

that this cannot be tolerated; that, ultimately, this body must stand and do what it is obligated to do, which is, in fact, to demand freedom for Americans held involuntarily and illegally around the world, and particularly in Iran.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S SUPREME COURT
NOMINATION

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I will close by commenting on the Democratic Whip's statements. He is demanding that the Senate do its job.

At a time in which the political season is well underway and politicians are campaigning around America for President, at a time in which two sides have two different visions of the Constitution—one is that the original intent of the Constitution be adhered to and changed only by the will of the people, as it has been 27 times; or, that it be simply cast aside the way the current nominee for the Supreme Court would do with the Second Amendment and others—I respect the minority leader's right to an opinion; but, of course, we all, on this floor, have a right to be wrong from time to time. Mr. Speaker, he clearly was when he went on for more than 10 minutes, telling us that we have to confirm a Supreme Court Justice in the middle of a political season.

I wish he had joined me in saying that this President should not make agreements that circumvent the Constitution, that circumvent this body and leave Americans stranded abroad.

LADIES IN WHITE AND PRESIDENT
OBAMA'S TRIP TO CUBA

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, when President Obama announced his efforts to normalize relations with Cuba in December 2014, many of us believed that his decision would only embolden the regime and end up hurting the Cuban people. Well, almost a year and a half later, we can say, unfortunately, as expected, that our suspicions have been warranted. This is indeed what has happened.

President Obama is only worried about legacy shopping and is willing to ignore the plight of the Cuban people who continue to suffer under Castro, and this normalization effort has been an abject failure for freedom and democracy on the island.

The lives of the Cuban people have not improved. A record number of them are fleeing the island to escape Castro's tyranny; and freedom and liberty, unfortunately, no longer seem to be the goals of this administration for the people of Cuba.

In December 2015, President Obama said in an interview that he would go to Cuba only when the human rights situation on the island had improved. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is what human rights looks like on the island, the valiant Ladies in White, who walk peace-

fully in Cuba to their church—and you see one being dragged away in the lower corner. This is what happens to them every week in Castro's Cuba. They are harassed. They are beaten. This is not what an improved human rights situation looks like at all, Mr. President.

Hours before the President arrived in Cuba, hundreds of pro-democracy advocates were arrested. Listen to that, ladies and gentlemen. Hundreds of pro-democracy advocates were arrested just hours before the President's Air Force One touched down. Many of them were members of the Ladies in White, Las Damas de Blanco.

The Ladies in White are mothers, wives, daughters, sisters of current or former political prisoners. These brave women continue to speak out for justice and freedom against the regime that oppresses them daily and arrests them every Sunday when they walk peacefully to church.

Two weeks ago, the Ladies in White leader, Berta Soler—and we saw her in one of the posters—asked President Obama very pointedly—and there they are getting arrested, harassed, as they do all the time. She said: Please visit Gandhi Park, where we meet. Meet with the victims of Castro's repression.

Well, President Obama responded by stating: "No one should face harassment, arrest, or physical assault simply because they are exercising a universal right to have their voices heard."

That is absolutely true.

And then he added that he would raise these issues directly with their oppressor, Raul Castro.

But once you have already embraced the oppressor of the Ladies in White and legitimized his regime on the world stage, what does this empty rhetoric and phrases matter to any of them?

In February 2015, Berta Soler testified before our House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and she stated: "Our demands are quite concrete: freedom for political prisoners, recognition of civil society, the elimination of all criminal dispositions that penalize freedom of expression and association, and the right of the Cuban people to choose their future through free, plural elections."

Elections in Cuba? Fidel Castro famously said, elections for what? They don't have any political system at all. There is only one party that is allowed to operate; that is the Communist Party. They have selections, not elections.

The Cuban people deserve more than just lip service and platitudes from the White House. They are demanding actions and reforms in Cuba to unclench the fist of the Castro control.

But solely a meeting with Cuban civil society is a very low bar, Mr. Speaker. It is not enough to help the Cuban people, especially after shaking the hand of a murderous tyrant like Raul Castro.

However, even this meeting with civil society is being undermined by

Castro's thugs, even this low bar. Gee, if I just meet with dissidents—check off the list—then my trip will have been a success.

Many civil society members have stated that they are now under house arrest, as I speak, and that Castro's security agents are preventing them from leaving their own homes until President Obama leaves Cuba.

In Cuba's communist newspaper, called Granma, the regime noted that President Obama's trip to Havana dispels the myth that human rights are being violated on the island. They are no fools. They understand the image is worth a thousand words. The image of President Obama in Cuba says no human rights are being violated. And the regime knows that all of the concessions that President Obama has given come with no strings attached.

I will end with this, Mr. Speaker:

No reforms are needed. No changes need to be made. In fact, the Castro regime has already stated that it will not change one bit after all of these concessions.

The Cuban people deserve better.

The American people deserve better.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 25 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: God of mercy, thank You for giving us another day.

The Psalmist could not find enough words to express trust in You. Personal experience of Your presence, care, and abiding guidance gave rise to his song: "O Lord, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer. My God, my rock of refuge, my shield, the fullness of my salvation, my stronghold." Psalm 18:2.

Stir in our hearts today Your Spirit. Touch the soul of this Nation that we may see Your saving work in our work and the work of this House. Your strength behind our weakness, Your purpose in our efforts at laws of justice, Your peace drawing all of us and the entire world to lasting freedom.

