

I've heard the argument that because Turkey lives in a dangerous neighborhood, it must take bold actions to preserve its own security. There is no doubt that Turkey faces threats from an array of terrorist groups, a murderous Syrian regime headed by Bashar al-Assad, and other destabilizing influences across the region. But the best way for Turkey to meet these challenges is in partnership with the United States and other NATO allies.

This is why I am supremely alarmed that Turkey is considering purchasing a Russian air-defense system rather than a NATO air-defense system. The operation of a non-NATO system puts the security of NATO members at serious risk and is inconsistent with the spirit of the alliance, not to mention interoperability among NATO member states. The Alliance understands Turkey's desire for air defense and wants to help, but Ankara's continued stated intention to acquire the S-400 is an obstacle to NATO's ability to assist and sends a signal that Ankara wants to break away on core defense issues.

In the time left before Turkey potentially makes a serious miscalculation, there is a key fact to highlight: the United States has offered Turkey two air and missile defense systems, including the Patriot PAC-3 system, which would fulfill Turkey's defense needs, but ultimate receipt and delivery of the Patriot is contingent on Turkey cancelling the S-400 deal. For these reasons, I, like many of my colleagues, remain willing to work with Turkey in order to support its purchase of a NATO air defense system.

But, I want to be clear: Turkey must demonstrate its commitment to its relationship with the United States and NATO. It can do so by taking the steps I previously noted, including releasing Mr. Brunson, Mr. Golge, and others; enhancing Turkish personal freedoms and promoting the rule of law; and acquiring a NATO, rather than Russian, air-defense system. No doubt, the United States has other important differences with Ankara, including its difficult relations with Israel, its occupation of Cyprus, and its improving ties with Moscow. But, should Turkey pursue the course I've outlined, it would represent an important step toward patching up some of our key differences.

Like many of my colleagues, I wish that our relationship with Turkey were on better footing. Turkey has been a strong NATO partner for decades. For the good of both the United States and Turkey, NATO, and the region, we must work to improve this relationship.

HONORING THE CITY OF SOUTH EL MONTE, CALIFORNIA ON ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 26, 2018

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the City of South El Monte, California, which I have the privilege of representing in California's 38th Congressional District. On July 30th, 2018, South El Monte will celebrate its 60th Anniversary. Located in the heart of the San Gabriel Valley, South El Monte is a colorful, diverse, and thriving community.

Known to many as the "City of Achievement", South El Monte has come a long way

since it was incorporated as a city with 3,000 residents in 1958. The city is now home to over 20,000 Californians and a robust business community. With easy access to major Southern California freeways, South El Monte hosts more than 2,400 businesses and serves as an important manufacturing base for the Los Angeles region, including in the space and aerospace industries.

Beyond its prosperous business sector, South El Monte is a tight-knit community. Since its inception, the city's mission has been to improve the quality of life of its residents. The Whittier Narrows Recreation Area and Legg Lake on the city's border, as well as the city's commitment to those who serve in our armed forces through its Active Military Banner Program, unite a diverse population with a rich history.

I am honored to represent this city and its residents, and look forward to what the next 60 years have in store.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DEMOCRACY RESTORATION ACT OF 2018

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 26, 2018

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce the Democracy Restoration Act of 2018. This legislation will serve to clarify and, in some cases, expand the voting rights of people with felony convictions, the next logical step in restoring their full participation in civic life.

The United States remains one of the world's strictest nations when it comes to denying the right to vote to citizens convicted of crimes. An estimated 6.1 million citizens are ineligible to vote in federal elections due to their status as ex-offenders. More than four and a half million of these disqualified voters are not in prison, but are on probation, parole, or have completed their sentence. Due to differences in state laws and rates of criminal punishment, states vary widely in the practice of disenfranchisement, demonstrating a critical federal interest for uniform standards.

Clarification of the law on restoration of ex-offender voting rights is a critical next step in criminal justice reform. In 2007, President George W. Bush signed the Second Chance Act into law, signaling a bipartisan awareness of the importance of enacting policies that assist in the reintegration of ex-offenders into their communities. Recent public opinion research has also shown that a significant majority of Americans favor voting rights for people on probation or parole, who are currently supervised in their communities, as well as for individuals who have completed their sentences. This legislation both captures the bipartisan spirit of the Bush administration and is consistent with evolving public opinion on rehabilitation of ex-offenders.

