

with respect to Syria, and I think about that wisdom from the Book of Job, which is that sometimes suffering and adversity is to test us. Are we going to abandon our principles? Are we not going to be the Statue of Liberty nation? Are we not going to be the nation that will extend a hand of welcome or friendship for those who suffer? Are we going to be true to our principles?

Again and again in our Nation's history and in the history of nations, it has been shown that if you are true to your principles—especially true to them during times of adversity—then you are worthy of respect. You teach important lessons to your kids and to the generations that follow, and usually things work out. I think our Nation's principles are solid. They are rock solid. In the heat of the moment, we shouldn't abandon them, and we shouldn't abandon people who have suffered and are suffering with the kind of hot legislative language that would label them as "foreign enemies" when they are just refugees in the same way that people throughout history have been refugees needing a compassionate response from others.

Thank you, Mr. President.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to complete my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, last week families across the Nation gathered in gratitude to celebrate Thanksgiving—the holiday we commemorate in remembrance of our Pilgrim ancestors. With humble appreciation, we venerate the sacrifice of America's early settlers. We remember their fortitude in leaving family and home to colonize a new wilderness. Facing disease, starvation, and even death, these brave men and women endured tremendous hardships to secure the blessings of religious liberty.

Freedom of religion—so precious and so prized by our Pilgrim forebears—is the legacy we enjoy as a result of their sacrifice. Today, I wish to honor the Pilgrims' legacy by speaking once again on the topic of religious liberty. Over the past several weeks, I have addressed this subject at length. In so doing, I have explained the critical importance of religious freedom and its centrality to our Nation's founding. I have also debunked the erroneous notion that religious liberty is primarily a private matter that has little place in the public domain. More recently, I have detailed the many ways freedom of conscience is under attack—both at home and abroad.

You might wonder why I devote so much time and attention to this vital subject. After all, this is the seventh in

a series of speeches I have given on the topic of religious liberty. When there are myriad other issues facing our country, why do I feel so compelled to speak out about religious freedom? Because, Mr. President, no other freedom is so essential to human flourishing and to the future of our Nation. Indeed, religion is not only beneficial to society but also indispensable to democracy.

I begin by discussing the most tangible benefits religion brings to society. History provides many examples. Indeed, many of our Nation's most significant moral and political achievements are grounded in religious teachings and influences.

First, consider the role of religion in the formation of our most basic rights. America's Framers were well versed in both religion and philosophy, and in drafting our Founding documents, they drew inspiration from both sources.

Take for example, the unalienable rights identified in the Declaration of Independence: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. These rights are a synthesis of both religious and philosophical teachings. The rights themselves stem from the theories of the philosopher John Locke, but the concept of inalienability—the idea that these rights are inviolable because they are "endowed [to men] by their Creator"—is religious in nature.

By invoking the divine and linking our rights to a moral authority that lies above and beyond the state, America's Founders insulated our freedoms from government abuse. Philosophy helped articulate our fundamental rights, but religion made them unsailable. Thanks to the moral grounding provided by religion, we exercise these rights free of state control.

In addition to undergirding the establishment of our God-given rights, religion directly benefitted American society by catalyzing the two greatest social movements in our Nation's history: abolition and civil rights.

Abolition traces its roots to the Second Great Awakening, when preachers such as Charles Grandison Finney and Lyman Beecher rose to prominence with their revivalist teachings on social justice and equality. Many of the earliest pro-abolition organizations coalesced around Christian evangelical communities in the North. Emancipation was a religious cause first and a political movement second.

Most abolitionists were deeply religious themselves, including two of the movement's most vocal leaders, William Lloyd Garrison and John Greenleaf Whittier. The Christian doctrine of moral equality was especially crucial in generating the grassroots support that eventually made emancipation possible.

Religion was equally influential in guiding the civil rights movement. We speak today of Dr. Martin Luther King, but we sometimes forget that before he was a doctor he was a reverend. In 1967, the year before his death, Reverend King proclaimed:

Before I was a civil rights leader, I was a preacher of the Gospel. This was my first calling and it still remains my greatest commitment. . . . [A]ll that I do in civil rights I do because I consider it a part of my ministry.

Reverend King recruited other religious leaders to his cause when he convened a meeting of more than 60 black ministers in what would eventually become the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. This coalition of evangelical leaders was instrumental in organizing both the Birmingham campaign and the March on Washington. For these ministers and many other men and women who participated in the civil rights movement, religion provided the initial impetus for their advocacy.

