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## THANKFUL

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, today is my birthday, and I chose to take this opportunity to address Congress and the American people on things I am blessed with and thoughtful about.

First, of course, are my parents, who are no longer alive, but they gave me a great education and gave me a lot of love. My mother got the opportunity to see me get elected to Congress, and when I did, she said: What does that make me? I told her it made her the queen that she has always been. She passed about 5 years ago, so she hasn't been able to see these other years.

I am thankful to my mother, my father, and my grandfather, but especially to my great-grandfather, Simon, who left Lithuania with nothing in about 1884 and came to this country. If he wouldn't have taken that bold step to leave his homeland without anything at all, I probably would have been born into some union that would have led to my being killed in the Holocaust.

Simon was a great man, and this was a great country that accepted him. We have bills dealing with immigration, and I think about Simon leaving Lithuania and giving me the opportunity to be here.

I am most thankful for my constituents for giving me this opportunity to serve in Congress. I love my job. I have been in politics all my life. I got elected for the first time when I was just 27 years old, and I am a lot older than that today.

My constituents have blessed me. My district is the most African American district in the United States of America, and the issue of race and my religion—I am Jewish, which makes me a minority in my district—do not come up any longer. I have not lost a precinct in the Democratic primary because I have the best constituents in America who don't see religion and don't see race, but they simply see somebody who works hard at their job and votes their interests and tries to make Memphis more prosperous, more healthy, and more just. And I will always do that.

I thank my constituents for giving me the opportunity to serve here, which was always something I longed for. I served in the State senate for a long time. I ran for Congress once before and lost. And I used to look at this building and think, "I didn't get there; I didn't make it." I got a second chance, and the District Nine residents gave me that chance. I will be finishing my 10th year this year.

To serve with the men and women I serve with in this Congress, we get a lot of abuse, and some people don't think we do a good job. Sometimes I don't think we do a good job. I will tell you that the people in Congress, the

men and women, are all good men and women. They are likeable people. That is why they get elected. They are all winners. They may have a different perspective on what is right for this country, but they come here dedicated, and they work hard and they try to represent their district and make things better for the people in their district. I am thankful for each of you, Democrats and Republicans, for the opportunity to serve with you in this great Hall and to serve America.

I thank District Nine, and I thank all my friends and my parents for giving me this opportunity and giving me life.

#### ANNIVERSARY OF THE JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the 1-year anniversary of the signing of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. We are grateful for the accomplishments of the legislation over the past year. The JVTa has reinvigorated our Nation's commitment to fighting sex trafficking.

The legislation sought to undercut demand for sex trafficking by holding buyers and advertisers of trafficking accountable for their choices. Under the SAVE Act—my legislation that was signed into law as part of the JVTa legislative package—we have given prosecutors the tools they need to fight these Web sites and businesses that support human trafficking by knowingly advertising victims for profit.

Right now, tens of thousands of demented online advertisements are openly selling children into sexual enslavement. Predators in our communities are going online and having children delivered to their hotel rooms as easily as they would a pepperoni pizza. Today, human trafficking is moving from the streets to the Internet, making it more accessible and more insidious. The SAVE Act fights this sick explosion of trafficking on the Internet.

The SAVE Act is already demonstrating that it is an indispensable tool to attack online trafficking. Backpage.com and other exploitive Web sites, which enable human traffickers by allowing them to post ads selling the bodies and the souls of our children, are angry that the U.S. is now holding the advertisers of human trafficking accountable.

Backpage.com claims that their ability to post children for sex online is a matter of free speech. It is not a matter of free speech, Mr. Speaker. It is a flagrant violation of the dignity and the basic constitutional rights of these abused and vulnerable children. Facilitating the purchase of children for sex is not a right; it is a crime, and it is a crime of the most heartless and evil proportions.

In December 2015, backpage.com filed a lawsuit against the SAVE Act in the

United States District Court of the District of Columbia, and they specifically named me, ANN WAGNER, in their case. They are suing us because the SAVE Act has upset their pocketbooks and hindered them from making money off human trafficking sales. I take it as a huge success that we are finally moving in the direction where adults, Web sites, and businesses that exploit victims of human trafficking cannot profit and will not be given a free pass for their despicable crimes.

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act creates a legal framework to ensure that those who sell children and young women for sex, those who buy children for sex, and those who profit from human trafficking will be held accountable for their choices. But this law will be rendered useless until the Department of Justice moves to fully implement it. To our knowledge, the Department has not opened any new investigations to target advertisers of trafficking.

The JVTa clarifies those who solicit and patronize victims of trafficking can and should be prosecuted as sex trafficking offenders under 18 U.S. Code section 1591. Failing to prosecute buyers perpetuates demand for trafficking and allows offenders to abuse our children with impunity.

But while buyers have been arrested over the past year, we have seen very few convictions. Exactly how many convictions? We don't know because the Department of Justice has not released this information. We do know that many buyers have inexplicably been allowed to walk.

America's children are not objects to be bought and sold and abused by predators. They are children who we, as adults, have the duty to fiercely, fiercely protect.

We are also waiting on the Department of Justice to levy a \$5,000 assessment on convicted human traffickers, convicted buyers who exploit victims, and offenders of similar crimes. We passed the JVTa 1 year ago, but the Department has neglected to assess the vast majority of these offenders—perhaps all of these offenders—despite a number of related convictions.

These fines are meant to help populate the Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund to provide assistance for victims of trafficking and child pornography and develop prosecution programs. We are waiting on the Department of Justice to establish and populate this fund to get survivors the services that they need.

In short, there is much work to be done and we will not just walk away. It is our most fundamental responsibility to fight to protect our most vulnerable from sexual enslavement. This is our most basic duty.

