

31. Mario Morera Jardines/Condemned to 3 years prison/Guamajal prison

32. Ernesto Ortega Sarduy/Valle Grande prison

33. Alexander Palacio Reyes/Cerámica Roja prison

34. Ricardo Pelier Frómota/Condemned to 3 years jail/Combinado de Guantanamo prison

35. Fernando Isael Peña Tamayo/Condemned to 5 years/El Típico prison

36. Silverio Portal Contreras/Campamento Ochimán prison

37. Humberto Eladio Real Suarez

38. René Rouco Machin/Melena del Sur prison

39. Laudelino Rodriguez Mendoza/Granjita prison, Santiago de Cuba

40. Leoncio Rodriguez Poncio/Condemned to 42 years and has served 28 years in prison/Guantanamo Prison

41. Alfredo Luis Limonte Rodriguez/Condemned 4 years/Ariza Prison

42. Elieski Roque Chongo/Condemned 5 years/Ariza Prison

43. Alexander Alan Rodriguez/Sentence Pending/Valle Grande Prison

44. Reinier Rodriguez Mendoza/Condemned to 2 years of prison/San José Prison

45. Mario Ronaide Figueroa Reyes/Condemned to 3 years prison/Prison 1580

46. Yoelkis Rozábal Flores/Condemned to 4 years/Combinado de Guantánamo prison

47. Daniel Santovenia Fernandez

48. Emilio Serrano Rodriguez/Valle Grande Prison

49. Armando Sosa Fortuny/Camaguey Prison

50. Liusban John Ultra/Condenado a 7 años/Jailed in the Province of Las Tunas/La Granjita Prison

51. Armado Verdecia Díaz/Condemned to 5 years of prison/Malverde Prison

Sources: Directorio Democrático Cubano; Andry Frometa Cuenca, former political prisoner; Yordan Marrero, Partido Demócrata Cristiano de Camagüey; Librado Linares Garcia, General Secretary of the Movimiento Cubano Reflexión; Unión Patriótica de Cuba (UNPACU).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. During his time in Cuba, President Obama failed to announce any substantive changes on policies, such as the fugitive policy.

Is there any news on returning New Jersey cop killer Joanne Chesimard or any of the other fugitives of U.S. justice, such as Charles Hill, William Guillermo Morales, or Victor Manuel Gerena? No news.

On confiscated property, there was no positive announcement about the Castro regime paying back Americans who had their properties confiscated.

There was no announcement by Castro about improving human rights on the island. Castro denied that human rights violations occur in Cuba. Again, look at this poster.

As predicted, Castro also demanded the return of the naval station at Guantanamo Bay. This Congress has been very clear that it strongly opposes relinquishing GTMO or transferring detainees to the United States.

Now, President Obama incorrectly keeps calling the Communist strongman Castro “President Castro”—wrong. He is not President of Cuba. There have never been elections. There are no political parties, except the Communist Party, in Cuba. There are no free and fair elections. He is not President. Stop calling a dictator President.

The President, our President Obama, proclaimed that this trip to Cuba would be fun. That is his word. It has not been fun for all of the Cubans who have been beaten leading up to the President's visit. It hasn't been fun for all the Cubans who have been prevented from leaving their homes until the President departs Cuba because they are human rights activists.

Now let me show you this other poster, Mr. Speaker. This is a poster of President Reagan with Gorbachev in 1987. And what happened there? President Reagan said: “Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.”

In Havana, 2016, President Obama says: Thank you, President Castro, for your spirit of openness.

Spirit of openness? And again, President what? He is not a President. What openness, when press is prohibited in Cuba? What openness, when the Cuban people are jailed for dissenting views? What openness, when the economy is controlled by one entity, the communist regime?

America, under the Obama administration, has forsaken those who suffer under Castro's oppression. That is a sad fact. And this will be President Obama's legacy, Mr. Speaker, the President who abdicated America's role as a defender of international human rights, all for a narcissistic play at building a legacy as the President who restored America's relations with dictators and tyrants who will do anything to undermine our country and harm our interests and our citizens.

And that is all there is about Cuba.

SMALL PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2016

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. PALAZZO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce bipartisan legislation that addresses the administrative burdens facing small and rural housing authorities across this country.