You are ever faithful, O Lord, worthy of all of our trust, now and forever. May everything we do this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the

last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. POLIQUIN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WATER STORAGE IN CALIFORNIA

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, after years of extreme drought, California is finally receiving, thanks to the Good Lord and Mother Nature, significant rain and snowfall, perhaps enough to return to near normal conditions.

However, despite continued mandatory statewide rationing, Federal agencies are still making decisions that result in the loss of massive amounts of water that could be stored, or decisions that will be harmful to agriculture. Just 5 days ago, the Sacramento River ran so high that enough water to supply over 54,000 people for an entire year flowed past each hour.

While recent storms have improved our water supplies, our largest reservoirs are not yet full. They soon could be, but are not yet full. It is precisely during these times that water agencies need to be very cautious and very careful in managing these water supplies so that, as our reservoirs do become full, we can carry through until maybe the next drought.

So will they allow these reservoirs to become full, or will they let water flow down because of bad flood data or fish needs?

We will see.

RECOGNIZING BLEEDING DISORDERS AWARENESS MONTH

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize March 2016 as Bleeding Disorders Awareness Month. This month marks the 30th anniversary of President Reagan's declaration of March 1986 as Hemophilia Awareness Month.

One of the most troubling bleeding disorders is hemophilia. Hemophilia affects roughly 20,000 people in the U.S. and 1 in 5,000 newborns. Treating the disorder is complicated, as well as expensive, as there is no known cure, and treatment may cost \$250,000 a year.

Another bleeding disorder is Von Willebrand disease, or VWD, which re-

sults in bruising, nosebleeds, and excessive bleeding following surgical procedures. VWD occurs equally in men and women and is estimated to affect more than 3 million Americans.

Through this greater awareness of bleeding disorders, we can work toward earlier diagnoses and the prevention of complications, unnecessary procedures, and disabilities.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL SHINAY

(Mr. POLIQUIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, our proud State of Maine has sent many hardworking, principled leaders to the national stage.

Senator Margaret Chase Smith brought common sense and courage to Washington as the first woman to serve in both the U.S. House and in the Senate.

Now, many other Mainers have served our country with distinction, but have seldom made the headlines.

Michael Shinay grew up in a middle class family in Waterville and was a loyal alum of the University of Maine. He was an immensely talented public servant who, every day, helped American families and businesses during his 30 distinguished years at the U.S. Postal Service. Mike served as postmaster in Burlington, Vermont, and in the Postmaster General's Office here in Washington.

In 1992, Mr. Shinay accepted the thankless job of cleaning up the theft and inside dealings right here at the House Post Office. He then cut costs and introduced new technology that streamlined this huge, complex mail system.

In 1999, Mike retired from the Postal Service and consulted on global mail systems to some of the world's most successful companies.

Two months ago, on January 23, Michael J. Shinay peacefully passed away, surrounded by his loving wife, Jeanne, of 39 years, and their two wonderful children, Katie and Jonathan. Two months ago, Maine and America lost a cheerful, hardworking public servant, full of fairness, integrity, and goodness.

We will miss Mike Shinay.

CONGRATULATING VALOR CHRISTIAN GIRLS SWIMMING AND DIVING TEAM

(Mr. COFFMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Valor Christian High School's varsity girls swimming and diving team on their 4A State championship win.

It was a thrilling win for Valor. The team scored 320 points to catapult past their competitors in the quest for the State championship title.

Senior Brooke Stenstrom showed tremendous leadership and dedication in her record-breaking 50-yard freestyle, 100-yard freestyle, and 200 medley relay, earning her the title of "Swimmer of the Year" in the State's 4A classification.

Freshman Abbie Erickson finished fourth in the diving portion of the competition, contributing to the team's total points and ultimate State win.

Ms. Lori Stenstrom, the swim team's head coach, led a tremendous effort all season long to get the team ready for their State championship performance, earning her the title of "Swimming Coach of the Year."

I am honored to congratulate these young women on their State championship win.

CUBAN PRO-DEMOCRACY LEADERS

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, Raul Castro's thugs arrested or detained many Cuban pro-democracy leaders in anticipation of the President's time in Cuba.

Berta Soler, the leader of the Ladies in White, was detained; Antonio Rodiles, detained; and some of these activists were invited to participate in the meeting with President Obama.

Antunez and his wife, Yris, arrested; musician Gorki Aguilera, arrested; former political prisoner Angel Moya, arrested. Pastor Mario Felix Lleonart Barroso was arrested yesterday.

The Castro brothers have shifted their strategy to a catch-and-release program to intimidate activists who have been placed under house arrest by the repressive apparatus of the regime.

President Obama says that human rights are important to him, but empty words with no actions to back them up send the message to the Castro regime to continue with his repression, and Castro continues to do so. No surprise there.

Shame on us, Mr. Speaker.

WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

(Mr. BENISHEK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, today, March 21, is World Down Syndrome Day. This internationally recognized event is set aside to raise public awareness of what Down syndrome is and about the important role that people with Down syndrome play in our lives and our communities.

According to the National Down Syndrome Society, there are currently about 400,000 people living with Down syndrome in the United States alone. These people are faced with elevated risks for many other health conditions and must confront obstacles every day of their lives.