From a constitutional basis, the Democracy Restoration Act is a narrowly crafted effort to expand voting rights for people with felony convictions, while protecting state prerogatives to generally establish voting qualifications. The legislation would only apply to persons who are not in prison, and would only apply to federal elections. As such, our bill is fully consistent with constitutional requirements estab-

lished by the Supreme Court in a series of decisions upholding federal voting rights laws.

Since this legislation was first introduced in 2008, the Sentencing Project reports 27 states have amended felony disenfranchisement policies in an effort to reduce their restrictiveness and expand voter eligibility. These reforms have resulted in an estimated more than 800,000 citizens regaining their voting rights. Yet, despite these reforms, the overall rate of ex-offender disenfranchisement has not abated and continues to have a disproportionate impact on communities of color. Many of the state reforms still rely on lengthy waiting periods or clemency and several feature burdensome procedural hurdles that have proven difficult to navigate for persons seeking to restore their voting rights. As a result, approximately 50 percent of the entire disenfranchised population is clustered in 12 states, with Florida alone accounting for 48 percent of the post-sentence population.

Proponents of ex-offender disenfranchisement have offered few justifications for continuing the practice. In fact, the strongest empirical research suggests that prohibitions on the right to vote undermine both our voting system and the fundamental rights of people with felony convictions. A series of studies make clear that civic engagement is pivotal in the transition from incarceration and discouraging repeat offenses. Disenfranchisement laws only serve to isolate and alienate ex-offenders, creating additional obstacles in their attempt to successfully put the past behind them by fully reintegrating into society. But that is only half the story.

The current patchwork of state laws has created widespread confusion among election officials throughout the country and has served as the justification for flawed voter purges. For example, although people with misdemeanor convictions never lose the right to vote in Ohio, in 2008, 30 percent of election officials in the state responded incorrectly or expressed uncertainty about whether individuals with misdemeanor convictions could vote. A similar survey by the Nebraska ACLU in advance of the 2016 general election determined that about half of state election officials gave out the wrong information about former felons' voting rights. Given the general confusion by election officials on restoration of voting rights, many ex-offenders are hesitant to even attempt registration, depriving eligible voters of their rights. Only federal law can conclusively resolve the ambiguities in this area plaguing our voting system.

For many years, voting restoration legislation has been supported by a broad coalition of groups interested in voting and civil rights, including the NAACP, ACLU, Human Rights Watch, the Brennan Center for Justice, and the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, among many others. This coalition has expanded to include many law enforcement groups including the American Probation and Parole Association, the Association of Paroling Authorities International, and the National Black Police Association, among others, who recognize that allowing people to vote after release from prison helps rebuild ties to the community that motivate law-abiding behavior.

The denial of voting rights by many states to ex-offenders represents a vestige from a time when suffrage was denied to whole classes of our population based on race, gender, religion, national origin and property. I believe that our

nation fails not only people with felony convictions by denying them the right to vote, but the rest of our society that has struggled throughout its history to ensure that its citizenry be part of legitimate and inclusive elections. It is long overdue that these restrictions be relegated to unenlightened history.

JOINING NORTH HALL MIDDLE SCHOOL TO HONOR GEORGIA'S FIRST LADY, SANDRA DEAL

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 26, 2018

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate North Hall Middle School on its new literacy garden. The school dedicated this garden to one of its former teachers, my friend and Georgia's First Lady, Mrs. Sandra Deal.

As the husband of a Hall County teacher and father of three kids who attended North Hall Middle School, I join the community in welcoming this addition to the school. The Sandra Deal Secret Reading Garden will inspire students to dive into books outside the classroom and explore the garden's variety of plants.

Since becoming First Lady, Mrs. Deal has advocated for literacy across our state. She currently serves as the co-chair of the Georgia Literacy Commission, where she partners with experts to improve low literacy rates and encourage students to read through campaigns like "Read Across Georgia Month."

In the last eight years, Mrs. Deal has visited schools in each of Georgia's 159 counties. During each visit, she takes the time to read to students and hear from educators about literacy in their classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, Sandra Deal's tenure as First Lady will come to a close at the end of the year, but her legacy of promoting compassion for students and lifelong learning will endure across our state for years to come.

RECOGNITION OF THE CREEKVIEW HIGH SCHOOL 2018 INTERNATIONAL ROCKETRY CHALLENGE WINNERS

HON. BARRY LOUDERMILK

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 26, 2018

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding 2018 International Rocketry Challenge winners from Creekview High School in Canton, Georgia.

These four students: Brayden Dodge, Kennedy Hugo, Aiden McChesney, and Warren Teachworth, under the leadership of Coach Tim Smyrl, competed against the best rocketry teams from around the globe and won First Place in the International Rocketry Challenge (IRC) at the Farnborough International Airshow.

