary Kerry to put their desire for a legacy achievement above the best interests of this Nation and our allies.

CONFEDERATE BATTLE FLAG SYMBOLISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, had this Confederate battle flag prevailed in war 150 years ago, I would not be standing here today as a Member of the United States Congress. I would be here as a slave. Over the last 150 years, we have made tremendous progress in this country, but we still have a long way to go.

As the tragic events in Charleston, South Carolina, illustrated, when nine God-fearing, churchgoing African American citizens were killed by a White supremacist, there is much work that needs to be done to eradicate the cancer of racial hatred.

When Dylann Roof committed this act of domestic terror, his emblem was the Confederate battle flag.

Later on today we are going to have a vote on the legitimacy of this flag. On Tuesday, it appeared that House Republicans were prepared to do the right thing in support of three amendments to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the purchase, sale, or display of the Confederate battle flag on National Park Service land.

But less than 24 hours later, House Republicans reversed course in the dead of night under cover of darkness to introduce an amendment supporting the Confederate battle flag, which is nothing more than a symbol of racial hatred and oppression.

There are some in this House who have made the argument that the Confederate battle flag is about heritage and tradition. I am perplexed.

What exactly is the tradition of the Confederate battle flag that we are supporting? Is it slavery? Rape? Kidnap? Treason? Genocide? Or all of the above.

The Confederate battle flag is nothing more than a symbol of racial hatred and oppression. And I stand here with chills next to it because the red in this flag is a painful reminder of the blood that was shed by Africans who were killed when attempted to be kidnapped and thrown into the institution of slavery.

The red on this flag is a painful reminder of the blood that was shed by millions of Africans who died during the Middle Passage when being transported from Africa to America.

The red on this flag is a painful reminder of the blood that was shed by African American slaves who were beaten, raped, lynched, and killed here in America as a result of the institution of slavery.

What exactly is the tradition the Confederate battle flag represents?

We were sent here as leaders to make decisions on the morality of America. And where we are, notwithstanding our painful history and the legacy of slavery, we have an opportunity today to make a definitive statement to be leaders, not individuals who cower in fear of some narrow-minded Americans who aren't aware that the South lost the war 150 years ago.

Let's choose racial progress over racial poison. Let's choose harmony over historic amnesia. Let's choose togetherness over treason. Let's come together not as Democrats or Republicans, not as Whites or Blacks, not as northerners or southerners.

Let's come together as Americans and vote down the Calvert amendment and relegate the Confederate battle flag to the dustbin of history, which is where it belongs.

WYOMING COUNTY, 2015 SADD
NATIONAL CHAPTER OF THE YEAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. JENKINS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Wyoming County, West Virginia, chapter of Students Against Destructive Decisions, also known as SADD.

The Wyoming County chapter has been named the 2015 SADD National Chapter of the Year. Consisting of 300 members from six different schools, these Wyoming County students work hard to encourage young people to avoid underage drinking, drugs, and other destructive activities.

Wyoming County and the surrounding area, like many parts of our State and country, are limited in the number of youth programs and social services leading to temptations for many teenagers. SADD helps fill the void and is a positive force in helping students make positive life choices and avoid destructive decisions.

These students represent our State's values and demonstrate compassion, commitment, and courage through their work. I know they will take the skills they have learned in SADD and become the next generation of leaders in West Virginia.

I congratulate these students and teachers and thank them for making Wyoming County a better place to live.

CONFEDERATE FLAG AMENDMENT

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, as you pointed out, I am from Minnesota. Minnesota's Governor Ramsey was in Washington, D.C., shortly after the attack at Fort Sumter, and he was the first to offer up our support—1,000 Minnesotans—to keep our Union together.

Minnesota was at the Battle of Gettysburg. Our regiment suffered 82 percent in casualties, the greatest loss of any unit at Gettysburg on a single day.

So last night, when the Republican leadership put forward a last-minute amendment that would allow for the display and sale of the Confederate flag in our national parks, an amendment which we will vote on today that would allow this hateful symbol which evokes memories of racism and a painful period in our country's past to be displayed on public lands, I found myself shocked, outraged, and disappointed because the people in Minnesota sent me here to strive for what they strive for every day: to build a better, stronger America, an America in which we strive to give everyone hope and opportunity, that they too can pursue life, liberty, happiness, and justice.