The Small Public Housing Agency Opportunity Act of 2016, H.R. 4816, being introduced by myself, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP), and the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. ASHFORD), is the House companion to Senators TESTER and FISCHER's S. 2292. If enacted, this bill would simplify inspection and compliance requirements and eliminate excessive paperwork for public housing authorities that support fewer than 550 households.

Small PHAs represent 80 percent of all agencies but administer only 20 percent of the units and receive only 10 percent of the public housing and Housing Choice Voucher funds. Under current law, these small public housing agencies are required to follow the same reporting and inspection rules as large, urban housing authorities, even though they have far fewer resources.

Speaking from experience with my work as a CFO and deputy executive di-

rector of a small housing authority prior to serving in Congress, there is a big difference between housing needs in small town Mississippi, Georgia, or Nebraska, and those in cities like New York City. This legislation removes that one-size-fits-all approach and gives small housing authorities the flexibility to operate more effectively and efficiently.

Simply put, small housing authorities are being crushed by the regulatory burdens of the Federal Government. It doesn't take a CPA to see the cost significantly outweighs the benefits of HUD mandates and regulations.

Specifically, this bill limits HUD's inspections of housing and voucher units to once every 3 years, unless the small PHA is classified as “troubled” by HUD. It eliminates certain paperwork, including the submission of plans or reports not required of owners and operators of Section 8 private properties, and it also eliminates unnecessary yearly environmental reviews for agencies that are not undergoing new construction.

As we all know, recent Federal budgets have reduced support for public housing, and cuts have disproportionately impacted small and rural housing agencies. Deep prorrations in the operating funds have forced housing authorities to reduce staff and cut services and maintenance.

Any revenue source is crucial; that is why this bill also takes a balanced, commonsense look at the inspections, requirements, paperwork, and regulations that our directors are doing year round.

Five decades ago, President Johnson announced a war on poverty, and it was believed during that time that one of the first bills to be introduced in the 89th Congress would be an updated version of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1964. President Johnson, in his State of the Union that year, proclaimed a desire for “a decent home for every American family.”

This goal is today, as it was in 1964, a very real one that must be addressed. That is why I applaud Speaker RYAN for creating the Task Force on Poverty, Opportunity, and Upward Mobility, to strengthen America's safety net to help those in need.

I also commend Representative LUETKEMEYER and the committee for the successful drafting and passage of the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016.

We have a model out there for public housing, and we can debate the pluses and minuses in terms of government efficiency; but at the end of the day, we cannot forget what the main focus here is: affordable housing for America's lowest income families.

This bill's exemptions and reforms will not have an adverse impact on the quality of living for these families. On the contrary, by removing just a fraction of the burden placed on the backs of our housing directors, we benefit the lives of the residents. With some directors and employees allotting over 30

hours a week to just one report or program or assessment, we take that time away from the residents.

This bill does not aim to reform the entire model or oppress one party involved but, rather, aims to ensure that the time and thousands of dollars spent on assessments here and there are absolutely necessary and that it ultimately benefits the residents in these units. So this bill really does what Congress oftentimes fails to do, which is to provide some much-needed regulatory relief. It simplifies, rather than complicates, the process.

I ask my colleagues to join me in this bipartisan effort to ensure that low-income families have a decent home, regardless of their location. This begins by giving agencies the resources and the flexibility they need to better serve their communities.

WATER CRISES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again rise to address the water crises that are facing not just California, but our Nation and throughout the world.

Today, global communities and business organizations have joined together, and the White House is holding a water summit to raise awareness of the 650 million people around the world who don't have access to safe drinking water, urging leaders to focus on ways in which we can increase access to safe, sanitary water. This is appropriate, but it is long overdue.

On the Web site, waterday.us, it states: "Water stress is the impact a lack of water has on a particular sector or population. Water stress affects nutrition, public health, environmental services, housing and urban growth, and national security."

□ 1030

And national security is directly related to our ability to grow food to ensure that American consumers are independent and have sufficient nutrition for their daily consumption.

Water, therefore, is a resource issue of the future not only for our Nation, but throughout the world. These impacts of not having a reliable and safe water supply are all too familiar for those of us who live in the San Joaquin Valley in California and my colleagues who represent that area.

