

came in together, we formed our early competitive political lives together in that crucible in Sacramento. I think when I think back on this, I am not going to remember a lot about the bills or a lot about that, and I don't think any of us really will so much. It is the friendships. It is the relationships. And I count MIMI, JEFF, and DAVID as my closest friends in this place.

So when you go around the hallways here and you see that the bronze plaques have been ripped off the offices there, indeed it is like having a part of it ripped off your heart, you know? But we soldier on, because the people have spoken. It is the will of the voters.

I know I have been proud to always stand with them. Whether fighting for water, for agriculture, for fiscal responsibility, for the right direction for our Nation, I have always counted on these friends to help keep all of us moving on the right track, thinking about the right things.

So indeed in these relationships, the fun that comes along with it, like with my friend "Cowadao." And JEFFREY, who we always refer to each other as our full formal first names. And M-I-M-I. We have had a lot of fun in this. And I think we have all fought hard in the trenches to advance not only our State at that level, but our country as well.

We are all better off for it. I am better off for having known them. And it is not going to be as fun, it is not going to be as fulfilling to be around here without friends like that, but, again, it is the will of the voters. It is how things go.

We will see each other in many other capacities as we move through this life together.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the invaluable contributions made by my California Republican delegation colleagues who are departing at the conclusion of this term.

I consider these individuals more than colleagues. I consider them my friends, and I am deeply disappointed they will not be joining us in the next session of Congress.

Every one of them has served in the House with distinction, making this institution better for having them a part of it. They have represented their constituents and our State well by understanding the unique challenges they faced and effectively fighting for solutions.

The booming voice from JEFF DENHAM is as unmistakable as it is effective advocating for California's Central Valley. He knows it is pretty difficult to farm without a reliable water supply, so he helped lead the charge for many sensible water policies that help our Nation's fruit and vegetable farmers keep American-grown produce on the dining room tables around the country.

DARRELL ISSA made a name for himself in the car alarm industry before he came to Congress, where he sounded the alarm on the executive branch mis-

conduct. As a leader on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, DARRELL held our fellow agencies to account for their actions and was a staunch defender of American taxpayers.

STEVE KNIGHT comes from a family well known for public service. STEVE proudly carried on that tradition by serving in the Army for 8 years, then the Los Angeles Police Department for 18 years. STEVE then came to Congress, bringing his tremendous experience to the House Armed Services Committee, where he has made a big impact.

The dean of the California Republican delegation, DANA ROHRBACHER, always brings a unique perspective to any conversation. Since his days in the Reagan White House, DANA has been a constant voice for the defense of liberty and freedom. He has also been a gnarly champion for California's legendary surfing community.

ED ROYCE and I were both members of the incoming freshman class of 1993. As a longtime member and now chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, ED has served as an effective advocate for American interests and allies around the globe. I have seen firsthand how especially tireless he is in being a voice for the safety and liberty of people so desperate for someone to come to their aid. And to cap it off, ED's tribute video featured Bono singing his praises.

DAVID VALADAO is a Member of the House who truly understands what it means to be a champion for his district. DAVID has never been interested in partisan politics. He just wants to deliver results for the Central Valley of California. Working with DAVID to solve California's water challenges and serving with him on the Appropriations Committee has been an absolute pleasure and honor.

Anyone who spends any time with MIMI WALTERS knows that she is the toughest member of the California Republican delegation. I think you have heard that a number of times. When our delegation needs to get something done, you can always count on MIMI to be front and center in the fight. Her tenacity in advancing worthwhile policies will be sorely missed by our delegation, our conference, and the House.

Time and time again, our California Republican delegation has come together to respond to the needs of our State, whether it was a serious drought, a disease threatening to wipe out our citrus farmers, horrific wildfires and the flooding and mudslides that follow them, there is no group of representatives I would rather lock arms with to fight for those solutions that our constituents need.

Mr. Speaker, Teddy Roosevelt so brilliantly said, "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena."

The departing members of the California delegation all leave with pride of

knowing they served in the arena and spent themselves in a worthy cause.

Again, I am grateful for their service and especially for their friendship.

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

#### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Byrd, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 1872. An act to promote access for United States diplomats and other officials, journalists, and other citizens to Tibetan areas of the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3996. An act to amend title 28, United States Code, to permit other courts to transfer certain cases to United States Tax Court.

H.R. 5759. An act to improve executive agency digital services, and for other purposes.

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. 6964. An act to reauthorize and improve the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills and a joint resolution of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1092. An act to protect the right of law-abiding citizens to transport knives interstate, notwithstanding a patchwork of local and State prohibitions.

