

our diversity, and to our ever-evolving culture. This embodies the epitome of a mutualistic relationship.

The people of Haiti and the United States have had a long and complex relationship dating back to pre-slavery days. Our cultures and our respective economic histories and destinies are deeply intertwined.

I greatly urge my colleagues to support the permanent extension of Haitians being protected from mass deportation. For 7 years, these Haitians have greatly benefited the American communities of which they have been a part. To pull them away from these communities at such a pivotal point in both the United States' and Haiti's history would equate to nothing short of gross negligence. Let us not neglect the principle of which our Nation was founded upon and continue to assume the role of our predecessors. Help those who are less fortunate.

VENEZUELA

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, in the last 2 months alone, reports indicate that nearly 3,000 Venezuelans have been jailed and 69 have been killed by the regime. Peaceful protests have led Venezuelan strongman Nicolas Maduro to issue a decree to convene a constituent National Assembly, what he calls a *constituyente*, in order to rewrite Venezuela's constitution.

But as we all know, Mr. Speaker, Maduro is fooling no one. This is just another attempt to undermine and discredit the current democratically elected legislature in the National Assembly. Another attempt of a power grab which seeks to consolidate more power around the executive and possibly rewrite the constitution to favor only one individual: Nicolas Maduro. Another attempt to pull a fast one over some in the international community who may make the mistake and call this weak and dangerous gesture progress.

But we know the truth. This is not progress. In fact, this is a major setback to democracy. Maduro is once again trying to delay the inevitable: free, fair, transparent, and democratic elections in Venezuela under the supervision of credible international observers.

Making matters worse, Goldman Sachs is also adding to the Venezuelan people's misery. Last week, the investment bank bought \$2.8 billion in Venezuelan bonds, not only providing the Maduro regime a lifeline in the short term but saddling the Venezuelan people with crippling debt repayments in the long term.

When, not if, a democratically elected president comes to the Venezuelan people, they will be stuck with the bill and face the responsibility to pay for this debt.

With so many Venezuelans lacking basic goods, including food, many have taken to calling these bonds hunger bonds, as the regime lines its own pockets and the Venezuelan people continue to suffer.

This is unconscionable, Mr. Speaker. Venezuela's pervasive corruption means any infusion of cash like Goldman Sachs will not benefit the people of Venezuela who desperately need it. Instead, Maduro and his thugs fill their coffers and use the cash to abuse the Venezuelan people and use it to stay in power.

Venezuela's state-owned oil company, PDVSA, was already sanctioned in the year 2011, for helping Iran avoid its own sanctions. Venezuela's Tarek El Aissami, second in command to Maduro, was sanctioned by our U.S. Treasury Department early this year under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act. Can you imagine? The regime's longstanding ties to drug trafficking and other illicit activities are only now being exposed, and U.S. businesses should be avoiding deals with Maduro like the plague.

But the private sector is not the only one aiding the Maduro regime. Sadly, the U.S. government is also helping prop up the regime. How? By allowing purchases of Venezuelan oil. This keeps Maduro afloat. In 2016, Venezuela remained the third largest foreign crude oil supplier to the United States behind Canada and Saudi Arabia. In 2016, oil exports from Venezuela were valued at \$10.5 billion. During the first 3 months of 2017, value of oil exports from Venezuela to us here in the United States was already worth \$3.5 billion. Financial transactions like these made to Maduro or any other despotic regime should be prevented.

We have a moral obligation to respect the suffering needs of the Venezuelan people and help alleviate this suffering.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REUNIFICATION OF JERUSALEM

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, later today, together with Israel's Ambassador to the United States, Ron Dermer, we will be joined live from Jerusalem by Prime Minister Netanyahu and Speaker of the Knesset Edelstein for a special event to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem—Israel's eternal capital.

I led a congressional delegation visit to Israel last week, and we met with both Prime Minister Netanyahu and Speaker Edelstein at the Knesset in Jerusalem.