This amazing team represented the United States against top teams from the United Kingdom, France, and Japan. Much hard-work and dedication went into securing this victory, and we are very proud of them all.

In order to capture First Place, the IRC required that students successfully launch a raw hen's egg 800 feet and safely return it to earth in forty-three seconds or less. Additionally, teams had to present the specifications of their rocket's design to a panel of esteemed international space experts. Creekview High School placed first in both the Rocket Launch and the Presentation components of the competition.

This is the thirteenth year the Raytheon Company has sponsored team U.S.A., and we are thrilled that this U.S. winning team was from the 11th Congressional District of Georgia. On behalf of Georgia's 11th Congressional District and the United States House of Representatives, I commend the excellent work of the 2018 Creekview High School team, and congratulate them on representing Georgia and the United States of America so well.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. WAYNE PHANEUF

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 26, 2018

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate my friend Wayne Phaneuf for being named an awardee of the Yankee Quill by the Academy of New England Journalists. The Yankee Quill is presented by fellow journalists to recognize the lifetime achievement of those who have had a broad influence for good, both inside and outside the newsroom. It is considered the highest individual honor of its kind in the New England region. The award is a fitting testament to Wayne's hard work, dedication, and exemplary character as a respected and committed journalist of 49 years with The Republican newspaper in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Wayne grew up in the McKnight neighborhood of Springfield and attended public schools in the area. He went on to American International College in Springfield and graduated from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He then went on to work as a reporter, columnist, assistant managing editor, and now executive editor over the course of his remarkable career with The Republican in his hometown. In those capacities, Wayne has undoubtedly contributed greatly to the communities of Western Massachusetts and beyond. Since The Republican's establishment in 1824, individuals like Wayne have played a significant role in growing the newspaper and keeping the people it serves informed, educated, and connected. Wayne has not only demonstrated an unwavering commitment to ethical, objective, and high-quality journalism, but also maintained a meaningful connection with the community he has served, including making regular public speaking appearances and authoring several books about the history of the region, especially Springfield's Union Station.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to again extend my sincerest congratulations to Mr. Wayne Phaneuf. He has demonstrated exceptional service, leadership, and dedication over his 49-year career. The Yankee Quill recognizes those admirable traits, and also Wayne's broad influence for good in serving the public

welfare. The Yankee Quill is certainly a well-deserved honor for him. I wish Wayne all the best in his future endeavors, including at the annual conferences of the New England Society of News Editors and the New England Newspaper and Press Association on October 11, 2018, where he will be officially presented The Yankee Quill.

HUTCHINSON CHURCH GROUP VOLUNTEERS

HON. COLLIN C. PETERSON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 26, 2018

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a group of four adults and eight students from Hutchinson, Minnesota, who traveled to Haiti and volunteered a week of their time to build and upgrade a new church office and teach kids at an Orphanage through a missionary program through Peace Lutheran Church.

These men and women rolled up their sleeves to help as much as possible at Good Shepherd Orphanage. The first day at the Orphanage they worked with kids on arts and crafts projects and helped the local pastor with construction on his new office in the church.

After a week of work, the group was scheduled to fly back to Minnesota. However, civil unrest in Port-au-Prince forced the State Department to issue a shelter-in-place warning to Americans staying near the capital. The Orphanage was very helpful in making sure they had enough food and water for the additional three days they stayed. At the Orphanage, the group felt safe as rock blockades and fires prevented their movement.

While civil unrest continued to paralyze Port-au-Prince, my office stayed in close contact with the Hutchinson church group. Over the three days, they experienced more of Haitian culture and spent extra time working with the kids. Once most of the road blockades were secure and local authorities deemed it safe to move, the group was escorted to the airport and boarded a flight home. I am thankful for the aptly-named Good Shepherd Orphanage who provided shelter, food, and water to a group of Minnesotans who needed it unexpectedly. I look forward to meeting with the Hutchinson church group to learn more about their incredible experiences in Haiti.

INTRODUCTION OF STUDENT LOAN BANKRUPTCY ACT OF 2018

HON. J. LUIS CORREA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 26, 2018

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, student loan debt has risen dramatically over the past decades. Today, many borrowers find themselves unable to repay their student loans. In the past, Congress has determined that allowing borrowers to easily discharge student loans under bankruptcy could threaten the student loan program and therefore have made student loans non-dischargeable. This decision has limited the circumstances in which a borrower may discharge their student loan debt.