

58,000 casualties, with hundreds of thousands more wounded and disabled. We need to remember the sacrifice they made, whether it was from Agent Orange or disabilities, or even the 22 veterans we lose each day to suicide.

We welcome home the Vietnam veterans. I am glad we could have this recognition for them.

INVESTIGATE RUSSIA'S INFLUENCE

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

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, the Russian cloud over this White House and over our democracy is darkening. I rise today to call on this body to come together to create a bipartisan, independent commission to investigate the full extent of Russia's influence on the Trump administration and our democracy.

Mr. Putin wants to weaken America and our allies, and he views democracy and human rights as obstacles to Russia's reemergence as a global power.

After Russia maliciously hacked emails and distributed false information to influence our elections for their favorite candidate, they have turned their eye to Germany and France. They want to sow disunity and weakness among Western democracies and undermine the transatlantic alliance.

Mr. Speaker, we must know the full truth of the Trump administration's ties to Putin and the Kremlin. There are too many unanswered questions about financial ties, personal ties, and political ties. Every new tie we discover is followed by another distorted fact from the administration.

The American people are demanding answers now. This House cannot become an accomplice to the administration's desperate efforts to divert attention from this investigation. An independent commission is now the only way to find out what happened and ensure it never happens again.

Mr. Speaker, we must follow the facts. We can't let ourselves be attacked this way ever again.

RECOGNIZING GRANDVIEW HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BASKETBALL

(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 Grandview High School girls basketball team from Aurora, Colorado. The Wolves triumphed in their 61-32 victory over Lakewood High School in the Colorado 5A State Championship.

Grandview finished the season with an impressive 27-1 record and celebrated the culmination of their season with the first girls basketball State championship win for their school.

Senior Michaela Onyenwere walked off the court with a game-high of 25 points and 8 rebounds.

During the championship game, the Grandview Wolves proved that with hard work, dedication, and perseverance anything is possible. The team was led to the championship title through the committed leadership of their coach, Josh Ulitzky, and his commendable staff.

Again, congratulations to the Grandview High School girls basketball team on their continued success and for their victory in the Colorado 5A State Championship.

□ 1100

ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

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

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, addressing climate change is one of the most important long-term challenges for our future. But this week's executive order from President Trump reverses recent progress and will worsen this slow-burning crisis.

The order undercuts the Clean Power Plan, weakens restrictions on emissions, and expands Federal coal mining leases. It undermines the success of the Paris Agreement and damages our relations with the signatories, including China and India. At the same time, the order makes it harder for our government and military to plan for the already occurring consequences of climate change—including assessing its impact on national security policy.

That is why today I am introducing the CLIMATE Act to prevent the irresponsible executive order from being implemented. Whether the Trump administration recognizes it or not, the international community understands climate change is real and is rapidly embracing a renewable energy future. The administration's decision to move our energy policy backwards only weakens the United States' global leadership role, making it more likely that green energy jobs of tomorrow will be created elsewhere.

We must come together to support policies that grow clean energy jobs in the United States and ensure we pass on a healthier planet to the next generation.

COMBATING ANTI-SEMITISM

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

Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1730, the Combating Anti-Semitism Act of 2017. I am proud to introduce this important legislation with my colleague from the other side of the aisle, Representative DEREK KILMER from Washington.

Since this January, we have seen a wave of disturbing violence and threats towards religious institutions across

America. In 2017 alone, more than 100 bomb threats have been made at 81 Jewish Community Centers across our Nation in 33 States. Tennessee, the State I call home, is also on that list. It is time that we send a clear message: religious intolerance has no place in this country.

The Combating Anti-Semitism Act of 2017 would increase the penalty for these violent threats and make them punishable as hate crimes under Federal law. We have a moral duty and responsibility to protect the rights of all Americans to worship freely and without fear, whether at a church, a synagogue, or any religious institution.

With this bill, we will deter threats and stand united against religious intolerance.

HONORING BARB LUTZ

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

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Barb Lutz. Barb has spent her entire adult life faithfully serving our military as a Federal civil service employee, primarily at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, as well as in Europe.

Barb has held numerous positions at the base and is currently the executive assistant to the commander of the 20th Air Force and Task Force 214 at F.E. Warren. She is responsible for providing the commander and vice commander with executive support, as well as serving as protocol specialist for the headquarters staff.

After a distinguished 43-year career, Barb is retiring this week. When Barb's current and former coworkers at F.E. Warren reached out to me about recognizing her, General Cotton best summed up how her colleagues feel about her when he said: "We all know Barb is a national treasure."

I want to thank Barb for all she has done for Wyoming and for the country over her 43-year career, and I wish Barb and her family the best in retirement.

TOPICS OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to be recognized to address you here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives and to once again continue this dialogue that we have with you, all of our Members and staff and the American people.

To initiate this dialogue, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GALLAGHER) of the Eighth Congressional District, born in Green Bay.

AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, every time I have the privilege of addressing this body, I am reminded of

how lucky we all are to live in a country where I am free to speak my mind without fear of retribution or retaliation. It is one of the great privileges of being an American. Yet for far too many around the world, freedom of conscience is still a distant dream.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in Russia, where Vladimir Putin's thuggish regime has poisoned the promise of the post-Soviet era and day by day has slid Russia back into the dark shadows of autocracy. Just last Sunday, thousands of Russians took to the streets and squares in protest of the Kremlin's corruption. And in return, Russian police arrested hundreds of protesters, including Vladimir Putin's political challenger, Alexei Navalny.

But the Putin regime's barbarity isn't just a polite policy difference. Russians of exceptional courage are dying, including as recently as last week, as the regime cultivates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation.

Vladimir Putin's campaign of murder is not limited to domestic political opponents. Like all dictators, Putin seeks to rally his nation's support by channelling public fear and anger against external enemies. Time and again, first in Georgia, then in Ukraine, and now in Syria, Vladimir Putin has warned us exactly who he is. As recent as last night, the commander of CENTCOM announced that Russia is likely providing support to the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I am afraid we have exhausted our warnings. Russian aggression, if left unchecked, may soon cross a line past which there is no return.

