

without consideration of how these policies will affect all communities, we do our Nation a disservice. I am confident we can do better. I am hopeful that we can do better. We have a responsibility to do better.

Today and every day, let us be inspired by Rosa Parks and remember that each person must live their life as a model for others.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak on this important issue.

OUR VETERANS DESERVE BETTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, last month, we celebrated Veterans Day, a day where we rightly single out the members of our military, past and present, and pay tribute to their service and sacrifice.

When you stop to think about it, it is amazing that men and women choose to serve in our Armed Forces, knowing full well that their sacrifice could be tremendous and even require their life. But, still, they volunteer. They do so because America—her ideals, her people, and her way of life—are worth defending.

The entire Nation owes our military personnel and veterans a huge debt of gratitude, and ensuring that debt is properly repaid is one of my top priorities in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, as I travel North Carolina's Fifth District, I hear a similar refrain. No matter where I go, constituents tell me horror stories of their experiences with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Veterans from my district and across the country are frustrated with the lack of service they are receiving. They are angry because they can't get an appointment or a phone call returned. And they are outraged, as I am, that the Obama administration is doing nothing to solve the multitude of problems that have been revealed.

My heart is always touched when veterans and their families describe their efforts to get service through the VA and how the VA wouldn't help them until my office intervened. These stories affect me more than words can say.

I am always happy to know that my office has helped, and my staff is encouraged when we get a problem solved. However, these veterans shouldn't have to contact their congressional office to access the benefits they have earned.

To say I am fed up with this administration's treatment of veterans is an understatement. How they can turn their backs on the veterans the way they do is unconscionable to me.

It is past time to put an end to the agency-wide pattern of mismanagement at the Department of Veterans Affairs. The bureaucratic incom-

petence is abominable, and there needs to be a shakeup at all levels. The agency needs to be led and staffed by people who believe America has a duty and an obligation to help our veterans.

Right now, it seems there is no sense of responsibility or concern from the Obama administration with the disgraceful way our veterans are being treated. It is time for President Obama to truly commit to reforming the VA and give America's veterans a meaningful, decisive plan to right the many wrongs.

Regardless of the outcome, my office will continue to leave no stone unturned when it comes to serving our veterans.

HIV/AIDS

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

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to mark World AIDS Day.

I do so in great pride, following my colleague from Ohio, Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY, who spoke on the floor about the 60th anniversary of what happened in Montgomery when Rosa Parks, with great courage, refused to give up her seat on the bus. The courage of that woman and all of those who supported her has made such an incredible difference in our country, and it is indeed related to what I want to say about HIV and AIDS.

Many of us had the privilege of knowing Rosa Parks when she worked for JOHN CONYERS. We honored her here in the House and are so proud that we have a statue of Rosa Parks in the Capitol of the United States.

We think of her and we think of the courage she had, which led to the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act. And that Voting Rights Act and Civil Rights Act led to our having a much more diverse Congress of the United States.

From there came our Congressional Black Caucus, the Hispanic Caucus, and the Asian Pacific Caucus. The Black Caucus directly related to Mr. CONYERS, who was a founding member, and Rosa Parks, who was an inspiration. They were responsible for so much change in the leadership of our Congress. And because so many issues spring from the Congressional Black Caucus, some say "the conscience of the Congress."

So the relationship from Rosa Parks, through the caucus, to now we are observing the 25th anniversary of World AIDS Day, the link is Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, who has been such a champion in the Congress on this subject. We take great pride in the accomplishments she has had in her capacity as a Member of Congress but also as our representative to the United Nations General Assembly.

Each year, World AIDS Day is observed internationally to reflect the progress that has been made in re-

affirming our determination to banish AIDS to the annals of history. We recognize that achieving an AIDS-free generation requires our relentless, energetic, and undaunted commitment to testing, treatment, and finding a cure.

The World AIDS Day theme this year, "The time to act is now," challenges us to act with the urgency that this global epidemic demands.

AIDS, as we know, and the HIV virus is a ferocious and resourceful disease, a resourceful virus, ever-mutating to escape our efforts to destroy it. Therefore, we have to be ferocious, resourceful, and adaptable in our effort to succeed to end HIV. We must bring bold thinking and deep commitment to testing, treatment, and the search for a cure and a vaccine to prevent.

President Bush, with his PEPFAR initiative, took a big advance in how we can help prevent the spread of AIDS in the rest of the world. He and Mrs. Bush, with their Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon Initiative to link cervical cancer prevention with HIV testing and treatment in Africa, was a remarkable initiative.

So we salute the bipartisanship. We supported, of course, President Bush with PEPFAR. We wanted it bigger, and he wanted it strong, and there we were with something that has saved millions of lives and given hope to people.

I visited some of the clinics in Africa where PEPFAR is being administered, and some of the people I met there said, "I would never have come in to be tested before because there was no reason. I had no hope that there would be any remedy or any maintaining of a quality of life that would have encouraged me to risk the stigma of saying that I was HIV-infected." So, again, it is all about the people.

In New York today, Bono will be observing the 10th anniversary of the ONE and (RED) initiatives that have set out to alleviate poverty and eradicate disease, with a heavy focus on HIV/AIDS. We know the work of the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation and what they have done on this issue, particularly in India.

I, today, also wish I could be in San Francisco, where amfAR will be saluting the work at University of California-San Francisco on HIV/AIDS by establishing a new initiative there.

I am just mentioning a few other observances of World AIDS Day. It is happening throughout the world.

If you go back a number of years, when I came to Congress, we were going to two funerals a day. It was the saddest thing. Now we are going to weddings and helping people make out their wills and all the rest because they have a longer life ahead.

