

death, service to our community, protecting this country.

I thank the gentlemen for the hard work.

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In closing, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for his leadership on this.

With regard to the gentleman from Washington State (Mr. REICHERT), I was a district attorney for 12 years and had my own attached State police force. I worked with local law enforcement, and I understand just what he was talking about in terms of the need to communicate, to work together cohesively, and to share information. We are all safer when that occurs.

Mr. Speaker, I started my day this morning in Boston. We met at the Federal Reserve. The “we” that met was something that, perhaps, you wouldn’t have seen a few years ago but that we see today because of the efforts by Congress, the Homeland Security Committee, the gentleman from Georgia, and me in working together across the aisle and in making sure these things happen.

It was a meeting on surface transportation threats and terrorist threats. We had our staff and the head of the FBI in our region there. We had the head of the ATF. We had our regional head of the TSA there. We had State officials, local officials, local police, regional police. We had authorities, like the transportation authorities, all present in the room—filling up the room—working together, sharing information. Yet we know we have to do a better job of making sure that occurs going forward.

With regard to many of the things we worked on in the committee, some of those agencies made procedural changes. They adopted new priorities that they had not had before. There is the reporting to Congress on the information of foreign terrorist fighters from our European allies, as well as making sure that the Joint Terrorism Task Force is sharing information.

With this legislation, we are making sure, going forward, that that is going to continue to be done because oftentimes, unfortunately, we react to a major crisis, respond, and provide the resources. Then, after a period of time, our attention wanes, and we are not constantly making sure that it is being done.

This legislation will make sure that it is being done going forward, and it will make sure that these groups are reporting back to Congress on a regular basis so that we are in a position to know that it continues to go forward all the time because, as our attention and our resources and our defensiveness might wane, the threats by terrorists will always be there, unfortunately, in the world we share. This will make sure that the reporting back to Congress occurs as well.

I am pleased to say that Congress has an integral role in this. We have crossed a very divided line, unfortu-

nately, that we live with today from a partisan standpoint, and we will work together time and time again, because if we can’t work together on issues of our national security, what can we work together on?

I thank my colleague from Georgia (Mr. LOUDERMILK). I thank the chairman of the committee, Mr. MCCAUL; the ranking member, Mr. THOMPSON; and all of the committee members for their efforts going forward. This ALERT Act will keep us safer, not just tomorrow, but in the decades ahead.

I yield back the balance of my time. Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me give a heartfelt thanks to my colleagues across the aisle, especially to my colleague from Massachusetts (Mr. KEATING), who mentioned that we have spent a good amount of time together in traveling to the Middle East and to Europe, looking at terrorism.

There was a time in our Nation’s history when our focus on terrorism was isolated to areas overseas, but no longer. Terrorism is in our neighborhoods and it is in our communities. As you heard here today, from Massachusetts to Georgia to Washington State, there are no geographical boundaries on terrorism even within the United States.

While this bill will not end terrorism, it will give critical tools to those who know their communities best. The local law enforcement officer who is on the beat every day knows his community better than anyone. When something isn’t just right, he is the first one to notice it. It is critical that we provide them with the training, the security clearances, and the tools that they need to become a force multiplier for our Federal agents who are operating on very limited resources today. In fact, they are stretched very thin.

Again, I thank all of those who are in support of this legislation. Of all I have worked on, I believe that this is one of the most important—that being the securing of our Nation so our children will have a nation that is free, safe, and full of opportunity. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4401.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LOUDERMILK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4401, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CALLING ON GOVERNMENT OF IRAN TO ASSIST IN CASE OF ROBERT LEVINSON

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to

the resolution (H. Res. 148) calling on the Government of Iran to fulfill their promises of assistance in this case of Robert Levinson, the longest held United States civilian in our Nation’s history, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 148

Whereas United States citizen Robert Levinson is a retired agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), a resident of Coral Springs, Florida, the husband of Christine Levinson, and father of their 7 children;

Whereas Robert Levinson traveled from Dubai, UAE, to Kish Island, Iran, on March 8, 2007;

Whereas after traveling to Kish Island and checking into the Hotel Maryam, Robert Levinson disappeared on March 9, 2007;

Whereas, in December 2007, Robert Levinson’s wife, Christine, traveled to Kish Island to retrace Mr. Levinson’s steps and met with officials of the Government of Iran who pledged to help in the investigation;

Whereas, for more than 8 years, the United States Government has continually pressed the Government of Iran to provide any information on the whereabouts of Robert Levinson and to help ensure his prompt and safe return to his family;

