

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HYDE AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the Hyde amendment, which, for too long, has been denying women their constitutional right to access safe and legal abortion.

Mr. Speaker, restrictions on abortion do not make it go away. They make it less safe. For the last 40 years, the Hyde amendment has created an often insurmountable barrier for women across the country struggling to access affordable health care because it prohibits Medicaid coverage for abortion.

It disproportionately affects low-income women: young women, immigrant women, women of color, women in rural communities. In fact, more than half the women who have their rights restricted by the Hyde amendment are women of color.

It is long past time to do away with this harmful provision, which has been expanded over the years to deny coverage to Federal employees and their dependents, our military servicemembers, Native Americans, and even Peace Corps volunteers.

□ 1015

Restricting Medicaid coverage of abortion means that about one in four low-income women carry to term an unwanted pregnancy. That is not a decision the government should make for women. There are many things that Congress should be doing, but one thing we should not be doing is interfering with a woman's constitutional right.

So what should we be doing? We should be supporting policies that prevent unwanted pregnancies, like funding Planned Parenthood; and we should also pass the EACH Woman Act to lift the coverage ban that stands in the way of too many women who have the right to make their own decisions about what is best for them and their families.

Two generations of women have been affected by the Hyde amendment over the last four decades. Let's end this policy and let each woman be able to do what is best for herself and her family.

HONORING SPECIALIST JONATHAN R. KEPHART

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, over this past weekend people in Oil City, Venango County, located in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District, joined to honor an American hero.

On April 8, 2004, Specialist Jonathan Kephart was killed in Iraq after his convoy patrol was ambushed outside of Baghdad. Kephart was credited with protecting his fellow soldiers by laying down fire against hundreds of enemy fighters, even after being wounded twice. He was the first soldier from Venango County killed in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Last Saturday, the Petroleum Street Bridge in Oil City was named after Specialist Kephart, and September 24 was declared Jonathan R. Kephart Memorial Day in Oil City.

I want to commend the efforts of everyone who worked to make this a reality, including State Representative Lee James, who authored and led the effort to pass the bill that made this distinction possible, earning unanimous approval in the Pennsylvania State House and Senate.

It is my hope that, because of this memorial to Specialist Kephart, his bravery and his sacrifice will live on in the hearts and the minds of the people in Oil City and Venango County for generations to come.

PROMESA

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

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, there is an important meeting in the Financial District of New York City, right in the heart of stock traders, the investment banks, and the bond buyers and sellers who trade in the debt of companies, countries, and municipalities. Right there in the nerve center of our financial market, they are holding a meeting.

Is it a meeting about Wells Fargo opening up thousands of accounts without the knowledge or consent of their customers? No, nothing like that. Nor anything related to the financial meltdown that our country is still recovering from that started right there. Nope.

This is the first meeting of the Puerto Rico financial control board, the junta de control, that has supreme power to rule over Puerto Rico.

Now, in case there is any confusion with the geography, New York City has a lot of Puerto Ricans, but it is not, in fact, the capital of Puerto Rico. My staff checked. San Juan is still the capital of Puerto Rico.

No, the meeting of the junta de control that has dominion over all aspects of the Puerto Rican people is not meeting in Puerto Rico. The meeting is taking place pretty close to Wall Street, which, I think, is symbolic of the way the junta de control over Puerto Rico came about.

It is a very bad omen for the future. Let me explain.

There are seven people—not elected, but appointed—who oversee every aspect of Puerto Rico's governance. Four are Republican nominees, there are three Democrats, and there is one non-voting member of the junta.

Several of the members of the Puerto Rico junta de control appear to have deep ties to Wall Street, where you can find many of the bondholders who traded and profited off Puerto Rico's \$72 billion in debt.

Judge Juan R. Torruella, the first Hispanic appointed by Ronald Reagan to the prestigious U.S. First Circuit Court of Appeals summed it up pretty well. He said to the Colegio de Abogados, the Puerto Rican Bar Association, that: "The principal purpose of PROMESA is to establish a collection agency for bondholders."

The person who is rumored to be the executive director of the junta de control is a big-time corporate energy lobbyist. He is the former head of the Center for Liquefied Natural Gas, a trade association of energy producers, which makes everyone concerned about Puerto Rico's environment nervous—with good reason.

So holding the first meeting in Lower Manhattan confirms to Puerto Ricans that the junta de control is by, for, and about the bondholders and corporate interests on Wall Street. So I consider the junta meeting on Friday as a home-court game.

The board will elect their chairman on Friday. Yeah, they are going to elect a chairman. Kind of ironic because they are electing the chairman to an unelected board because, well, democracy is good for some people—just not the people of Puerto Rico.

We have been told that members of the control board met secretly in Washington last week at the Treasury offices. Whether this is actually the first meeting of the control board is in great doubt.

And all of this raises the bigger problem of transparency. There isn't any. Under the law, this group can meet in secret anywhere in the world, and their proceedings can be conducted in executive session.

The board members can receive unlimited and unreported gifts, meals, even tickets to Hamilton and anything else, and we will never know. The scandal is coming. They are under no obligation to translate anything into Spanish, which, in case you forgot, is the language of the people that they are to control.

I will say, to their credit, that, after I wrote to each member of the control board and asked for a public commitment to transparency, a few of them wrote back. None of them made a public commitment to transparency, but a few acknowledged that keeping Puerto Ricans informed, making the meetings publicly accessible, and translating materials in the language of the people being governed were good principles.

It remains to be seen whether anyone on the junta de control really fights to inform the people of Puerto Rico, really sets up to be a champion for the schoolteachers and the doctors and the moms and the dads who are struggling, and the firemen, and the policemen who serve the people of Puerto Rico and are heroes.