S. 2961. An act to reauthorize subtitle A of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990.

S.J. Res. 64. Joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of the Treasury relating to "Returns by Exempt Organizations and Returns by Certain Non-Exempt Organizations".

#### AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the leadership on both sides of the aisle for according us this time. It is an honor to have the privilege of standing here in the House of Representatives to present a resolution tonight, and I am grateful that the time has been allowed.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored tonight to present this resolution, H. Res. 1166, honoring and praising the American Jewish Committee, known as AJC, on the occasion of its 112th anniversary.

I am honored to say that this resolution has other persons who are sponsors: Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. MENG, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. COHEN, Ms. MOORE, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. ROTHFUS. I am honored that

these Members have cosigned, if you will, in that they are cosponsors of this resolution.

I am honored to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that this organization, the American Jewish Committee, has been around now for 112 years in the business of protecting Jews and other minorities from anti-Semitism, racism, bigotry, hatred, and human rights violations.

When these things occur, you can count on the American Jewish Committee standing up, speaking out, and making their position known.

The American Jewish Committee is currently fighting against the rising tide of hate and bigotry. And there is empirical, as well as anecdotal, evidence to support the fact that there is a rising tide.

Per the FBI, there were 6,121 hate crimes in 2016; in 2017, 7,125 hate crimes. A rising tide. Three of five hate crimes target ethnicity or race; one of five will target religion. Hate crimes in this country are being addressed by the American Jewish Committee. 2,013 hate crimes against African Americans in 2017, 938 hate crimes against Jewish Americans.

The American Jewish Committee is confronting hate and making a difference in the lives of people.

This organization was founded November 11, 1906, in New York City by a group of Jews who wanted to raise awareness about the persecution and targeting of Jews in Russia.

I might also add that this was around the time that the NAACP was founded. It was founded just some years later in 1909. And a good many members of the founding persons associated with the NAACP were Jewish people.

The NAACP and the AJC have had a partnership, a friendship, a relationship for many, many years in this battle against hate and bigotry.

The AJC supported the Civil Rights Act of 1964, supported the Voting Rights Act of 1965, supported the historic decision in the Supreme Court case of *Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka*. And I would add, not only did the AJC support it by filing various briefs and doing research, but also with money. Members supported this lawsuit with money.

Thurgood Marshall was the lead counsel for the NAACP in *Brown v. Board of Education*, but there were other persons who were not of African ancestry associated with this litigation who helped to fund it. It was a costly piece of litigation, and I am proud to say that AJC was supportive of the NAACP in *Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka*.

The AJC has been at the forefront of strengthening ties between Jews and Latinos. The AJC concerns itself with the human rights and human dignity of all people regardless of ethnicity.

The AJC's Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council is a group of some 50 persons, Muslims and Jews, who have as their aim protecting and expanding the

rights of religious minorities in the United States of America. Those who will divide us along religious lines are confronted by the AJC, the American Jewish Committee.

□ 1730

It has launched a global campaign encouraging people of conscience around the world to attend Jewish services, and especially this was made known after the attack at the Tree of Life congregation in Pittsburgh, where 11 worshippers were killed.

I was fortunate enough to attend a Shabbat service in Houston, Texas, where our mayor, the Honorable Sylvester Turner, spoke and where we, persons of goodwill, had the opportunity to express our desire and our belief that we should combine our efforts to make sure that we developed a symbiotic relationship as we moved forward with this global campaign to encourage people of conscience to get to know persons of different religions so that we could have together what we could never accomplish apart.

The AJC, in 2015, launched what is known as the Mayors United Against Anti-Semitism campaign to build a nationwide coalition of elected officials committed to fighting anti-Semitism, a nationwide coalition. I am proud to say that that continues to this day and that elected officials are responding to the clarion call to unite against bigotry, hatred, anti-Semitism, homophobia, xenophobia, Islamophobia, sexism, and nativism. The AJC is there to fight for the rights of people to live in dignity with peace and harmony.

The AJC is international in scope. It has 11 international offices, 22 in the United States, and 36 international Jewish community partnerships. In truth, it is international in scope. It is also an organization that has been there for the State of Israel.

It is a steadfast supporter of Israel, becoming the first American Jewish organization to open an office in Israel, and an effective advocate for Israel's security. The AJC has been and continues to be a strong partner for the State of Israel.

I am proud to tell you that I have a friend, who at one time was the head of AJC. At the time, I was the head of the NAACP. I share this brief vignette because I think it is important to explain how things can really work and how people can work together.