Today, religion continues to benefit society by contributing to our Nation's robust philanthropic sector. The importance of charity and helping the poor is nearly universal across all faiths. Every year, religious organizations throughout the United States feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give shelter to the homeless, and care for the sick and afflicted.

Without these religious groups, our government welfare system would be overwhelmed.

Charitable organizations are irreplaceable because they often step in where the state cannot. Consider some of the largest, most well-respected religious charities in operation today, such as the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, World Vision, or LDS Humanitarian Services. These organizations are motivated by more than a mere humanitarian impulse; they are driven by a sense of duty both to God and to man. Every year, they lift millions from despair, offering not only material assistance but also spiritual direction to help individuals lead more prosperous lives. This is a critical service that no government program could ever provide.

It is clear that religion has benefitted our society in several meaningful ways. First, as a result of religious teachings, we have unfettered claim to the natural rights delineated in our Nation's founding documents. Second, thanks to religious leaders from John Rankin to Martin Luther King, we freely exercise civil rights today that were once denied millions of Americans. Third, by virtue of religious teaching on charity, we have a humanitarian sector that is unparalleled in its ability to respond to crisis, bless the poor, and lift the needy.

But my purpose in speaking today is not merely to recite a list of blessings brought about by religious liberty. Religion is not simply beneficial to society; it is an indispensable feature of any free government. Without religion, liberty itself would be in danger and democracy would devolve into despotism.

The nexus between religion and democracy involves the relationship between morality and freedom. Freedom

is a double-edged sword; it can be used for good or for evil. Statesmen may use freedom to defend justice, but tyrants can abuse it for their own corrupt ends. Morality is necessary to ensure that individuals exercise their freedom responsibly.

Religion provides free individuals with the moral education necessary to exercise freedom responsibly. It instills the very virtues that lead to an engaged citizenry, including a concern for others, the ability to discern between right and wrong, and the capacity to look beyond the mere pursuit of present pleasures to the good of society.

President George Washington identified the link between morality and religion. According to Washington, "Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle." For Washington, morality presupposed religion, and both virtues cultivated a healthy society. Perhaps this is why he said that "[o]f all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports." That was George Washington.

John Adams was of the same mind. He argued that without religion and morality, our government could not stand because, "[a]varice, ambition, revenge and gallantry would break the strongest cords of our Constitution, as a whale goes through a net"; hence, his most famous observation that the Constitution "was made only for a moral and religious people."

For Washington, Adams, and many others who helped to establish our constitutional system of self-government, religion, morality, freedom, and democracy are necessarily interlinked. Without the moral sensibilities that religion can provide, freedom is all too easily corrupted, endangering the very foundation of democracy.

Our Founding Fathers were not alone in calling attention to the inextricable connection between religion and a healthy democracy. The renowned political philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville offered his own analysis on the subject. After spending several months observing American Government and society, Tocqueville wrote his famed "Democracy in America" in an attempt to explain American political culture to his French counterparts. When Tocqueville published his work in the early 19th century, the United States was a burgeoning democracy and unique as one of the only countries in the world that guaranteed religious liberties to its citizens.

At this intersection of democracy and religion, Tocqueville made his most compelling observations. Like Washington and Adams, Tocqueville believed that religion was essential to the success of the American political experiment. Without the moral strictures of religion, the Nation's democracy would collapse on itself. In Tocqueville's own words:

Despotism may be able to do without faith, but freedom cannot. . . . How could society escape destruction if, when political ties are relaxed, moral ties are not tightened? And what can be done with a people master of itself if it is not subject to God?

In other words, Tocqueville asked how the experiment of self-government could succeed if individuals refused to submit to any moral authority beyond themselves. By posing this question, Tocqueville argued that democracy needs religion and morality to ensure that citizens exercise their freedom responsibly. Democracy needs religion to help refine the people's moral responsibility and instill the virtues of good citizenship that make democracy possible in the first place.

Tocqueville also taught that democracy needs religion to temper the materialistic impulses of a free-market society. By setting our hopes and desires beyond imminent, temporal concerns and turning our hearts instead toward those in need, religion engenders charitable behavior and saves democracy from its own excesses.

In Tocqueville's view, the free exercise of religion is not just a condition of liberal society; it is a precondition for a healthy democracy. Without religion and the moral instruction it provides, freedom falters, and democracy all too easily dissolves into tyranny.