You see, what Vladimir Putin wants is fundamentally at odds with American interests. After the Second World War, America laid the foundation for a new and better world, drawn together by common values and forged from the fires of war. We did this not just because we are a generous people but because we are a wise people.

Farsighted American statesmen realized that creating the architecture for peace in Europe was a far better investment than returning to isolationism and then one day having to pay the butcher's bill, as we did twice during the first half of the 20th century.

As Europe is changing, Vladimir Putin dreams of restoring the Soviet Union's prestige and power, and his ultimate goal is clear: the end of the postwar-American project in Europe and the return of power politics unencumbered by the rules of the road that we established to our benefit in concert with our allies.

And so the stakes, in my mind, could not be any higher. If we do not stand up to Putin now, his aggression will continue until one day he goes too far. On that day, we may face an unimaginable choice between war or the destruction of the NATO alliance. And whichever we choose, we will have lost.

Despite Putin telling us exactly who he is, I have heard some say we should

try to work with Russia to find areas of common ground. Yet we have seen firsthand how the last administration's reset has not led to better relations but to a tide of Russian aggression.

I do not believe Putin desires war with the United States. What he desires is the fruits of conquest without the cost. He holds the cards of a bluffer, and he is gradually raising the stakes in an effort to get us to fold. Fortunately, it is the U.S., not Russia, who holds the stronger hand. We cannot, and we must not, give Putin the acquiescence he requires to succeed in his plot to overturn the world we created.

When it comes to Russia's interference in our elections, we must put the country and the sanctity of our democracy far above partisan interests. For any American to collaborate against our own government with a government that seeks to undermine our country would, indeed, be nothing short of treasonous. But I call on my Democrat friends to resist the urge to treat this critical issue as nothing more than an opportunity to score political points.

And I call on my fellow Republicans to unwaveringly pursue investigations into efforts by Vladimir Putin to undermine our democracy, wherever they may lead.

I will close with this, Mr. Speaker. In our twilight struggle against the clouds of dictatorship, we must maintain what the former Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky calls moral clarity. Sharansky contrasts free societies with fear societies, where citizens live in perpetual unease. While even free societies are not perfect, they must never play into the hands of fear society propagandists who assert the dubious sense of moral relativism.

After all of these years, we are still Ronald Reagan's America—a light on a hill shining brightly as a beacon for all mankind. There is no moral equivalence between the United States and any society based upon fear, let alone Vladimir Putin's Russia.

American exceptionalism remains buried deep in all our bones. We are not just a free society; we are the model free society. Our values and our deeds will endure long after each of us in this Chamber is gone.

Mr. Speaker, the conflict before us is a simple one: we cannot fall prey to false equivalencies or fail to recognize our adversaries for who they are. Let us steel ourselves today in this Chamber and rise to stop Mr. Putin's aggression in its tracks, both against our own Nation and against those who have proven themselves to be our closest friends and allies.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin for his statement here and for bringing up the topic of American exceptionalism and bringing us back through some of this history that we need to revisit from time to time. That statement is very valuable to us.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Babin), an exceptional American in his own right.

TERMINATE GRANTS TO SANCTUARY CITIES

Mr. Babin. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the gentleman from Iowa, my good friend for yielding to me.

I rise to express my strong support for the announced policy by Attorney General Jeff Sessions that will terminate U.S. Department of Justice grants to sanctuary cities. These are the localities that have chosen not to cooperate with the Federal Government when its seeks to deport already-detained criminal aliens.

Under this Trump policy, your hard-earned tax dollars will no longer go to cities and counties that thumb their nose at the Federal immigration authorities and refuse to cooperate.

In President Trump's first 2 months in office, this administration has acted to secure our borders, to encourage compliance with Federal immigration law, and to deport criminal aliens. The previous administration put out the welcome mat for criminal aliens. Thanks to Trump, the welcome mat has now been removed.

A few short days ago, the national news broke on how two illegal aliens from Central America raped a 14-year-old girl in the boys bathroom of a public high school in Rockville, Maryland. These two young men, Henry Sanchez-Milian, an 18-year-old from Guatemala, and Jose Montano, a 17-year-old from El Salvador, came across our southern border last year as unaccompanied minors. The Obama administration initially targeted them for deportation proceedings, but they were later released to join relatives in Maryland.

When asked about the situation, Rockville school officials said that the legal status of these two individuals did not matter, as Rockville has declared itself to be a sanctuary city. I beg to differ. It does matter. If the Federal Government had done its duty and immediately returned these illegal immigrants to their home country, this young girl would not have been brutally raped.

For the sake of this young girl, we must secure our borders. This vicious crime would never have taken place had the Obama administration followed the law and secured our borders. The good news is that the new administration is working hard to secure our borders, to deport criminal aliens, and to protect the lives of American citizens.

Cracking down on sanctuary cities is an important first step. In the first month of the Trump administration, ICE issued 3,083 detainers. These are orders for local authorities to keep criminal aliens in custody for 48 hours to enable U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, agents to come and get these criminal aliens for deportation. 206 of these detainees were just declined, meaning that local authorities deliberately ignored ICE's detainer requests and released these individuals back out onto American streets.

This is especially concerning because 44 percent of those individuals had already been convicted of crimes in the United States. These weren't just petty crimes, folks. These include: homicide, rape, assault, domestic violence, indecent exposure with a minor, sex offense against a minor, aggravated assault with a weapon, resisting an officer, vehicle theft, kidnapping, driving under the influence, hit-and-run, and sexual assault.

Thank you, Mr. President, for holding accountable these sanctuary cities that released these criminals back out onto our streets.

We are also working to force foreign countries to take back their criminal alien citizens; 25-year-old Casey Chadwick was murdered by an illegal alien from Haiti, Jean Jacques. Jacques had been released 6 months earlier and ordered deported after serving a 19-year sentence for attempted murder.