Whereas officials of the Government of Iran promised their continued assistance to the relatives of Robert Levinson during the visit of the family to the Islamic Republic of Iran in December 2007;

Whereas, in November 2010, the Levinson family received a video of Mr. Levinson in captivity, representing the first proof of life since his disappearance and providing some initial indications that he was being held somewhere in southwest Asia;

Whereas, in April 2011, the Levinson family received a series of pictures of Mr. Levinson, which provided further indications that he was being held somewhere in southwest Asia;

Whereas Secretary John Kerry stated on August 28, 2013, “The United States respectfully asks the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to work cooperatively with us in our efforts to help U.S. citizen Robert Levinson.”;

Whereas, on September 28, 2013, during the first direct phone conversation between the heads of the Government of the United States and Iran since 1979, President Barack Obama raised the case of Robert Levinson to President of Iran Hassan Rouhani and urged the President of Iran to help locate Mr. Levinson and reunite him with his family;

Whereas, on August 29, 2014, Secretary of State John Kerry again stated that the United States “respectfully request the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran work cooperatively with us to find Mr. Levinson and bring him home.”;

Whereas on July 14, 2015, the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, and Germany concluded 20 months of negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program;

Whereas, on January 16, 2016, the Government of Iran released five United States citizens detained in Iran, Jason Rezaian of California, Saeed Abedini of Idaho, Amir Mirzaei Hekmati of Michigan, Matthew Trevithick of Massachusetts, and Nosratollah Khosravi-Roodsari;

Whereas, on January 17, 2016, President Obama stated “even as we rejoice in the safe return of others, we will never forget about Bob”, referring to Robert Levinson, and that “each and every day but especially today our hearts are with the Levinson family and we

will never rest until their family is whole again.”;

Whereas, on January 19, 2016, White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest stated that the United States Government had “secured a commitment from the Iranians to use the channel that has now been opened to secure the release of those individuals that we know were being held by Iran. . .to try and gather information about Mr. Levinson’s possible whereabouts”;

Whereas, on November 26, 2013, Robert Levinson became the longest held United States hostage in our Nation’s history; and

Whereas the FBI has announced a \$5,000,000 reward for information leading to Mr. Levinson’s safe return: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes that Robert Levinson is the longest held United States hostage in our Nation’s history;

(2) notes the repeated pledges by and renewed commitment of officials of the Government of Iran to provide their Government’s assistance in the case of Robert Levinson;

(3) urges the Government of Iran, as a humanitarian gesture, to act on its promises to assist in the case of Robert Levinson and to immediately provide to the United States Government all available information from all entities of the Government of Iran regarding the disappearance of Robert Levinson;

(4) urges the President and the allies of the United States to continue to raise with officials of the Government of Iran the case of Robert Levinson at every opportunity, notwithstanding ongoing and serious disagreements the United States Government has with the Government of Iran on a broad array of issues, including Iran’s ballistic missile program, sponsorship of international terrorism, and human rights abuses; and

(5) expresses sympathy to the family of Robert Levinson for their anguish and expresses hope that their ordeal can be brought to an end in the near future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First, I would like to thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their leadership in bringing attention to Bob Levinson’s plight and for guiding this resolution through our Foreign Affairs Committee and onto the House floor today.

Two weeks ago, we passed this resolution out of the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, which I chair alongside Ranking Member TED DEUTCH, my friend from Florida. We

were joined by Bob’s wife, Christine, and their son Dan, as well as by Bob’s sister-in-law, Suzi.

It was truly heart wrenching, Mr. Speaker, to see Christine, Dan, and Suzi again and to see how much they miss Bob and how much they worry about his well-being and his fate. All they want is Bob’s safe and immediate return. Unfortunately, the Iranian regime’s continued failure to honor its commitments and promises to assist in Bob’s case and to help bring him home have left them without a father, without a husband, and without a friend for nearly 3,300 days.

In fact, next week will mark the ninth anniversary of Bob’s disappearance from Kish Island, Iranian territory. I can’t even begin to imagine what the family has had to endure for these past 9 years—all of the birthdays, all of the holidays, all of the anniversaries, all of the momentous family occasions that never really felt whole because Bob was unable to share them with his family. No family should ever have to go through that ordeal, and the U.S. and the Iranian Governments can and should do more to ensure Bob’s immediate return.