In this regard, religion is not merely a boon to democracy, but a bulwark against despotism. Laws alone are incapable of instilling order and regulating moral behavior across society. As LDS Apostle Dallin H. Oaks has observed, "Our society is not held together just by law and its enforcement, but most importantly by voluntary obedience to the unenforceable and by widespread adherence to unwritten norms of right . . . behavior."

Of course, religion and a basic sense of morality help induce such voluntary obedience to the unenforceable that Elder Oaks describes. George Washington conceded that individuals may find morality without religion, but political society needs the spiritual grounding that only religion can provide. In this regard, religion complements law in cultivating a moral citizenry.

Both law and religion are necessary to engender good citizenship. As the influence of religion diminishes, governments must enact more laws to fill the void to maintain a moral citizenry. So the consequences of less religious activity are not greater human freedom but greater state control.

Religion, then, acts as a check on state power. It cultivates morality so governments don't have to through the cold, impersonal machinery of law.

By acting as a shield against state overreach, religion is a friend to both democracy and freedom. Expanding religious freedom empowers democracy, but limiting religious freedom weakens our democratic institutions. In the most extreme case, eliminating religious freedom altogether results in tyr-

anny and human suffering on a massive scale.

Consider the catastrophic state of affairs in countries that have explicitly outlawed religion. The Soviet Union, Communist China under Mao, the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, and North Korea are prominent examples. In each of these countries, leaders committed unspeakable atrocities to enforce their own godless morality. In the absence of faith, there was no religious horizon to keep political ambitions within limits. Unencumbered by the moral restraint of religion, dictators systematically killed millions of their own people to establish their own secular vision of Heaven on Earth. These illustrations of totalitarianism, torture, and genocide demonstrate that a society without religion is a society without freedom.

I raise these grievous examples to reiterate my initial point: Religion is central to human prosperity. Society needs religion to keep political ambitions in check, and democracy needs religion to maintain morality so that freedom can flourish.

I had the privilege of serving for 2 years in three States—Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan—as a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We served without pay, without compensation. I lived on \$55 to \$65 a month, and I traveled all over those three States, helping other missionaries be able to teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I am glad I had the freedom to be able to serve that mission in three States in this beautiful, wonderful country, where religious freedom is a revered right and a heralded concept.

Those 2 years were the most important years of my life because they led to a wonderful marriage with Elaine, 6 children, 23 grandchildren, and 16 great grandchildren, and those are all I know about at this time. I have to say that they led to a better life in every way, even though my life has been hard.

I was raised in Pittsburgh, PA. My father was a building tradesman. Sometimes there wasn't work. We lost our home shortly after my birth. It was a little band-box frame home in Homestead Park, PA. My dad borrowed \$100 to purchase an acre and then tore down a burned-out building to build us a home that was black on three sides, and the fourth side had a Meadow Gold Dairy sign that he had apparently torn down and put up just exactly the way it was. We didn't have indoor facilities.

It was an acre of ground, and we raised quite a bit of our food. We actually raised chickens. I was in charge of the chickens, taking care of the chicken coop, feeding them, cleaning up after them, collecting the eggs every day, selling the eggs, and delivering the eggs, from 6 years old on. I am glad I had that experience.

I am glad that my family went to church and was religious. The Mormon Church at that time in Pittsburgh was very small, but the people were all patriotic and loved America. Why did they? Many of them were from other

countries. They loved America because they were free. I didn't know any better, but I knew I was free, and that was important—not just to me but to my parents and to many others as well.

Elaine and I are so grateful that we have been able to raise our six children, all of whom are married now, all of whom have children, and many of whom have our great-grandchildren.

The thing that tied us together more than anything else was religion in this freest of all nations. I am so grateful for this country. I am so grateful for the freedoms that we all take for granted. I am so grateful for my parents, who were just humble people, neither of whom had received any education beyond the eighth grade, but both were brilliant in his or her own way. The thing they taught us was religion and doing good to our fellow men and women.

I am so grateful for this great country. I am so grateful for all of the many blessings we have from religious freedom, and I don't want to see us lose that in the realm of political correctness.

In closing, I urge all of my colleagues to consider the state of religious liberty in the United States today. Only by strengthening this fundamental freedom can we secure the future of our own democracy and keep the rest of our freedoms alive and viable.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I am here for my now 28th "Waste of the Week." I have been coming to the floor of the Senate for 28 weeks pointing out government waste.

Some in this Chamber say we can't cut a penny more. We are down to the bone. We are far from it. This is just a small effort, having been shot down, in terms of anything larger to do to deal with our fiscal situation, because the White House simply does not want to engage in it. We at least ought to be able to take steps as a body to eliminate the kind of wasteful spending that takes place on a daily basis in Washington.