Haiti had refused multiple times to take back Jacques, and under the Obama administration policy, Jacques was simply released onto U.S. streets to return to his life of crime, although Haiti had gladly taken billions of U.S. aid. That is why I have introduced H.R. 82, the Criminal Alien Deportation Enforcement Act. My bill withholds foreign aid from countries that do not repatriate their criminal aliens.

This commonsense step ensures that countries that benefit from the goodwill of the United States must hold up their end of the bargain and take back their criminal aliens. And through his recent executive order, President Trump declared that he would restrict the issuance of visas to certain residents of noncooperative countries. Congress should support the President by locking in this enforcement with legislation so that a future President does not reverse this enforcement.

□ 1115

On behalf of the American people, I applaud President Trump and I call on my colleagues to cosponsor my legislation to lock in these protections for future generations of Americans and keep them safe.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time, I would like to pose a question to the gentleman from Texas.

The bill that you have proposed that mirrors the President's executive order to limit people coming in from those six countries, do you have the bill number for that? H.R.?

Mr. Babin. That is H.R. 80.

Mr. KING of Iowa. 880?

Mr. Babin. H.R. 80.

The gentleman from Iowa, I am going to correct myself. That is H.R. 81, H.R. 81.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Okay. And you also have H.R. 82.

Mr. Babin. I have H.R. 82, which I just discussed, and that is the repatriation of criminal aliens.

Mr. KING of Iowa. For the record, I believe I am a cosponsor of both of those pieces of legislation.

Mr. Babin. You are, Mr. KING. You are a sponsor. And I thank you for your cosponsorship and trying to keep our American citizens, our constituents, safe.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time from the gentleman from Texas, I appreciate the approach that you brought to this Congress. It is not hard for me to get behind, and I support legislation that is brought by Mr. Babin. He has been looking at the safety and security of the American people and coming up with good, solid, principled ideas on how to restore and strengthen our national security.

Each of those two pieces of legislation, the numbers which I did not know until now, H.R. 81 and H.R. 82, are pieces of legislation that I and many other conservatives have signed on to in our endeavor to make Americans safe again. This great America, making it great again, part of it is to make America safe again.

I would add to this, Mr. Speaker, that I am appalled at the audacity of the judges who are either out on the left coast or well beyond the left coast, as far west as Hawaii, who would just step in without any kind of a constitutional, foundational background in their arguments or decisions, without citing the statute is this, that Congress has the authority to control immigration in the United States of America.

If we want to pass a piece of legislation and it is in law that says the only people that we will let come into America are green Martians, then that is the law, and that is what a judge is obligated to determine when they read the law.

But on top of that, not only does Congress set the terms on what legal immigration is into America—and it is clear and it is defined—but we grant the President of the United States the authority to determine those who will not be allowed to come into America, just like any other sovereign nation-state in the world that controls its borders.

And if we don't have the authority, if Congress doesn't have the constitutional authority that is clearly defined, and if the statutes that are produced by Congress and signed into law by previous Presidents do not set that statutory authority on who comes into America but a judge someplace in Seattle or Hawaii can supercede the will of the American people, can supercede the supreme law of the land, the Constitution of the United States, can supercede Federal law just because, in their whim, they think a law might mean something that it doesn't say, that is what we are dealing with, Mr. Speaker. I intend to move further on this and examine these judges more closely.

As a matter of fact—and I thank the gentleman from Texas. But we had a hearing either earlier this week or last week—and my weeks run together, Mr. Speaker—and this hearing was a hearing where we discussed some of this statutory authority.

In fact, it was this week. I remember one of the witnesses, and the witness was a Sheriff Hodgson out of Maryland; and he testified that a State legislator in Maryland had learned that there was likely to be an ICE raid into a particular community, and the representative posted on their Facebook, essentially: Don't go out of your homes. Be careful because you might be picked up and deported if you are illegally in America.

That heads-up from an elected State official, I asked him this question, and his answer concurred with my opinion, that it is a direct violation of 8 U.S.C. 1324, which is a Federal ban on harboring illegal aliens. To harbor them, to encourage them to come here or stay here—and it can be either willfully or for financial purposes. If that is the case, they are facing a Federal felony of up to 10 years in a penitentiary; that is, if it is for profit. But if it is not for profit, then they are only facing 5 years in a Federal penitentiary for facilitating illegal immigration, harboring illegal aliens.

When I read the statute into the RECORD before the Judiciary Committee, it was clear to me that Sheriff Hodgson had read that statute multiple times. I don't know that he had it completely memorized, but he knew exactly what it meant; and he concurred with me that I believe the Justice Department should be investigating, should be looking into State legislators or any citizen—they are subject to the same laws as all the rest of us—who is harboring illegal aliens. We should bring this on the highest profile level that we can.

And furthermore, we have a judge out in Washington, again, who, according to news reports, helped facilitate an illegal alien who was before this judge's court to go out the back door when there were ICE agents waiting, guarding the front door. That also is a violation of 8 U.S.C. 1324, harboring illegal aliens.

So Congress passes laws, and these laws are to be respected; and we cannot be a real civilization if we don't have respect for the rule of law, Mr. Speaker. And not only has respect for the rule of law been so eroded, we had a previous President, and that is President Obama, who openly and blatantly violated the supreme law of the land, the Constitution, according to his definition.

Twenty-two times Barack Obama said he didn't have the authority to grant a legal status to the people who are defined as DREAMers, the deferred action for children of—I guess they say—well, it is children of aliens is what it really is. But President Obama, 22 times on videotape and who knows how many times it wasn't on videotape, said: I don't have the constitutional authority to change the law. Congress has to do that.

When he was pressed to change the law and he said he didn't have that authority those 22 times, then he concluded that he could get away with it

anyway. He issued the order, the DACA order—two of them that are really openly and blatantly unconstitutional. DAPA, the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans, that is how they called it. Again, it is parents of those who were born here to illegal parents, and we need to move the birthright citizenship bill to put an end to that.