□ 1030

We also toured the famous City of David and saw discoveries that prove, without a doubt, that Jews have lived in Jerusalem for millennia. This is important, Mr. Speaker, because there are efforts at the United Nations—at UNESCO and the Human Rights Council—that seek to erase all Jewish ties to Jerusalem.

As we are set to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Jerusalem's reunification, we should take this opportunity to rebuff such efforts at the U.N. and, instead, reinforce that Jerusalem is, was, and always will be the eternal home of the Jewish people.

HEALTHY FARMS: HEALTHY ECONOMY AND A SECURE NATION

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the foundation of healthy living and healthy communities: our food, which comes from our farms.

This month is both National Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Month and National Dairy Month. Although we should bring attention to the importance of eating these nutrient-rich foods, dairy and fresh fruits and vegetables play a much larger role, as we know, in the health of our communities and our country, and they do so not just by providing us food.

In California, we know that dairy products and fresh fruits and vegetables are an integral part of our healthy community and a strong economy. Our farmers also provide economic development in other sectors as businesses are created and expand, investments are made, and innovations arise to support the needs of these farmers and farm communities.

But the economic contributions of California agriculture—American agriculture—do not end at our borders. In California, we produce half of the Nation's fruits and vegetables, and we are the top milk producing State in the Nation. The men and women who own and work on these farms provide both nutritious food for our families and create thousands of jobs across the country.

We know we must make sure that our farmers have the tools to do so, but our farmers need a reliable source of water, a legal and stable workforce, and access to export markets, in other words, fair trade agreements.

We must also ensure that American agriculture is sustainable. We must continue to ensure that it is sustainable for our well-being and the well-being of future generations to come because the bottom line is food does not come from a grocery store. Food comes from our farmers and the land that they farm.

Our food supply is a national security issue, but it never really gets looked at in that light. So by investing in critical programs and infrastructure projects—by ensuring that our farmers have the water, the workforce, and the access to foreign markets—we are not only investing in our farms, but we are investing in the long-term health and security of our Nation.

What is more, people don't realize it, but less than 3 percent of our Nation's population is directly involved in the

production of food and fiber. This is part of the amazing development of American agriculture. So equally crucial for the sustainability of American agriculture are our export markets and our trade agreements. That means improving NAFTA, continuing to engage with our European allies, and not turning our back on Asia.

In fiscal year 2016, the United States exported \$129 billion worth of agricultural products. We not only feed our Nation every night, but we grow more than enough to export abroad. We must maintain good relations with our top trade partners and continue to lower trade barriers to existing and new foreign markets.

So let's not just focus on healthy eating during National Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Month and National Dairy Month; let's take the opportunity to discuss how we will work together to ensure that our farmers, ranchers, and dairymen and -women can continue to contribute not only to America's dinner tables, but to our communities and to our economy. The health and security of our Nation depends on it.

CONGRATULATING ANANYA VINAY

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, let me also give a shout-out to Ananya Vinay, the 2017 National Spelling Bee champion, from Fresno, California. We are all proud of her accomplishments. Obviously, this young lady has a great future ahead of her.

Congratulations, once again, on becoming the 2017 National Spelling Bee champion.

HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF ROY HERTEL

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

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and memory of my friend Roy Hertel, who passed away Thursday, May 25, at the age of 68.

Roy was a true public servant and community leader in Montgomery County, Illinois. Throughout his life and career, he held many roles in the region and had an immeasurable impact on countless lives, including mine.

As a teacher, circuit clerk, county board chairman, and administrator for the county's Department of Health and Human Services in the State of Illinois, Roy's career was defined by his dedication to bettering the lives of those not only in Montgomery County, but also throughout central Illinois.

His involvement in the region went far beyond his career. Roy was an active member of the Disciples of Christ in Hillsboro; a 45-year member of the Lions Club, where he had held all offices, the district lieutenant governor and district governor in 1991 and 1992; a member of the Mt. Moriah Masonic Lodge Number 51 A.F. & A.M. in Hillsboro; president of the Circuit Clerk's Association; a member of the Hillsboro

Moose Lodge Number 1377; part of the Hillsboro Sports Association; and served as chairman, until his death, of the Montgomery County Board.