I have come down once a week to do this. I could come down every day, I could come down every hour and point out something in this vast array of Federal Government that never stops growing that simply falls in the category of waste, fraud, and abuse. So far we are well over our \$100 billion goal of accumulated waste. Today, this is No. 28. Specifically, this particular waste of the week is facilitator fraud in the

Social Security disability insurance fund.

What is the facilitator fraud? Facilitator fraud is when individuals with specialized knowledge use system as a means to fraudulently, illegally qualify people to receive SSDI benefits. They look for claimants either by putting out ads or using social media or word of mouth: Look, you too can get checks from the Federal Government even if you are not disabled because we have figured out how to qualify you. We will help you process these forms. We have connections with doctors and medical providers who will be able to give us written information, even though it is fraudulent and illegal, that you can use to justify with the Social Security Administration to qualify for Social Security disability.

Then, when those payments start, the facilitators get a percentage of that or they have worked out some kind of agreement that you will pay us this amount of money if we can get you the claim. Once disability payment is made, financial compensation to the facilitator is in place, and there is a vicious cycle of fraud and abuse. So instead of robbing Peter to pay Paul, Peter and Paul are robbing the Federal Government together and reaping the benefits.

Over the last 5 years, the Social Security Administration has seen an amazing increase in fraudulent activity associated with facilitators. The estimate is potentially 1 percent and perhaps even more—we haven't tied this down yet—of SSDI payments are affected by facilitator fraud. We have taken a rough estimate of what this would amount to over a 10-year period of time and dropped \$4 billion. We think at least \$10 billion over 10 years is a conservative estimate of the waste of taxpayers' dollars through fraudulent, illegal means.

Last month the Social Security inspector general, Patrick O'Carroll, testified before the Joint Economic Committee, which I chair, and shared his concerns about this question. He said, "There are people out there in positions of trust that the agency relies on for information. . . ." as to determining whether a claim is a legitimate claim for coverage. He said, "And if those people [whom we rely on] decide to defraud the government"—by sending in false claims, backed up by false medical support, the taxpayer is being taken to the cleaners. "We have found that in some cases the former Social Security employees"—that have left the employment of the Federal Government—"that understand the way the system works then go into conspiracies with unscrupulous medical providers and attorneys, where they will use improper information and facilitate getting in so that a person will get on benefits," and they get the payment and the rewards.

Last year, a San Diego-area psychologist confessed to charging his patients \$200 each to fabricate medical evidence to support their disability claims.

Imagine getting up in the morning, going to your desk, you have the credentials of a doctor—in this case a psychologist—to issue an opinion as to what the claimant's medical condition is, and then participate in this cycle of fraudulent activity and be paid for it. That is his job. That is what he does every day. Fortunately, we caught him, and that is how we know about this.

In August of 2013, Federal law enforcement officials and the Puerto Rico Police Department arrested 75 people in Puerto Rico and dismantled a large-scale disability fraud scheme involving physicians and a claimant representative who is also a former Social Security Administration employee.

So not only are individuals doing this, but there are groups of individuals who are working through a system. These are just two small examples of what is happening. To give some credit, the discovery of this has produced some progress in terms of addressing this problem. The most recent budget deal reached in the Senate included increased funding for what is called the Cooperative Disability Investigation Units, which investigate suspicious disability claims and hopefully prevents fraud before it happens. Additionally, the Social Security Administration's regional Disability Fraud Pilot Program works specifically on facilitator fraud across the country trying to identify those high-dollar, high-impact cases involving third-party facilitators conspiring with claimants to defraud the Social Security Administration. It is a pilot program. I don't know why we haven't had that program in place from its very inception. Every agency distributing funds for individuals should have as a component of that agency an investigative process for fraud, waste, and abuse because—you name the program writing checks to claimants, and I believe we will be able to find those that are fraudulently taking money out of taxpayers' wallets.

We are going to keep coming here every week putting the spotlight on waste, fraud, and abuse. Today we add another \$10 billion to the total, which keeps growing and growing. Now it is a total of \$128,812 billion of documented waste, fraud, and abuse. This is not something we make up. This is not something we read about in the paper. This is something where agencies of the Federal Government, which have accountability and responsibility to try to dig in and find this abuse, provide information on a regular basis, but it is something taxpayers simply cannot afford, should not be obligated to pay, and highlights the fact that we have a government growing beyond its means.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.