The President knew he didn't have the authority for that DAPA program, and he knew he didn't have the authority for the DACA program, and he said so at least 22 times. Then he issued those orders, and the executive branch of government began to carry out the President's orders, which are in violation of the law. So he has commanded the executive branch of government to violate the law.

Subsequent to the DACA order going out, President Obama went to Chicago and gave a speech and said publicly—and this is on videotape, too. He said this: I changed the law.

Mr. Speaker, no President ever had constitutional authority to change the law. It is Congress that writes all the laws in the House and in the Senate. The President gets an opportunity to sign them into law, and, as President, he is free to lobby the Congress to change the law. But no President should have the audacity to stand up in front of his hometown and the world and say: I changed the law.

Now, do we remember, Mr. Speaker, that there was a big national outrage over that statement or over the constitutional violations? No. There wasn't a great outrage. I am greatly outraged, and I remain outraged, but the American people were relatively complacent about this.

Now, there were plenty of them that did some work on this, true, but it wasn't like a big cultural movement. I would remind you about what happens when we are extremely offended by violations of law and decency. That is when Republicans and Democrats get together and do something about it.

One of those things I can think of, Mr. Speaker, is this. I reach in my pocket and I pull out—this is an acorn. I carry an acorn in my pocket every day, and I have done that for, oh, I don't know how long now—pretty close to 10 years.

But I brought an amendment to the floor of the House of Representatives to cut off all funding to ACORN about 2 years before we heard of the videotapes that came out of ACORN that were collected by James O'Keefe and Hannah Giles because I knew what was going on. I had had an investigator that was feeding me information. And I came to the floor and made an effort to cut off all the funding that was supporting ACORN, which admitted later on to 440- or maybe 444,000 false or fraudulent voter registration forms that they paid people commissions to produce.

Some of those forms included Mickey Mouse and the entire Dallas Cowboys football team, all registered to vote.

ACORN employees were paid on commission to collect the voter registrations. They were subverting our electoral process. They were advocating all kinds of things from within ACORN and helping to facilitate, as we know the allegation, prostitution and others.

This was so bad—this was so bad that Democrats were outraged. I know, Mr. Speaker, it is hard to fathom this now. But Democrats were outraged. Republicans were outraged. And when those videos became replete throughout the American consciousness, you—and I say, Mr. Speaker, I say the American people rose up and they called their Members of Congress, and they did interviews on TV, and they wrote letters to the editor. It was the talk of the coffee shop and the church and the school and the work and the town. America revolted at the idea that we would be sending hundreds of millions of tax dollars to an organization that was so immoral and so corrupt.

Underneath that was the corruption of our electoral process. So we came together here with moral and constitutional outrage and cut off all funding to ACORN or any of their affiliates or subordinates or successors, and that has been part of the appropriation process here ever since.

I carry this acorn in my pocket to remind me, to remind me not to ever let something like that happen again. But also, it is a point of pride for me when I hold this in my hand because I am proud of the American people, Mr. Speaker. It was the American people that got that done with bipartisan outrage about what was happening to our Republic and to the legitimacy of our elections in this Republic.

And I would remind people, Mr. Speaker, that we have a Constitution that I have said is the supreme law of the land. It is the foundation upon which our country is built. But that foundation sits on something. It sits on a bedrock, and the bedrock that it sits on is legitimate elections.

We can watch our Constitution erode by decisions in the Supreme Court and by loss of understanding of what its original meaning is and what it is to be a constitutional and contractual guarantee to succeeding generations, we can lose our Constitution that way, or we could just lose our country by allowing the bedrock that our Constitution sits on, legitimate elections, to be eroded and destroyed.

That is what I think the American people understood, maybe instinctively, maybe intuitively, maybe intellectually, what was happening to our country. All of that went together to build a giant snowball of public outrage that ripped the funding out from underneath ACORN, and we will hold that now for a long term and, hopefully, for the very long and increasingly healthy life of this Republic.

That is what needs to happen when we are outraged, when we see our Constitution being undermined. We did that with ACORN, and it is a symbol of

what the American people should be doing.

But when you have a President of the United States that takes an oath of office to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States so help him God, and in that oath it is specified in another section of the Constitution that he, meaning the President, take care that the laws be faithfully executed—we call that the Take Care Clause—well, the President, President Obama, did not take care that the laws be faithfully executed. He refused to enforce the immigration law, and he issued orders that ordered his subordinates throughout the executive branch of government, including the Border Patrol, custom border protection, ICE, and USCIS, to defy the law.

The law of the United States says that, when law enforcement encounters someone who is unlawfully present in the United States, they shall—not "may," but "shall"—be placed into removal proceedings. That is the law.

Had that been the case and if the law had been followed, if the law had been followed ever since Ronald Reagan signed the amnesty act in 1986—which, by the way, was a legal act. I thought it was poor judgment on the part of President Reagan. He let us down on a principle of the rule of law. Thirty-plus years ago I knew that we would be fighting for a long, long time to restore the respect for the rule of law, particularly with regard to immigration.

When I watched the debate take place here in this Congress and in the House and in the Senate and I read what I could read about that, I reasoned that, even though we were losing in the House, the rule of law was losing in the House on the amnesty debate in 1986, and even though the rule of law lost in the Senate, I was confident that Ronald Reagan understood the principle that, if you reward people for breaking the law, there would have been more people that break the law.

□ 1130

If you say that this is the last amnesty ever, you also will have to continually fight the argument of we didn't really mean that; there are these other circumstances.

The three—well, it actually started out to be 1 million people that were going to get amnesty in 1986. And the rationale, which I don't actually think was rational, was we can't enforce the law against these million people that are here illegally, but we need to have the rule of law. So what we will do is we will grant an amnesty to the million people that are here illegally.

Then our promise will be, from this point forward, everybody who enters into the United States, or is unlawfully in the United States will have to face the law, and we will deport everybody that has violated our immigration laws. We will enforce the law from this point forward, from 1986.