So the flag that we are talking about is a symbol of a time when African Americans were enslaved, sold as

human commodities. It had been used as a rallying cry throughout our history for those who wish to keep our country segregated.

And we saw again last month in Charleston this flag being used as a symbol for many who carry hatred in their hearts, a man who carried so much hatred that he took the lives of nine parishioners because he viewed this flag as a symbol of his beliefs.

This flag should be no point of pride for any American, and we should take this flag down.

Just 2 days ago, without opposition, as I had the honor of being ranking member as we were doing the Interior bill, this body voted to adopt amendments which would prevent the sale or display of Confederate flags in national parks.

Those amendments were simple, commonsense efforts to place into law standards that the National Park Service had put forward last month. It was a moment of great pride for me.

All those new standards would do was bring the Federal Government in line with decisions made by many private sector retailers: Amazon, Wal-Mart, Sears, Disney. And other national retailers have all made the decision to take down this flag because of its racist history.

Private businesses are rallying behind a commonsense decision to stop peddling hateful symbols. So why in heaven and Earth is the House of Representatives, the Republican Caucus, working to ensure that the Federal Government allows them to be sold?

For House Republicans, it appears perhaps the cost of getting the votes to pass the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, which panders to polluters, is to wrap themselves in a banner of racism.

I think that is wrong, and I urge my colleagues to stand with people of great courage and great passion to say "no" to hate, "no" to racism, and "yes" to America.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on the Calvert amendment.

CLEAR LAW ENFORCEMENT FOR
CRIMINAL ALIEN REMOVAL ACT
OF 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to discuss H.R. 2964, the Clear Law Enforcement for Criminal Alien Removal Act.

This is a bill that I have had introduced every Congress since 2007. And we have many Members of this body, Mr. Speaker, who have joined as co-sponsors of this legislation.

What it would do specifically is this: It would ensure that State and local law enforcement officials have the tools necessary to help the Federal Government deport criminal illegal aliens from the United States.

□ 1100

My legislation would require the Department of Homeland Security, when a State or local law enforcement agency arrests an alien and requests DHS to take custody of that alien, to do a few specific things. Number one, they have to take the alien into Federal custody and incarceration within 48 hours and request that the State or municipality temporarily incarcerate the alien or transport the alien to Federal custody. This would allow them to remove this individual from the country and bar them from coming back.

Mr. Speaker, the bill also requires the DHS to train State and local police in enforcement of immigration laws, the Federal Government to reimburse local and State governments, and to withhold funds from sanctuary cities.

Now, we have heard a lot about these issues in the last few days, and one of the problems that we have is the sanctuary cities. Mr. Speaker, I have before my colleagues a map that was prepared by the Center for Immigration Studies. We now have in this country 200 sanctuary cities. I am reading from this map. More than 200 cities, counties, and States across the U.S. are considered sanctuary cities.

Now, what happens in these cities is they choose to work around and to circumvent or not to abide by Federal law when it comes to immigration policy. That is one of the reasons passing the CLEAR Act is so important, holding them accountable.

Also, reading from the map, I find it so interesting that the Department of Justice has never sued or taken any measure, including denying Federal funds, against the jurisdiction that is a sanctuary city. On the other hand, we know that the Department of Justice actually sued the State of Arizona for trying to strengthen its immigration laws.

Mr. Speaker, I would come to the floor today as we talk about dealing with the criminal illegal alien population and highlighting H.R. 2964. I would ask my colleagues: What does your vote record say about your actions? Are you strengthening Federal law and abiding by Federal law? Or do those actions strengthen sanctuary cities? Do they provide more accountability? Is that what you are providing through your vote actions? Or is it something that allows a violation of Federal law to continue?

I think it is imperative that we address the issue of criminal illegal aliens, that we address the issue of sanctuary cities; and, Mr. Speaker, I think that it is imperative that we move forward with passage of the CLEAR Act by this body. It is a simple bill.

I encourage my colleagues to read it. It is 21 pages, and you will find in there that it addresses these issues that are front and foremost in our minds this day.