

One of the most basic, and often most effective, ways to help prevent suicide is to ensure that our loved ones, friends, colleagues, and anyone else in our lives feels connected and has a sense of belonging. There is great virtue in reaching out to the marginalized and neglected, especially young people who may be lonely or bullied.

For those who are despondent and having suicidal thoughts, services like the National Suicide Prevention Hotline is vital. The hotline is a free support service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 1-800-273-8255, 1-800-273-TALK.

As we enter this season of hope, let those who are hopeless encounter the encouragement that everyone needs.

CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, during this holiday season, I am baffled as to why and how we have gotten here to this place.

In the last 24 hours, a tweet went out from the White House that would end the Syrian war, to the opposition of the national security team—General Mattis, the Secretary of State, the National Security Advisor, and others who thought that a tweet ending the war was never heard of in the history of the United States.

In the course of these 24 hours, we are in the midst of a political collapse, a catastrophic collapse, and a shutting down of the government. Included in the shutting down of the government will be the funding for the State Department and Homeland Security.

It is clear that we are at a constitutional crisis, one that requires the attentiveness of this body, and to recognize the leaving and retiring of General Mattis, who has indicated: Maybe you can have a Secretary of Defense that fits your thinking.

What thinking?

And then to hear from North Korea: Maybe you can remove the troops off of our borders.

This is a time for us to speak up, to protect the American people, and not a time to shut the government down.

I hope the President is listening.

THE IMPROVING HEALTH OF THE STATE OF MAINE

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

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, during this joyful time of year, I would like to give thanks for the improving health of my great State of Maine.

Because we have cut taxes and regulations, our small businesses are growing and hiring more workers and paying them more. Maine's 2.7 percent unemployment is the lowest rate in 50 years.

We are rebuilding our military to keep our families safe, while supporting 6,000 shipbuilders at Bath Iron Works.

We have passed legislation that guts online human trafficking, which protects our daughters and our sons.

We have made the biggest financial commitment ever to combat the opioid epidemic, giving thousands of struggling Mainers hope for recovery and better lives.

Child poverty in Maine is dropping, while education is closer to home, where it belongs.

We have strengthened Social Security and Medicare so our seniors have more peace of mind.

Our veterans, our beloved veterans, are now able to receive their healthcare closer to home, and our small hospitals that provide those services must get paid on time; otherwise, interest accrues on the outstanding bills.

And Maine's pristine natural environment is living up to our brand: Vacationland. The way life should be.

Mr. Speaker, Maine families are doing better and better, and I am grateful to have the opportunity to help.

Merry Christmas and happy holidays to all, and may God always bless the United States of America and our great State of Maine.

□ 2015

RECOGNIZING LINDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS CAROLING FOR A CAUSE

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the students, faculty, staff, and friends of Linden Public Schools in New Jersey for spreading holiday cheer while helping those in need.

Each year, members of the Linden Public Schools load into buses with Santa Claus and travel through their town to sing carols and collect donations for a charity gift drive.

Staff and students put their hearts into planning the event, which they call Caroling for a Cause. This year, they collected more than 1,000 gifts from across the community. Those gifts will help bring smiles to the faces of more than 300 children.

Mr. Speaker, this is the season of giving, and the Linden Public Schools are leading by example.

I thank the students, faculty, and staff who participated. And I applaud Superintendent Danny Robertozzi for supporting Caroling for a Cause.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing everyone who participated. They are helping make sure their friends and their neighbors in need have a Merry Christmas and happy holidays.

COMMENDING REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP FOR LISTENING

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I commend our Republican leadership today for listening to our conference and putting back into the continued resolution the needed disaster relief for the southern States and for the West Coast, and the border security measure demanded by most Americans in this country.

To not do so, to just accept the product that the Senate punted over here, would have been a travesty and a dereliction of our duties here, I think, in the U.S. House of Representatives. These are very important things that need to be done and need to be accomplished, with the caravan amassing on our southern border and the security measures that, although heroically done so far by our Border Patrol folks, need to be augmented with this asset.

Heaven knows, our southern States, having been affected by hurricanes; and farmers depending on decisions to be made in this place; and, on the West Coast, with the fires in my own district, the stability needed from the funding that would come from a disaster relief package, I am really pleased to see the work of the House today put this back out there and send it over to the Senate, where I hope they will have the guts to actually deal with it.

DEMANDING VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT RELEASE MICHAEL NGUYEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BERGMAN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) is recognized for half the time until 10 p.m. as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the leadership on both sides of the aisle for extending this opportunity for us to speak tonight. This is an important issue for all Americans.

I rise tonight on behalf of Mr. Michael Nguyen, an American citizen. Mr. Michael Nguyen, an American citizen who was on a mission of mercy to Vietnam and who is being detained in Vietnam.

I would ask that persons please not allow the last name Nguyen cause you to think anything other than the fact that he is an American citizen who makes America the beautiful a more beautiful America. He was on a mission of mercy.