Ronald Reagan believed he was going to get that; and, by the way, he did

command the executive branch of government, and the Republicans did run the executive branch of government not only from 1986, but all the way up until 1993, when Bill Clinton took office.

But what happened was they didn't get the enforcement. There was fraud. It was well over a million people—it was closer to 3 million people—who received amnesty under the 1986 amnesty act; and those 3 million people then were legalized in America, by law. And I don't dispute the validity of the law, but they were rewarded for breaking the law. That is what the amnesty did.

So I have talked to a number of them along the way, and they will argue: Yes, we deserved amnesty. We came to America. We wanted to live here. It is a good thing. My family is better off.

Well, is the rule of law better off, is America's Constitution better off, is our civilization better off because we decided that we would ignore the law and reward people for breaking it?

By the way, is the debate over? Did we restore the respect for the rule of law since 1986, Mr. Speaker? Or, instead, have we seen the respect for the rule of law be eroded day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year, over the last 30-plus years since the amnesty act of 1986?

That is what happened. Ronald Reagan saw it in his lifetime. He recognized that and would have liked to have had that bill back again.

I have had the conversation with a glorious American, then-Attorney General Ed Meese, III, who also recognized that the advice that President Reagan got from his Cabinet on whether to sign the amnesty act in 1986, whether that advice was good, and I will tell you that the Cabinet members that I am aware of would like to have reversed that decision after they saw the actual results.

Well, it is not that I am the most clairvoyant Member of the United States Congress, but I can assert with great confidence here into this CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Mr. Speaker, I saw this coming in 1986. I wasn't in public life. I just wanted to raise my family and run my business and live with the freedoms that are guaranteed to me as an American citizen under the Constitution, but I wanted the rule of law.

I had been raised with a deep and abiding respect for the law. My father would sit me down at the supper table with the Code of Iowa on one side and the Constitution on the other side, and he would lecture to me how this fits. He would say over and over again: This is the law, and you will abide by the law. If you don't like it, if you think the law is not right, true, or just, there are means by which you go about changing it.

You can go lobby your State Representative. You can lobby your Congressman. You can run for office, which is what I ended up doing. And I am here defending the Constitution and the rule of law.

But we also are a First World country. We are the leaders of civilization for the world. We are the leaders of western civilization for the world. We are the American civilization. The American civilization is a dominant component of Western civilization, and if we take the values that formed America out of the values of the world, we don't have a lot of science and technology in progress to work with. We don't have a lot of economic dynamism.

I know that there have been wars and there have been dictators that have popped up within Western civilization. But, fortunately, we haven't had a dictator pop up in our American civilization. And one of the big reasons for that is because of our Constitution, and because we have public debate, and we come here to the floor of the House, and over there to the floor of the Senate, and across America, again, in our coffee shops, in our churches, in our workplaces and out on our parks and our streets, and we discuss this openly.

We should listen to other people's ideas and we should consider what they have to say and we should evaluate that. That is what our Founding Fathers envisioned. And as these ideas merge, what will happen is that sometimes there will be people on the right that are never going to compromise, and there will be some people on the left that are never going to compromise.

Maybe that doesn't matter so much because the people in the middle get to hear both of those arguments and make their own decisions, and they can move left or they can move right. But over time, we build a consensus. And when we get to that consensus, that is when we can move legislation here in the House and over in the Senate and to the President's desk for a signature, and then America continues to become an even better place.

But we have to have open dialogue to do this, and we have to have the rule of law that gives order to our society. If the rule of law is sacrificed because people are ruled more by their hearts than they are their heads, I would say: Come back to the history of America. Study our Founding Fathers. Read the Federalist Papers. Deliberate on this Constitution that we have, deliberate on this supreme law of the land and understand how deep the thought that went into the words that are there that are our guarantees.

Our Founding Fathers understood that we had to continue to educate each generation and raise them up not only in an understanding of the Constitution—and I double assert its original meaning—but they needed to be raised with an American experience. That is why it is required that our President of the United States be born in America. And that "born in America" is essentially shorthand for we want to ensure that all of our Presidents are raised with an American experience. That is how to interpret that.

I am not here to slice or dice, Mr. Speaker, the actual locations of birth of any President. And we have seen that Congress has some authority to address it by statute, should we choose to do that. But I am asserting that it is essential that the American civilization be preserved, protected, and expanded; and that we have leaders that are raised with the American experience that will come here and defend the American culture and civilization. And that is so important, that the leader of our thought process, the leader of the destiny and the direction of America is the President of the United States, our Commander in Chief.

The words that our President says reset and redirect America. We saw it happen under the 8 years of Barack Obama. We are seeing it begin now under the beginnings of the 65 or 66 days of the Trump administration, Mr. Speaker, and we have noticed that the dialog in America immediately shifts to: What is the President thinking about? What is the President talking about? What is the President tweeting about?

I think there is a high degree of anxiety on the part of the mainstream media, because they are never really off the clock because this President might wake up at 3 in the morning and send out a tweet that resets things. And so I am fine with that. I think it is important that we understand the thoughts of the President.

By the way, he isn't all-powerful. I used to say to the previous President: You are only the President. It is the American people that run this shop, and through a lot of different mechanisms.

But the President does have a lot of authority and he gets to set the tone for the debate and he gets to define many things, but especially the foreign policy.

But we still have this constraint, and the power of the purse exists here, especially in the House of Representatives. If the House doesn't appropriate money, nobody gets any money. That is kind of like when they say: If mama ain't happy, nobody's happy. Well, if Congress doesn't appropriate money, nobody gets any money.

So that power of the purse was designed by our Founding Fathers to be the controlling factor of the things that go on in this country. And if a President is out of line, we are obligated to shut the money off to those things that are out of line. Of course, the Senate will have to concur with any spending that the House should initiate, but just the same, it is the power of the purse that controls much of this.

But we are to be guided and bound by the Constitution. Earlier this morning, as the chairman of the Constitution and Civil Justice Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee, I held a hearing on constitutional rights, in particular the Kelo decision that came down in—if I get my date right—June 23 of 2005.