Roy also served as a coach for both youth baseball and soccer leagues, and was a dedicated fan and supporter of every sports team that his son played on and every child played on in Hillsboro, Illinois. He was especially fond of the Hillsboro Junior High Dragons that his son started on, clear up until his son played for the Gateway Grizzlies.

My thoughts and prayers are with Nanci and the rest of Roy's family and friends, as central Illinois has lost a leader whose presence will be tremendously missed.

REFORM OUR BROKEN MILITARY JUSTICE SYSTEM

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

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, for more than 7 years, I have spoken out against the broken military justice system that allows commanders to decide how sexual assaults and other criminal offenses are prosecuted under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Our servicemembers are stuck in a world where their fates rest within the chain of command, where bias is king and justice often a jester.

Today, I stand here sick at heart that, once again, a rape conviction has been overturned because of the broken military justice system. In this instance, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces threw out Airman Rodney Boyce's rape and assault conviction because of the involvement of Lieutenant General Craig Franklin, who referred the case to court-martial.

This all came about because, in 2013, General Franklin was admonished by his superiors for tossing out the aggravated sexual assault conviction of a fellow F-16 pilot, a unanimous decision by a jury of his peers. Certainly, a general should not have the power to overturn the findings of a court of law simply because he thinks his buddy could not possibly have committed the sexual assault.

But because Franklin was appropriately admonished for this abuse of power, the U.S. Court of Appeals found that his subsequent decision to move forward with an entirely separate Boyce case constituted unlawful command influence.

This is made more ridiculous by two facts: first, the military judge during the actual trial found no evidence of unlawful command influence; second, the appeals court that threw out the Boyce case also did not find evidence of unlawful command influence, just the "appearance" of it.

So, apparently, unlawful command influence is like pornography: there is no definition, but judges know it when they see it.

Colleagues, it is past time to reform this unjust system that ignores jury

decisions on the whim of a convening authority. The military must remove the power to decide whether or not to prosecute sexual assault cases from the chain of command and give the authority to independent military prosecutors.

I have met with countless survivors who have suffered in unique and horrifying ways. There is a hauntingly clear pattern to nearly all of their experiences: the perpetrator was let off the hook and the victim fellow servicemember was revictimized by an unjust system, all at the hands of the chain of command that is supposed to be there to protect and defend them.

The sense of betrayal by their command is marrow deep and life altering. Many describe the feelings of this betrayal more akin to a violation at the hands of a family member rather than a boss or coworker.

All that we need to do is to allow trained and experienced lawyers in the military to make a legal judgment about a crime. This in no way impacts the commander's authority. It simply gives servicemembers what we civilians take for granted, which is relying on a trained prosecutor to decide whether to move forward with serious charges of sexual assault.

Our servicemembers deserve and need a system that they can trust to be fair and impartial. Letting a convicted rapist walk free because of a mere appearance of unlawful command influence—forget the fact that he was, in fact, convicted of the assault—shows just how deep the problem runs.

As this case shows, the perception and the reality is that commanders with a built-in conflict of interest and with little or no legal training are deciding whether to move forward to trial. They make this decision not solely based on legal reasoning, but a myriad of other factors—like how well they fly a jet or how well they are liked by others—that should not be injected into the decisionmaking.

Our servicemembers deserve and need a system that they can trust to be fair and impartial. We have the power and duty to fundamentally reform the system to ensure that they are treated with a level of fairness that befits their sacrifice and service.

Mr. Speaker, the words of one military servicemember still haunt me and ring in my ears, when she said to me:

I joined the military to fight the enemy. I never thought that he would be right next to me.

HONORING THE AMERICAN FARMER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an often overlooked and sometimes underappreciated American hero: the American farmer.

The American farmer has been working the land since before the founding