My friend, David Minberg, as I indicated, was the head of AJC, and I had the good fortune to be a leader of the NAACP in Houston, Texas. We had a city council person, whose name I need not mention, who made a racial slur, said a very ugly thing, and David and I had the opportunity to bring our organizations together.

Upon doing so, we concluded that we should talk to other persons of goodwill in the city so as to build a coalition to confront the council person who made the racial slur. With a strong coalition, the NAACP and the AJC were

able to call for the resignation of this council person.

These two organizations, taking the lead, were able to do something that, in my opinion, could not have been done but for the unity exhibited, and the coalition that was constructed could not have done it, and that was to have this city council person leave city council.

This is the kind of strength that the AJC brings to issues associated with hate and bigotry. The AJC does not tolerate hatred and bigotry. Much of what I express with reference to hatred and bigotry I acquired from associating with persons who are part of the AJC.

I have understood, as a result of working with my friends at the AJC, that we can never, ever tolerate hatred and bigotry, regardless of where it comes from, regardless as to what the source is. We have got to be bold. We have to show courage. We have to stand up together against hatred and bigotry.

These are some of the things that the AJC has exhibited over the years in my presence.

And I said my friends at AJC. I call people friends who are persons that I do more than have dinner with, persons whom I do more than associate with, persons whom I have more than a relationship with. I call friends persons whom I can disagree with and still maintain a relationship with them.

Over the years, these friends and I have stood together, and we continue to stand together.

So, tonight, Mr. Speaker, I call to the attention of this august body H. Res. 1166, and I call to the attention of those who are within the sound of my voice, those who may be viewing at home, I call to their attention H. Res. 1166, a resolution that honors and praises the American Jewish Committee on the occasion of its 112th anniversary.

I suggest that it be resolved by the House of Representatives that the House of Representatives, itself, recognize the 112th anniversary of the historic founding of the American Jewish Committee, and that the House of Representatives should honor and praise the American Jewish Committee on the occasion of this anniversary for its efforts regarding human rights worldwide, for its interfaith dialogue, and for the promotion of Israel's security and its place in the world.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to have presented this resolution, and I would have the world know, and all of my friends know, that I look forward to returning to Houston, Texas, and meeting with my friends who are associated with the AJC, the American Jewish Committee, as we continue our struggle to end hatred and bigotry—not to manage it, not to make it less tolerable, but to eliminate it in its entirety wherever it exists.

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

## THE CHRIST OF CHRISTMAS

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

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, we are told it is the most wonderful time of the year: Christmas. As a Nation, we have celebrated it with family, with breaks from work, and with a bit of pomp in our Nation's Capital. But why? It has not always been the case.

When Americans began to settle in the Colonies, they came with varied religious backgrounds. To the Pilgrims and Puritans, the idea of celebrating a holy day associated with the churches that had persecuted them in Europe was repulsive. But to those high churches long established—such as Anglican, Episcopal, and Catholic—Christmas was observed widespread.

In the fabric of our Nation, the low church settlers dwelt more in New England, where Christmas was not observed, and the high church settlers were more in the South, where it was. Still, it was not until 1837, when Louisiana made Christmas a State holiday, that Christmas was officially recognized.

In time, more States began official recognition. In 1870, Christmas became a national holiday. Its lack of recognition was not for a lack of understanding for the importance of the birth of Christ. Rather, it was out of respect to the various Christian beliefs making up our national fabric.

It was not until 1889 that a Christmas tree adorned the White House, and the first official Christmas tree lighting ceremony did not occur until 1923, under President Calvin Coolidge. The first White House Christmas card did not appear until 1953, under President Dwight Eisenhower.

Still, our Nation and our leaders have always made great effort to express the importance of the birth of Christ. Here is what a few of nearly all of our Presidents have said about the birth of Christ:

Calvin Coolidge: "For many generations, Christmas has been joyously observed . . . because on that day was born one who grew to be the only perfect man and became the Savior of the world. No other influence in human experience has compared with the birth and life of Christ."

Franklin Roosevelt: "Here, at home, we will celebrate this Christmas Day in our traditional American way—because of its deep spiritual meaning to us; because the teachings of Christ are fundamental in our lives; and because we want our youngest generation to grow up knowing the significance of this tradition and the story of the coming of the immortal Prince of Peace and Good Will. But, in perhaps every home in the United States, sad and anxious thoughts will be continually with the millions of our loved ones who are suffering hardships and misery, and who are risking their very lives to preserve

for us and for all mankind the fruits of His teachings and the foundations of civilization itself."