That decision was about property rights in New London, Connecticut, that the local government had decided that they were going to act by condemning the private property locally so that they could hand that private property over for a private interest to do expansion and development on multiple homes within the area of New London, Connecticut.

I recall my outrage when the Supreme Court ruled that that was constitutional; for a local government to condemn private property for private use, all it had to do was be facilitated by local government.

I had not read the decision at that time. In fact, I hadn't read the dissent. I had read part of the decision. But within a week, we brought a resolution of disapproval of the Supreme Court's decision on Kelo to the floor of this House. And, yes, I was engaged in that debate and some of the shaping of the resolution.

But the Supreme Court of the United States, which is there to protect the Constitution itself, to interpret the Constitution and the law, effectively stripped three words out of the Fifth Amendment of our Constitution.

The Fifth Amendment reads like this: ". . . nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation."

Well, the people in New London Connecticut, particularly the Kelo family, had their private property, their home condemned, confiscated under eminent domain and handed over to private use and through the entity of local government. So I was outraged. America was outraged.

By the way, that is another time like I showed you the acorn, Mr. Speaker, but the Kelo decision was another time that the American people rose up and said: We disagree with this decision.

And it was—the polling that I recall from the time, 11-1, opposed the Supreme Court's decision that would allow local government to confiscate private property.

I came to this floor to add to the debate. And at the time I was queued up to speak, the speaker ahead of me was over at this podium, the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Barney Frank. Now, he and I had a history of disagreeing on a lot of issues, and I expected to disagree with Mr. Frank on that issue. So I sat here in a chair in front with my notepad to take notes on Mr. Frank's statements so I would be prepared to step up and rebut him because my turn was coming next.

I am writing notes furiously, keeping up with his quotes. And while this is going on, and he was almost finished with his speech before I realized I agreed with everything Barney Frank said on Kelo. Everything.

So I spoke, I came down here to this podium and gave my speech, but my speech fully supported the statement by Mr. Frank. And I added to that, that the effect of that decision was to strip those three words out of the Fifth

Amendment "for public use." I made that argument as emphatically as I was prepared to do, that now the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution that guarantees our property rights says: "Nor shall private property be taken without just compensation."

In other words, they have to pay you for it. But you don't get to keep your home if there is a private interest out there that can convince a local government that they will pay more taxes on that property than you are paying on that property.

Stripping those three words out of the Fifth Amendment was the exact effect of the Kelo decision. I did not know it at that time because later on is when I picked up the dissent, one of the last dissents written by Justice O'Connor, who had exactly the same analysis in her dissent as I had in my speech and, as I believe without utter clarity of the statement, that Mr. Frank would have agreed with it if he didn't say it or not.

So here we are. The American people have risen up and we have said: We disagree with the Supreme Court. We want to restore our Constitution, but amending it is pretty difficult.

By the way, if you wanted to amend the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution to fix Kelo, to have the Fifth Amendment mean "nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation," if you want the Fifth Amendment to mean that—I asked a witness today: How do you rewrite the Fifth Amendment and amend our Constitution when the Supreme Court has so, I will say, subverted the meaning, they had de facto stricken those three words out?

How do you rewrite it? Do you start with: We really mean it this time that "nor shall private property be taken," we really mean "without just compensation," we really mean it "for public use without just compensation"?

Do we keep adding? Do we really mean it? Or are there words in the language that can prevent a court from doing what they decide to do from an activist standpoint?

I don't think so. And a number of times I have tried to write amendments to the Constitution to fix problems that have been created by an activist court.

□ 1145

So I will say the Kelo decision in 2005 was a precursor to things that happened by the Supreme Court, although they are not connected and cited; and that would be June 2015—June 24 and June 25, 2015, as a matter of fact. It was King v. Burwell, the decision when the Supreme Court, on a Thursday—I believe if you look at the calendar, Mr. Speaker, it will be a Thursday, June 24, 2015, when the Supreme Court concluded and issued a decision that they could rewrite ObamaCare, that they could rewrite the statute—the law that was actually passed here by hook, crook, and legislative shenanigan, but

still within the boundaries of the Constitution.

The law gave no authority to the Federal Government to establish exchanges under ObamaCare, but the Court considered this, and they concluded that: We must have really meant to say "or Federal Government" when Congress wrote that the States may establish exchanges. The de facto result of the King v. Burwell decision was that the States—and added these three words, in effect—"or Federal Government" may establish exchanges under the law. The Supreme Court added words to the law. If they can add words to the law, then they can also subtract words from the law.

So I am appalled by this. This is Thursday, and before I can get my feet back underneath me, having been essentially knocked over by a Supreme Court truck believing that they would be bound by something within the Constitution, before that can happen, I am pulling into a Catholic church in Logan, Iowa, to do a 10 a.m. meeting with some priests and members of the parish synchronized just by providence or happenstance with former Senator Rick Santorum, who has been a definitive voice on marriage. We were both listening to the radio as we pulled into that church to do a joint event, and for the first time we had heard about the Obergefell decision, the decision that came down on Friday, June 25, 2015.

That decision goes even beyond the idea that the Court can insert words into Federal statute that was previously duly passed by Congress and signed by the President. And now under the gay marriage decision of Obergefell, the Supreme Court not only found a new right in the Constitution, they created a command in the Constitution—a command.

It is not in the Constitution about same-sex marriage. Our Founding Fathers never envisioned such a thing. There is no one that can assert that it was even in the imagination of any Founding Father. Neither can they assert that it was in the imagination of anybody that was in this Congress when the 14th Amendment was passed out of this Congress—out of the House and the Senate—and ratified by the American people with 75 percent of the legitimate States at the time.

No one can assert that that ever was out there in, let's just say, the emanations and penumbras of the Constitution or especially the 14th Amendment, the equal protection clause of the Constitution. They can't assert that.