So while I believe it is fitting and appropriate that we recognize that there is a nationwide and worldwide issue regarding our water resources and how we manage them—with the planet having 7 billion people last year and by the middle of this century another 2 billion, or 9 billion people—we need to look at both short-term and long-term comprehensive solutions to our water needs not just throughout the world, but here in the United States, specifically, in California.

So I find it extremely disappointing that California's San Joaquin Valley is not at the forefront of this discussion after 4 years of devastating drought.

While I empathize with those in Flint, Michigan, and other areas of the country, like those of us in the San Joaquin Valley, we have been facing water shortages for 4 years; it is getting much worse; and there is less national attention being focused on our plight.

In the valley, instead of lead poisoning due to the failure of all levels of government, as we have seen in Flint, Michigan, we are dealing with waters that have high nitrate levels in drinking water. In addition to that, in many places, we don't have access to water at all.

The solutions are clear. We need to increase Federal funding for infrastructure to build resiliency during drought periods and reduce the impacts of water quality using all the water tools in our water toolbox.

We need to increase coordination between local, State, and Federal agencies to reduce the impacts of communities impaired by water quality or a lack of access to water.

Finally, we need to increase our focus on ensuring that regulations, where they are in place, achieve their intended purpose while minimizing negative impacts that they have with contradictory results.

For instance, due to the decisions made by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Bureau of Reclamation is required to operate pumps in California's water system under what I believe are scientifically flawed provisions, biological opinions, which have lost, as a result, hundreds of thousands of acre-feet of water.

This year, if the Federal agencies had operated within the flexibility provided even in those flawed biological opinions, San Joaquin Valley communities could have been provided an additional 2- to 300,000 acre-feet of additional water. In addition to that, that would have benefited over 400,000 households.

As a result of the drought and the inability to capture water that is flowing in the system, over 600,000 acres of prime productive agricultural land have gone unplanted, and we have seen families impacted. Families that literally do not have access to water have had to bottle in water.

There is a very certain human toll—the impact—that is taking place to provide highly uncertain benefits for species. This is unacceptable, it is avoidable, and it is immoral.

I urge the Federal agencies to take action to do experimental increases in pumping with increased detection and monitoring so we can find out if, in fact, delta smelt and salmon traveling through the delta are even being harmed by the exact pumping levels under discussion.

So while I appreciate the comprehensive plan the administration is trying

to implement to solve our Nation's water crisis, we need short-term solutions now so that farmers, farm workers, and farming communities in the San Joaquin Valley do not go without a water supply under the Federal project for a third year in a row.

Additionally, we must do everything possible to get Federal legislation passed and signed into law that would not only deal with our short-term needs, but to deal with our long-term needs as well. We passed the House bill last year.

We need to get Senator FEINSTEIN's bill passed so we can go to conference because, if the Federal agencies don't act—and they have not been doing the job that I would like to see them do—then Congress must act.

HONORING BERT STEPHEN CRANE, A BELOVED LEADER IN THE MERCED COMMUNITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DENHAM) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor the life of a beloved leader in the Merced community, Bert Stephen Crane. Bert passed away at the age of 84 on Sunday, March 13, 2016, surrounded by his loving family.

On November 29, 1931, Bert was born to fourth-generation California farmers and ranchers. Raised on a cattle ranch, he was up before the Sun and out until it came down. During his youth, Bert achieved the rank of Eagle Scout as a member of Boy Scout troop 101.

At Merced High School, Bert was the drum major in band and played basketball. After high school, Bert studied at Stanford University and obtained his bachelor of science degree in agricultural economics from UC-Davis.

During his college years, Bert met Nancy Magnuson, whom he fell in love with and later married in 1957. They remained married for over 58 years and raised three children who would follow the family tradition of ranching and farming.

Bert spent most of his life farming walnuts, which he ventured into in the early 1970s after his early career in the beef industry. Bert went on to own and operate a successful walnut-processing plant.

Bert lived an impressive and inspirational life. He was known to have ridden horses with Ronald Reagan, was extremely involved in the community, and had a passion for health care.

He led fundraising events for Mercy Hospital and was instrumental in the development of the Mercy Cancer Center. Bert served on the Merced County Planning Commission for 28 years. His service to his community, agriculture, and research is one of great respect and integrity.

Bert valued and treasured the time he was able to spend with his family above all else. He is survived by his loving wife, Nancy, and his three children and seven grandchildren.