Harry Truman: "In love, which is the very essence of the message of the Prince of Peace, the world would find a solution for all its ills. I do not believe there is one problem in this country or in the world today which could not be settled if approached through the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. . . .

"In the stillness of the eve of the Nativity when the hopes and mankind hang on the peace that was offered to the world 19 centuries ago, it is but natural, while we survey our destiny, that we give thought also to our past to some of the things which have gone into the making of our Nation. . . .

"In this day, whether it be far or near, the kingdoms of this world shall become, indeed, the kingdom of God, and He will reign forever and ever, Lord of Lords and King of Kings. . . .

"Since returning home, I have been reading again in our family Bible some of the passages which foretold this night. . . . We miss the spirit of Christmas if we consider the incarnation as an indistinct and doubtful, far-off event unrelated to our present problems. We miss the purport of Christ's birth if we do not accept it as a living link which joins us together in the spirit as children of the ever-living and true God. In love alone—the love of God and the love of man—will be found the solution of all the ills which afflict the world today."

Lyndon Johnson: "We were taught by Him whose birth we commemorate that after death, there is life. . . . In these last 200 years, we have guided the building of our Nation and our society by those principles and precepts brought to Earth nearly 2,000 years ago on that first Christmas.

"In a few days, we shall all celebrate the birth of His Holiness on Earth. . . . We shall acknowledge the kingdom of a child in a world of men. That child, we should remember, grew into manhood Himself, preached and moved men in many walks of life, and died in agony. But His death, so the Christian faith tells us, was not the end. For Him, and for millions of men and women ever since, it marked a time of triumph, when the spirit of life triumphed over death."

□ 1745

Gerald Ford: "In our 200 years, we Americans have always honored the spiritual testament of 2,000 years ago. We embrace the spirit of the Prince of Peace so that we might find peace in our own hearts and in our own land, and hopefully in the world as well."

Ronald Reagan: "The Nativity story of nearly 20 centuries ago is known by all faiths as a hymn to the brotherhood of man. For Christians, it is the fulfillment of age-old prophecies and the reaffirmation of God's great love for all of us. Through a generous Heavenly Father's gift of His Son, hope and com-

passion entered a world weary with fear and despair and changed it for all time."

Reagan continues. " . . . I have always believed that the message of Jesus is one of hope and joy. I know that there are those who recognize Christmas Day as the birthday of a great and good man, a wise teacher who gave us principles to live by. And then there are others of us who believe that He was the Son of God, that He was Divine. If we live our lives for truth, for love, and for God, we need never be afraid."

George H.W. Bush put it this way: "At Christmas, we, too, rejoice in the mystery of God's love for us—love revealed through the gift of Christ's birth. Born into a family of a young carpenter and his wife, in a stable shared by beasts of the field, our Savior came to live among ordinary men. Yet, in time, the miraculous nature of this simple event became clear. Christ's birth changed the course of history, bringing the light of hope to a world dwelling in the darkness of sin and death.

Today, nearly 2,000 years later, the shining promise of that first Christmas continues to give our lives a sense of peace and purpose. Our words and deeds, when guided by the example of Christ's life, can help others share in the joy of man's Redemption."

Bill Clinton: "The Christmas story is dear and familiar to us all—shepherds and angels, Wise Men and King Herod, Mary and Joseph, and, at the heart of it all, a Child. This Child was born into poverty in a city too crowded to offer Him shelter. He was sent to a region whose people had endured suffering, tyranny, and exile. And yet, this Child brought with Him riches so great that they continue to sustain the human spirit 2,000 years later: the assurance of God's love and presence in our lives and the promise of salvation."

Barack Obama: "More than 2,000 years ago, a child was born to two faithful travelers who could find rest only in a stable, among the cattle and the sheep. But this was not just any child. Christ's birth made the angels rejoice and attracted shepherds and kings from afar. He was a manifestation of God's love for us."

Even with all of their flaws, the political and party tensions, the times of national prosperity and crisis, our Presidents have been consistent in expressing publicly their belief on why Christ's birth matters. Bold Presidential statements: the only perfect man, Savior of the world, immortal Prince of Peace, Lord of Lords who will reign forever, His Holiness, Son of God, the light of Hope, God's love and presence in our lives, a manifestation of God's love for us.

No other human being has ever been accorded such accolade by our Presidents.

Indeed, even in our national Congress, well over 90 percent of elected officials associate themselves with the