#### TSA FUNDS DIVERTED

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, as I speak here today on the comfortable and uncrowded floor of the House of Representatives, all across America, people are standing in lines like cattle, waiting 60 minutes, 90 minutes, sometimes longer, missing their flights to get through airport security. It didn't have to be this way.

We do a lot of things around here that are kind of not quite on the up-and-up, and one of them was a deal at the end of 2013 December, essentially when Americans are celebrating the holidays and not paying a lot of attention. Congress cut one of those year-end budget deals to fund the whole government and theoretically reduce the deficit.

Now, my friends on the Republican side are totally averse to dealing with the deficit through any sort of revenues: can't raise revenues, can't make hedge fund managers on Wall Street pay taxes like other Americans because that would be bad; can't deal with overseas loopholes, corporations re-incorporating in tax havens so they won't have to pay money here, even though they are based here and operate here. We can't deal with any of those issues.

They snuck into that bill a little fee, yeah, just a little tiny fee. They raised the fee for aviation security.

So why are things so bad today? If they just raised the fee in December of 2013, raising an extra \$1.2 billion—B, as in billion—a year for aviation security, why are the lines so long?

Well, guess what. They raised the fee, and they diverted the money. So airline passengers are paying more for their tickets ostensibly for aviation security to keep them safe and maybe to mitigate some of their inconvenience of standing in line, but the Republican majority chose to divert that money to deficit reduction and other things—\$1.25 billion dollars this year.

Now, I heard the head of the union for the screeners on the radio this morning. He said we need 6,000 more workers. And they said, well, God, how much is that going to cost? Six thousand, how could you possibly afford that?

Guess what. It would cost a heck of a lot less than \$1.2 billion to hire 6,000 more screeners so Americans didn't have to stand in 2-hour lines and miss their flights.

What is wrong with this place? Why can't we be on the up-and-up.

If you raise a tax on people to pay for aviation security, both to make them safe and to make it more convenient and predictable, spend the money making it more safe, making it more convenient, and making it more predictable. Don't divert the money to illusory deficit reduction or other things around here. That is incredible.

So all Congress has to do is say: Hmm—of course, I voted against the bill, but the large majority who did—we were wrong. We shouldn't have raised the fees on airline passengers.

We shouldn't have diverted the money. We shouldn't have starved TSA from the funds they need to hire more people, both to deal with baggage and lines. Up above and below, we have got problems in both places with lack of staffing.

Now, we will just blame the management of TSA. Oh, it is the management. It is the management. Don't look over here, because we are taxing the passengers and we are spending the money over here, not on security. That is why people are standing in line today.

I hope this place gets honest and says: Let's change the law and let's spend the money, the taxes the passengers are paying, on aviation security and eliminate the excessive waits in lines.

#### NDAA AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) offered an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act regarding religious freedom. Many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have attempted to use this amendment as a wedge in an effort to divide the American people. I want to take a few minutes to discuss the truth and the facts about its impact.

In September of 1789, the First Congress considered demands made by many participants in the State conventions which called for ratifying the U.S. Constitution. In response to many of those concerns, Congress approved, by a voice vote, the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and sent it to the States for ratification. The States ratified it in December of 1791.

The first two clauses of the First Amendment address religious freedom. The first prohibits an establishment of religion so that citizens would not be forced to support a national church, as was the case in Great Britain.

The second clause prohibits any government act that inhibits the free exercise of religion by a citizen, thereby assuring that the government cannot dictate religious beliefs or interfere with citizens as they practice and live out their faith.

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Historically, we have a proud tradition of Republicans and Democrats working together to protect free exercise under the First Amendment. A great example of this is the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which passed this House by a voice vote in 1993.

Unfortunately, basic principles of free exercise are under attack today. In response, Mr. RUSSELL's limited amendment would extend religious liberty protection to four categories of government contractors.

It is important to note that one doesn't lose constitutional rights if he or she seeks to become a contractor of the government. Hence, contractors are protected in the free exercise of their religious beliefs and practices. The Russell amendment makes explicit these contractors' rights to such protection in the employment of people who work for them.

So let's look at the Russell amendment. It states: "Any branch or agency of the Federal Government shall, with respect to any religious corporation, religious association, religious educational institution, or religious society that is a recipient of or offeror for a Federal government contract, subcontract, grant, purchase order, or cooperative agreement, provide protections and exemptions consistent with sections 702(a) and 703(e)(2) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 . . . and section 103(d) of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 . . ."

Again, note that the Russell amendment is limited to these four categories of religious entities, and it does not apply to other private entities or individuals.

Mr. Speaker, the 1964 Civil Rights Act is a landmark civil rights law which bans discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Title 7 of the act deals with discrimination in the workplace. Section 702 specifically protects the four categories of religious employers listed in the Russell amendment.

Hence, the Russell amendment extends to these four categories of religious entities when they are working for or attempt to work for the government, the same religious liberty rights they have had for over 50 years when operating in the private sector. This approach is neither new nor novel.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 extends many of the same rights granted under the 1964 act to people with disabilities. Section 103(d) of that act allows the four categories of religious entities to give "preference in employment to individuals of a particular religion" and to require that "all applicants and employees conform to the religious tenets of such organization."

Again, the Russell amendment extends to these four categories of religious entities the same religious liberty rights they have had for over 25 years when operating in the private sector to when they are doing business in the government.

The opponents of the Russell amendment say it provides for discrimination against the LGBT community. A simple review of the amendment and the underlying statutes demonstrates an absence of any reference to LGBT persons. Indeed, the Russell amendment is narrowly drawn to apply only to the four categories of religious entities in their employment of individuals to carry out their work. Any service or product produced by such an entity in a government contract would have to