They asserted in the Roe v. Wade decision that this right to privacy becomes a right to abortion under any circumstances to speak of—almost any circumstances, Mr. Speaker. They asserted that it was in the emanations and penumbras, and they kind of made it up. They found it in that shadowy area along the edge of the clouds that we all see something different if we see anything at all, but they could see something that nobody else had seen, and they wrote that into the decision.

But this Obergefell decision goes even beyond that, even beyond the audacity of *Roe v. Wade*, *Doe v. Bolton*, *Griswold v. Connecticut*, and the *Eisenstadt* decision. It goes beyond all of those.

It is this: the Supreme Court created—not only found a right, but they created a command in the Constitution.

And here is the command: if you are a political subdivision in America that recognizes civil marriage, then thou shalt conduct same-sex marriages and recognize same-sex marriages, regardless of where they might take place, but they shall take place in your jurisdiction as well. That is the Obergefell decision.

Now, if this had been a decision of the United States Congress, it would have been litigated and found unconstitutional. We don't have the enumerated power or the constitutional authority to impose same-sex marriage on America. That is outside the reach of this Congress, and I think there are Democrats that will agree with me on that, Mr. Speaker. But if the States were to pass same-sex marriage laws, they do have that constitutional authority. If that had happened in a statutory way, I would accept that. I don't agree with it, but I would accept it as a constitutional function of a legitimate subdivision within the United States.

That is how we need to do things in this country, in a constitutional fashion, not bypass the will of the people and allow the Supreme Court to assert an authority that they do not have constitutionally. I can chase this all the way back to *Marbury v. Madison* and have to take that argument apart, I know, with some of the people that would carry on this argument. But in the end, it is this: We get into big trouble when we start establishing special rights for immutable characteristics.

If you look at Title VII of the Civil Rights Act—and I don't have it committed exactly to memory, but in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, there is protection there for religion, but that is a specific constitutional protection in the First Amendment. Beyond that, it is protection for immutable characteristics that have to do with race, ethnicity, and national origin. I am fine with putting in disability. That is an immutable characteristic. Age is another immutable characteristic. And sex is an immutable characteristic. Gender is not, and sexual orientation is not.

When you go into that zone, then you are giving special protected status for characteristics that cannot be independently identified and can, at least potentially, be willfully changed. That is a zone that is too blurry a zone for law, and it is a zone then for our culture to accept, embrace, and love people of all walks of life and recognize that we are all God's children, we are all created in His image, and because of our immutable characteristics, they are tied to our origins.

By the way, our rights do come from God and not from government. If we think somehow that rights come from government, then it is okay for government to take our rights away. But they don't come from government. Our Founding Fathers understood that. In fact, they articulated that better than anyone ever had. They had a tough job. They had to first understand this divine right of humanity, natural law, as they described it. They had to first understand it, then they had to articulate it, then they had to debate it among themselves. They had disagreements amongst themselves, but they reached a consensus that got to the Declaration and a consensus that got to the ratification of the Constitution.

We fought a gruesome and a ghastly civil war to put away the sin of slavery. That also was a movement that came from the people of America and the people of Western civilization and the world. Slavery is an institution that has been part of every ancient civilization back to the beginning. America stepped up pretty early in this process. Great Britain was ahead of us. Not many other nations beat us to that punch. It was a brutal thing that America went through, but it was a consensus of America in the end that ended that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am making this point that this America that we are is built upon the pillars of American exceptionalism. Those pillars are inherited from Western civilization whose roots go to Western Europe, they go to Rome, they go to Greece, and they go back to Mosaic law. We have been a wise-enough civilization to adopt those values from outside of Western civilization that give us vitality, just like our English language has this unique vitality. One of the reasons for it is that it is adaptable, it is flexible. We are not stuck in time and place. We take on words into our language. Every year there is a list of new words that go into the dictionary because we create them to take care of the meaning that we need.

Daniel Hannan, a member of the European Parliament from the United Kingdom, has written a book about the English language. I think of Winston Churchill's book, "A History of the English-Speaking Peoples." I read that book carefully forward and back and digested it so to speak. When I finished it, I remember I looked up at the ceiling, and it was about 1:30 in the morning, and I thought: My gosh, wherever the English language has gone, freedom has accompanied the language.

Now, Churchill didn't ever write that, that I recall, in his book, but that was a conclusion that came to me. I would call it an inescapable conclusion that might only mean "if you think like I do." But he laid the case out without saying that the English language has carried freedom.

Well, Daniel Hannan's book—the title of which I forgot at the moment, Mr. Speaker—goes further. He says

that, as he sits in the European Parliament—and he is multilingual—he will have earpieces on listening to the interpreter while he is listening to another language in this ear, and the language he gets interpreted into his ear doesn't necessarily carry out the same values and meaning. His analysis is that the English language not only is a carrier of freedom, but it is a language that articulates freedom unique to any other, and that you can't really understand God-given liberty without having an understanding of the English language that has such a utility in our carrying out and talking about our values of language and liberty.

Liberty means something different from freedom. We have got two words, liberty and freedom. Many other languages only have one word, and they just use that word universally. But in our spirit is this—freedom is this: a wild coyote has freedom. He can jump the fences and go wherever he wants to go. But freedom is different. He has that freedom. But liberty is bridled by morality. We have liberty in America. We are bridled by the morality of the obligation that we are a civilization and a culture that is part of Judeo-Christianity, descended, at a minimum, from Judeo-Christianity, and our values that are rooted in there, as I said, are traceable back to Mosaic law.

We have to have a morality within America if we are going to be an America that achieves and that we can aspire, that the arc of history takes us to soaring heights instead of flattening that arc of history out and perhaps diminishing into the Third World.