That is why this resolution before us today, Mr. Speaker, is so important, not just for Bob and the Levinson family, but for all American citizens who may, one day, be in a similar situation. Our constituents and the American people need to know that their Representatives and their government will make the safety and security of U.S. citizens a top priority.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of the resolution.

I thank my good friend and partner, Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN, along with Congresswoman WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Congressman DIAZ-BALART, for introducing this resolution with me and for their commitment to raising awareness to Bob Levinson’s case and for always pushing for Bob’s return.

I thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for helping to swiftly move this resolution to the floor as we prepare to mark the anniversary of Bob Levinson’s disappearance. I thank Senator NELSON for spearheading a similar resolution, which passed the Senate earlier this month. I also thank all of my colleagues who have cosponsored this resolution.

□ 1700

Passing this resolution today is particularly significant. This Saturday, March 5, 2016, members of Bob’s community in my district in south Florida will come together for a rally in support of the Levinson family and call for Bob’s immediate return. Just 4 days later, on March 9, we will mark the ninth anniversary of Bob’s disappearance from Kish Island in Iran.

When we received word in January that our government negotiated for the

release of four Americans imprisoned in Iran, we welcomed the news. These were Americans who were wrongfully held, and this move made very clear that the United States does not forget about its own people.

We rejoiced as Amir Hekmati, Saeed Abedini, and Jason Rezaian were reunited with their families. Our colleagues, Congressmen KILDEE, HUFFMAN, and LABRADOR, have been tireless, tireless advocates for the release of their constituents. I am so pleased that each of them has returned to the United States. For their families, Mr. Speaker, the nightmare is over. Unfortunately, the nightmare continues for my constituents, the Levinson family.

Bob is now the longest held hostage in American history. Bob has now missed 9 years of birthdays with his seven children, anniversaries with his wife, Christine, weddings, the births of three of his four grandchildren, and so many other happy occasions that should have been celebrated together as a family. This is a family who, for 9 years, has never given up on bringing their husband, their father home.

We were so fortunate to be joined by Bob’s wife, Christine, and his eldest son, Dan, when we passed this resolution in committee some weeks ago. We had the opportunity to tell them directly that this Congress will not forget about Bob. By passing this resolution today, this House of Representatives will now tell the world that we will never forget about Bob.

Bob Levinson dedicated his life to serving this country, first with the DEA and then over 20 years as an FBI agent. Bob is a patriot who loves this country dearly, and now, Mr. Speaker, it is time for this country to come through for Bob.

Over the years, the Levinson family has received proof of life in the form of pictures and video. We are grateful that throughout the nuclear negotiations with Iran, Secretary Kerry and others raised Bob’s case at every single meeting, and we have been told that the deal to release the other Americans opened new avenues for consultation on Bob’s case. But we cannot wait. Whatever information Iran has about Bob needs to be provided now so that Bob can be brought home.

This resolution before us today calls on Iran to follow through on its repeated promises of assisting the United States in locating Bob. The resolution calls on our government and those of our partners and allies to continue to press Iran for information about Bob at every opportunity.

President Obama and Secretary Kerry have repeatedly expressed their commitment to securing Bob’s release, and Secretary Kerry reiterated that commitment during testimony in the House just last week. President Obama has stated in January, when referencing Bob’s case, he said “we will not rest until their family is whole again.”

For anyone who is watching this debate today, I encourage you to share this information about Bob Levinson, to tweet about Bob Levinson, to use the hashtag #whataboutbob.

For those in south Florida, I encourage you to come to support the Levinson family this Saturday in Coral Springs. We must keep talking about Bob. We must raise the level of awareness about Bob's case.

Our government and the government of our friends and allies must continue to work tirelessly to find Bob and to bring him home. The newly elected Parliament in Iran must know that we will never rest until Bob is home.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), who is the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairwoman of the Subcommittee on The Middle East and North Africa and chairwoman emeritus of the full committee, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for her leadership on this issue. I also thank TED DEUTCH, who authored this very, very important resolution. I also thank TOM RICE and ELIOT ENGEL for quickly bringing this legislation to the floor so that Members can vote on it in anticipation of the ninth anniversary of Bob Levinson's being held by the Iranians.

Almost 9 years ago, the Levinson family wrote, in part, on helpboblevinson.com. I quote them, in part. They said:

"If you pray for Bob, we thank you. If you frequently follow the news stories and blogs about Bob's situation, we thank you. If you have spread the word about his story and continue to do so, we thank you. We thank you all from the bottom of our hearts. Please continue to pray for Bob. We would love to have him home for Father's Day."