The maintenance of life, the quality of life is really important, but we do want a cure.

So I said it was the 25th anniversary of World AIDS Day; I meant to say the 25th anniversary of the Ryan White CARE Act. That young man, whose

name is something that is iconic to all of us, left us, but his mother carries on the tradition, and it has made such a tremendous difference.

My colleague Henry Waxman, who is no longer in the Congress but is still a champion on HIV/AIDS, was so instrumental in leading us to passing that legislation.

So it has been bipartisan. It is global. It is personal. It is urgent that we continue so that, one day, 50 years from now, people will say, “What was AIDS? What was that?”, and the books will show that it was a terrible, terrible tragedy that befell the world’s population regardless of status, of wealth, of gender or of race, and something that is now buried in the news somewhere as a terrible memory but not a part of our future.

Again, as we observe World AIDS Day, may we all wear our red ribbons in sympathy with those who have lost their lives, sadly, before the science took us to a better place on this.

That is what we are counting on, research and science to take us to a better place on this, and also the enthusiasm, determination, and relentlessness of so many people throughout the world to make HIV/AIDS a horrible, horrible memory, again, but not part of our future.

□ 1045

THE RIGHT OF PRIVACY MUST EXTEND TO ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, like most Americans, I store a lot on my computer and on my phone: family photographs, personal calendars, emails, schedules, and even weekend to-do lists or, as my wife calls them, honey-do lists.

But this information stored on a phone, like the one I have here in my hand, is not private from the prying, spying eyes of government—our government. Most Americans have no idea that Big Brother can snoop on tweets, Gchats, texts, Instagrams, and even emails.

Anything that is stored in the cloud for over 6 months is available to be spied on by government as long as it is older than 180 days. Now, why is that? Well, it goes all the way back to the outdated Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986. That act protects privacy of emails that are less than 6 months old.

In 1986, those were the days before the World Wide Web even existed. Many of us have staff that weren’t even born before 1986. We stored letters in folders, filing cabinets, and desk drawers. No one knew what the cloud was because the cloud did not exist. There was not any broadband, no social media, no tablets, or no smartphones. So, in 1986, lawmakers tried to protect emails but only did so for 180 days.

Under current law, every email, every text, every Google doc and Facebook message, every photograph of our vacation is subject to government inspection without a warrant, without probable cause, and without our knowledge if it is older than 6 months.

This is an invasion of privacy. Constitutional protection for 6 months only? That is nonsense, Mr. Speaker.

What is worse, some government agencies don’t want the law changed. The Securities and Exchange Commission is lobbying to keep the same law on the books so they can snoop around in emails after 6 months without a warrant. The SEC is not even a law enforcement agency, but yet they want to keep the ability to look at emails.

I suspect they want to be able to read personal financial records and communications without a warrant. Spying on citizens by government sounds like conduct reminiscent of the old Soviet Union.

The SEC is not the only government agency that has access to emails over 6 months old. Any government agency can go in, confiscate emails that are older than 6 months without a warrant, without probable cause, and without knowledge of the person that they are snooping on. To me, this is a clear violation of the spirit of the United States Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, if we go back to the days of snail mail and you write a letter and you put it in an envelope and you put it in a mailbox and it floats around the country from place to place and finally ends up in somebody else’s mailbox, government cannot go and grab that letter and search it without a warrant under most circumstances, no matter where it goes in the U.S., because it is protected. It is the privacy of the person who wrote the letter and the person who is receiving the letter.

Why should government have the ability to snoop around in our personal emails? They don’t have that right, even though they have the ability to do so.

Mr. Speaker, the Fourth Amendment makes us, the U.S., different than any nation on Earth to protect the privacy of American citizens. Government agencies can’t raid homes or tap into phones or read mail without showing a judge they have probable cause that a crime was committed. They must obtain a search warrant.

Mr. Speaker, I was a judge in Texas for 22 years, a criminal court judge, and saw 20,000 cases or more. Police officers would come to me at all times, day or night, with a search warrant. If it stated probable cause, I would sign the warrant, and then they would be instructed to go search whatever it was that they had probable cause to search.

That is what the Constitution requires before you can snoop around and spy on Americans. If you want to search, get a warrant. That is the rule under our law.

Why should our possessions and communications be less private because

they are online? Well, they shouldn’t be. That is why I have teamed up with Representative ZOE LOFGREN on the other side and lots of other Members of Congress in both parties to introduce legislation to update the outdated ECPA law.

There are several bills pending. In fact, these bills have over 300 sponsors right now, bipartisan, to restore ECPA’s original purpose to protect the privacy of American citizens.

This legislation would protect the sacred right of privacy from ever-increasing spying government trolls on Americans. Our mission is simple: extend constitutional protections to communications and records that Americans store online for any amount of time.

Mr. Speaker, technology may change, but the Constitution remains the same. Thomas Jefferson said in the Declaration of Independence, government is created to ensure our rights, not violate those rights.

It is about time we make government protect the right of privacy rather than violate the right of privacy. We need to pass this ECPA law and get privacy back in America.

And that is just the way it is.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o’clock and 51 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. STEWART) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

As we face a new day, help us to discover the power of resting in You. Send Your Spirit down upon the Members of the people’s House.

Grant them wisdom, insight and vision that the work they do will be for the betterment of our Nation during a time of struggle for so many Americans.

In extraordinary times, people from around the world are coming together and recognizing shared threats to peace and prosperity among all people of goodwill. May the men and women of this House emerge as leading statesmen and women to address issues that transcend the here and now of political tides.

Help them to identify policies that will redound to the benefit of our children and grandchildren.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.