So I revere this country, Mr. Speaker, and I revere our Constitution and our rule of law. The people in this country, all of us who are part of this civilization and part of this culture, all of us who get up every day and go out and do things to lift others up, all of us who scrub out some of the things that aren't so great and elevate those things that are great and pull ourselves together, whether it is a mom and a child, a dad and a child, whether it is a church group, whether it is home school, public school, or parochial school, whether it is work, whether it is your volunteer group, if you are out there handing out pamphlets to advance your cause and adding to the civil dialogue in America, keep a moral foundation behind it, and add to that civil dialogue, if we continue to do that, and if we protect, understand, and teach the values of America, and in particular the understanding and the original meaning of our Constitution, we will continue to be an even greater country.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the privilege to address you here on the floor of the House of Representatives. I am privileged to serve here and privileged to have the opportunity to go home and carry out some of the things that I have talked about here in this last hour.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to without amendment a joint resolution of the House of the following title:

H.J. Res. 67. Joint Resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to savings arrangements established by qualified State political subdivisions for non-governmental employees.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 353. An act to improve the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's weather research through a focused program of investment on affordable and attainable advances in observational, computing, and modeling capabilities to support substantial improvement in weather forecasting and prediction of high impact weather events, to expand commercial opportunities for the provision of weather data, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 101-509, the Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, announces the appointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress:

Deborah Skaggs Speth of Kentucky.

□ 1200

REPEALING HEALTH CARE LAW

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BANKS of Indiana). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to follow my good friend from Iowa, STEVE KING. I know Mr. KING cares deeply about America. He not only cares deeply, but having been in the private sector in business where he, like our President, was involved in building things and making things work and making things accessible, he has good solutions. I have no doubt if he were not in Congress, he probably would have gotten the bid on the sections of the wall that the President is taking bids on even now.

We are at an interesting time. It has been interesting to see some of the messages. Some are hurtful. I know the liberal papers like the Longview newspaper immediately pick up on any dissension in the Republican Party, especially if it is aimed at conservatives like me. I don't know why we use the term "conservative." It used to be just somebody with common sense that believed in keeping our word, believed in following the Constitution.

We seem to get in trouble when we don't follow the Constitution. For example, it makes very clear that everyone who is an American citizen is supposed to have rights. We can't assure the rights of every person in every other country. That would turn into this remarkable experiment in a repub-

lican form of government that we have here.

It is really a democratic Republic—a Republic where you select representatives so that you don't have big gangs running around as a majority wreaking havoc when people disagree with them. We elect representatives so they can come together and, hopefully, read bills and not have to vote on them so they can find out what is in them, go ahead and read the bills in advance and hopefully have something to do with the writing of the bills, especially things that affect people's health.

When we see messages like have come out today, it is unpleasant. One was apparently sent out from the White House, condemning the Freedom Caucus, apparently, because we have the audacity to want Republicans, including those at the White House, to keep our promise. I still remain in favor of—as do my friends on the Freedom Caucus and a lot of others—and remain committed to our promise to repeal ObamaCare.

I realize there can be honest disagreement. Some think if we give more power to Health and Human Services, more Federal Government, and give more power to the people we trust in the Federal Government, whom I do trust, then they can do what Congress is not willing to do, and that is repeal ObamaCare and have a system in place that will assure people can get health care that is affordable.

The fact is most people talk about how we have got to make sure people can get health insurance. And then, over the years, they use the term "health care" synonymously with "health insurance." Actually, the fact is we should be most concerned about people, all Americans, having access to affordable health care, whether they have insurance or not.

One of the problems that health insurance has gotten into over the last 50 years is that health insurance has ceased to be insurance. Under ObamaCare, health insurance was certainly not insurance.

If you look up the root of insurance, the word "insure," insurance was intended to be something you could purchase very cheaply that would insure against an unforeseeable event some point in the future, maybe a catastrophic accident, a chronic disease, something that you don't expect and you hope never happens. For the insurance companies, it is actually a form of legalized wager that you are paying a little amount, hoping that never happens, but just in case it does, insurance will be able to take care of it at that point.

We have long since lost the idea of true insurance, and people began paying health insurance companies not to insure against an unforeseeable event in the future, but to pay them to manage their health care, to tell their doctors what medication they could prescribe, what procedures they would cover to help their patients, telling the patients which doctors they could see.

Actually, the truth is, as the Federal Government got more and more involved, we saw less and less insurance and more and more insurance companies managing people's health care, and the managing insurance companies were actually following the lead of the Federal Government.

The more we passed laws regarding health care and insurance, the more the Federal Government had a say in people's health care and well-being and the more insurance companies moved into a management role, much as the Federal Government in Medicare and Medicaid moved into a governing role.

This morning, I am meeting with constituents that are very caring individuals and who provide health centers that are extremely affordable, very, very cheap, but provide quality care for people that can't afford the care. They don't have to go to the emergency room, which costs more than going to a clinic for minor matters. It saves a lot of money. It is a lot of cheaper.

Of course, emergency room care is about the most expensive care you can get, and people who don't have insurance often go and line up at emergency rooms, which drives up the cost of everybody's health care and everybody's health insurance. We can break the cycle of that.

I understand there are very well-meaning friends on the Republican side of the aisle that think if we just give the Federal Government, give Health and Human Services, more power to control all of this, we have a guy in place that I do believe can do great things to cure the ills of health care.

My problem is, if we don't repeal the outrage known as ObamaCare, or the Affordable Care Act—which is really unaffordable—if we don't actually repeal it here in the House, have the Senate repeal it, then no matter how much those in the executive branch and those in Health and Human Services, including my friend, the Secretary, no matter how much they do to help Americans, the next liberal that comes in, the next Kathleen Sebelius who comes in thinking she knows more about what is best for you than you do, then all of those great reforms will go out the window. Because the Secretary will have more authority and more ability to make regulation under the Republican proposed bill, then I am quite certain that somebody that comes in, like Kathleen Sebelius, who knows better what you need than you do, will make sure that the regulations and the overreach become even more burdensome.

I totally understand the President's frustration. He was told that the Republican bill would basically repeal ObamaCare. The truth is I totally agree with the President. We need to act to repeal ObamaCare. I stand with the President, through whatever hardship, to repeal ObamaCare.

I have heard people referring already to the Republican bill as SwampCare. There are some good things in the bill,