That was May 25, 2007. That, Mr. Speaker, was almost 9 years ago.

In a letter to Dad, also in May of 2007, Bob Levinson's children wrote:

"Dad . . . your seven children love and miss you very much. We are writing you this letter in the hopes that you will be able to read it wherever you are and know that you are in our thoughts and prayers every minute of every day."

The seven children continued:

"As you know, Mom is our rock. She has encouraged us to take each day one day at a time. While we are sure it will come as no surprise to you, she has amazing strength and has been an inspiration to all seven of us."

"We are all looking forward to your welcome home party. It cannot seem to come soon enough. We pray for you every day and look forward to having you come home to us safe and sound."

The seven Levinson children continued:

"Dad, you are the best dad anyone could ever ask for, and we love and miss you more than words can say. We are so proud of you, and the world now knows what we have known all along—what an intelligent, kind, and gentle man you are."

Again, that letter was from Bob's kids, and it was posted almost 9 years ago. Despite the emotional pain, Christine, his wife, and the entire family tenaciously press for Bob Levinson's freedom.

No one in American history, as Mr. DEUTCH pointed out a moment ago, has been held hostage longer than Bob Levinson. His ordeal and the agony and the heartbreak of his family must end.

When the reports that most of the Americans held by Iran were released but no freedom or even information about Levinson, the family was indeed crushed. In response, the family wrote: "We are happy for the other families. But once again, Bob Levinson has been left behind. We are devastated."

Devastated, yes, but they are absolutely committed to the return of their husband, father, grandfather, relative, and friend. Both the administration and Congress must not rest until this good, decent, and honorable American is returned to his family, friends, and a grateful Nation.

So I again thank Representative TED DEUTCH for sponsoring H. Res. 148 so all of us can express our deepest concern for Bob Levinson and press, as never before, for his return.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank Mr. SMITH for his powerful words and for sharing the very powerful and very moving words of Bob's family.

I ask my colleagues to think about the Levinson family as if they were your own and to use the opportunity that we have here today to send what is the most powerful message that this House can send—these days especially—and that is a message of unity.

Mr. Speaker, with this resolution today, we have an opportunity to recognize that, when a proud American has been missing from his family, has been missing from his community, he is missing from our family and he is missing from our community and our country. Our country is missing Bob Levinson. It is our country that will be made whole when Bob is returned.

I urge my colleagues in the strongest way that I can to stand together with me, with Bob's family, and on behalf of every person in this great country in moving this resolution forward and continuing to work tirelessly to bring Bob home.

I yield back the balance of my time. Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank my good friend, Mr. DEUTCH, for his eloquent proposals time and time again in our committee, on the House floor, and in every public gathering on behalf of Bob Levinson's fam-

ily. I am sure that the Levinson family feels a great sense of relief that they have such a tireless advocate by their side.

I hope that the administration continues to press the Iranian regime to do more to assist with the Bob Levinson case, and it needs to continue to raise the issue with the Iranian regime at the highest level and at every opportunity.

As Mr. DEUTCH pointed out, the community in south Florida will be rallying in support of Bob and his family this coming Saturday, March 5. It will be held at the Center for the Arts in Coral Springs at 2 in the afternoon.

What a powerful message it would send to the family were the House to adopt this resolution without dissent. It will also send a strong message to the Iranian regime that we will not relent until Bob is home with his family and Iran has honored its commitments and its promises.

I commend, again, my good friend and south Florida colleague, TED DEUTCH, for authoring this resolution, and I am honored to be his Republican lead. I have worked alongside Mr. DEUTCH for so many years in support of Bob and his family.

Bob, a south Florida resident, as you heard, is a constituent of Mr. DEUTCH's district. As I said, the Levinson family is so fortunate to have such a wonderful Representative, because TED has shown unwavering commitment to the family, for Bob in his fight to be reunited with his loving family. I can only say that we all support TED in his mission. We support the Levinson family. We will continue to work with Mr. DEUTCH in this effort.

I urge my colleagues to strongly support this measure, support Bob and the Levinson family in this one more anniversary of being in captivity who knows where.

I yield back the balance of my time. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 148, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read: "A resolution calling on the Government of Iran to follow through on repeated promises of assistance in the case of Robert Levinson, the longest held United States hostage in our Nation's history."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FEMA DISASTER ASSISTANCE REFORM ACT OF 2015

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1471) to reauthorize the programs and activities of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, as amended.