And it is unclear that this control board will step up on behalf of the Puerto Rican people and make creating jobs, creating more jobs and creating more jobs the number one priority of the junta. That is the way we create a tax base for Puerto Rico. That is the way we give puertoriquenos a viable option to live and work in Puerto Rico rather than moving to Florida or some other State.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we leave Washington this week and head home for the great exercise in American democracy in November, I want all of us to keep in mind that the island of Puerto Rico, our colony in the Caribbean Sea, is a place that now, more than ever, only dreams of true democracy.

COMMENDING EDEN DETENTION CENTER

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

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with concerns about a recently issued memo from the Department of Justice to the Acting Director of the Bureau of Prisons directing the non-renewal or reduction of contracts with private detention facilities. I strongly disagree with this policy change, as private prisons play a critical role in our current Federal Bureau of Prisons system.

One facility in particular, the Eden Detention Center, located in Texas' 11th District, is an excellent example of a private prison operating in an efficient, effective, secure, and safe manner for both the community and those incarcerated.

Let me take a moment to brag about these constituents.

The American Correctional Association has awarded the Eden Detention facility a 100 percent score on their mandatory requirements, and a 99.08 percent score on nonmandatory requirements. These are undoubtedly phenomenal rankings by any measure, and the Eden facility meets these high standards at considerably lower costs than similar Federal facilities.

Eden is more than a detention facility; it is a rehabilitation center. The Bureau of Prisons has long placed significance on rehabilitating those incarcerated, directing facilities to invest in the lives of their inmates. The goal—to turn individuals from a life of crime to contributing members of society—is at the center of the Eden facility's mission.

It is this responsibility for one's fellow man that the people of Eden understand and put into practice daily, providing inmates with extensive training, educational services, and recreation, all for the purpose of improving life after incarceration.

The Eden facility has partnered with many civic and charitable organizations in the surrounding community to support this goal. As a result, the center is able to provide many vocational,

computer, and life skills training opportunities, as well as educational opportunities for basic adult education, English language training, GED, a full library, a law library, and much more.

The Bureau of Prisons takes extreme pride—and rightfully so—in a strong value system that includes, but is not limited to, respect, integrity, service, safety for all parties, successful rehabilitation, and exceptional staff and operations. I am proud to report that Eden and the greater community not only meet these core values, but they share them as well.

GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, Americans everywhere are tired of reading headlines about mass shootings. What happened in Orlando in June broke all our hearts, and we have felt similar outrage about the shooting in Houston this week. But while incidents like this command headlines, we forget just how frequent shootings have become.

In New York City, already this year, there have been 897 shooting victims. According to Gun Violence Archive, which tracks shootings daily across the United States, there have been 10,717 gun-related deaths this year and more than 22,000 injuries, and it is only September.

There are steps this Congress could take to help stem this violence. Will any one solution stop gun violence completely? Of course not. There are anywhere from 270 million to 310 million guns in the United States, close to one firearm for every man, woman and child. So we will not solve this problem overnight. But there are some steps we could take, steps that Republicans continue blocking.

First, it makes no sense that if you cannot legally get on an airplane, you can still purchase a firearm. If you are prohibited from flying, you shouldn't be buying a gun. That is just common sense.

Now, some on the other side of the aisle like to drag up an incident or two where someone was incorrectly placed on the no-fly list. If that is the case, I will say, let's also fix the no-fly list. But we cannot use this as an excuse to do nothing. That is what the NRA and the gun manufacturing lobby want Congress to do—nothing.

Second, for 10 years, this Nation used to have an assault weapon ban. President Bush let that law expire. We need to reinstate it.

Third, we need a universal system of background checks, something that 87 percent of the American public supports.

Mr. Speaker, there are other, tougher steps I would like to see implemented. I have legislation that will invest in community organizations that combat

gun violence. My bill will also help stop the flow of stolen guns into New York City and hold accountable gun owners who lose their guns and irresponsibly do not report them missing.

For now, there are three basic steps we should take immediately to help reduce this epidemic. Yet Republicans can barely fund the government, let alone take on difficult problems like these.

Let me make one last observation, Mr. Speaker. The American people are watching on this issue. If Republicans are in such a hurry to get back to your districts, I promise, you will hear from your constituents on this issue.

We are all tired of tragedies like Orlando and what happened in Houston this week, and we are also outraged by the daily shootings that do not make national news but still shatter families.

The American people are watching. They are telling the Republican leadership: "Do your job. Do your job with funding to address Zika. Do your job with money for Flint. And do your job to address the tragedy of gun violence."

ICANN

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

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, it was recently revealed that 500 million Yahoo email accounts were hacked in 2014, making it the largest data breach in U.S. history. Even more troubling is the fact that the perpetrators have been reported to be state-sponsored actors, with China and Russia among the likely suspects.

Yet, in the face of such vulnerabilities, President Obama wants to give the Chinese and Russian Governments more control over how the Internet operates. The President has even promised to shut down the Federal Government budget so that he can meet his goal of giving away a portion of America's control over the Internet to these foreign governments by October 1, 2016.

□ 1030

Rushing headlong to meet an arbitrary date to hand over our Internet control is incredibly foolish. In fact, it is stupid. No one rewards a criminal for their criminal acts, but that is exactly what the President's policy does.

Sadly, it is yet another example of how this administration has sacrificed U.S. leadership and values across the world to advance a reckless agenda. The policies from this administration have only led to America losing standing and influence across the globe on a wide range of fronts—and it must end.

Our adversaries have become bolder, taking advantage of the vacuum of leadership created by the pulling back of U.S. leadership. The forces of extremism, violence, totalitarianism, and criminal enterprises have filled the void, and the American people are suffering as a result.