He is being detained; being detained without the benefit of bail, something that we routinely expect to be the case in this country; being detained without the benefit of a lawyer, something that we are all entitled to under the Constitution in this country when charged with criminal offenses; being detained

without the benefit of a speedy trial, something that we take for granted; being detained in Vietnam, Mr. Speaker. This is something that every American ought to be concerned about, when we have one of our own being detained without the benefit of bail, without the benefit of a lawyer, and without the benefit of a speedy trial.

Mr. Nguyen is a resident of California's 45th District, and Mr. Nguyen is being represented by Mrs. WALTERS. Mrs. WALTERS is here tonight. I know that she has been engaged and involved in doing what she can to help extricate Mr. Nguyen from his circumstance.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS).

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to demand the Vietnamese Government immediately release Michael Nguyen, an American citizen and Orange County resident who has been unjustly detained for over 5 months.

Michael is a loving husband and father of four, a small-business owner, and an active member of his community and church. He has no criminal record in the United States.

This summer, while visiting elderly relatives, Michael was arrested by the Vietnamese Government. He is under investigation for allegedly violating article 109 of the Vietnamese criminal code, activities against the government.

Article 109 is an arbitrary and vague charge the Vietnamese Government often uses to justify baseless arrests. Michael could be held for months without formal charges as the Vietnamese Government investigates.

Despite repeated requests by my office, the Vietnamese have yet to produce any evidence substantiating Michael's arrest.

These unjust actions are further exacerbated by the Vietnamese Government denying Michael's family's request to visit him while in prison.

During the investigation, the Vietnamese Government permits only monthly visits by the U.S. State Department. These visits are the only opportunity Michael has to hear messages from his loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, Michael's family has been devastated by this ordeal. I had the opportunity to meet with them again just this last week when I was back in Orange County, and I am here tonight on their behalf, to echo their calls for his safe return.

The Vietnamese Government has not only denied an innocent man his freedom, it has completely disrupted the lives of a loving wife, four young daughters, and countless friends and family members across the country who are praying for Michael's homecoming every single day.

Michael's wife, Helen, is a nurse who works long hours with many emergency on-call days. During Michael's absence, she has been a single mother to their four young daughters.

The girls miss their father dearly. His detainment has made it difficult for them to focus on their schoolwork and their extracurricular activities. These girls should not have to spend one more sleepless night worried about their father's safety.

Their entire family has demonstrated incredible strength during this ordeal. I am constantly inspired by their love and devotion to Michael.

Mr. Speaker, this unjust detainment has gone on far too long. Michael's detainment is only the most recent example of Vietnam's troubling human rights record and lack of transparent legal system. Earlier this year, the Vietnamese Government unjustly detained William Nguyen, an American citizen of no relation to Michael.

I am deeply concerned for Michael's safety and well-being, and I demand his release immediately. In the meantime, I call on the Vietnamese Government to allow Michael's family to visit him in prison.

Mr. Speaker, as you can imagine, this time of year is especially difficult for Michael and his family. While most families across our Nation will have the opportunity to spend time together celebrating Christmas, the Nguyen family will cope with Michael's absence. This Christmas, I pray for good news for the Nguyen family.

Michael's story has touched so many people. Several of my colleagues have heard of Michael's detainment and have joined in my fight to secure his release. I am grateful for their support and their willingness to join tonight's Special Order.

While I will not be returning to Congress next year, I am confident that my colleagues will continue the fight to bring Michael home. I am extremely grateful for my colleagues' engagement, and I will continue to support their efforts any way I can as a private citizen.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for the extraordinary work that she has done to extricate Mr. Nguyen.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA), a person who came to Congress and has done an outstanding, great job since he has been here. I don't know whether he came to be a freedom fighter, but that is how I know him. He really takes a stand against injustice.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to address this body, and I demand that the Government of Vietnam respect human rights, religious freedom, and international law as it pertains to an American citizen, Michael Nguyen, who is being held without formal charges, under arrest in Vietnam.

This unjust imprisonment raises issues, especially since he has never broken the law in the United States. He is a loving father, member of the local church, business owner, and model American citizen.

Yet, when he was traveling to Vietnam to visit his elderly relatives, he

was arrested. Why? We don't know. Apparently, he has been arrested for "activity against the people's government," yet we don't know the circumstances or the reasoning.

We ask one very simple thing from the Government of Vietnam: to play by the rules, respect human rights, respect religious freedom, and release Mr. Michael Nguyen, an American citizen who is being detained without formal charges.

Mr. Speaker, I urge that he be safely released and that he be returned to his family in the United States.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his powerful words and look forward to our continuing to work together to extricate Mr. Nguyen.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO), another Member who has been involved and engaged in this process, who has been with us on phone calls when we have talked to our Ambassador to Vietnam, and who has been a party to our contacting the Secretary of State.

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for organizing this Special Order.

It is an honor to be here to advocate on behalf of one of America's citizens. I have the honor of chairing the Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs. I have been to Vietnam, and I got to meet with their Prime Minister, with their ambassadors, and with so many people over there.

The Vietnamese people are a wonderful people. They have a society that is a communist society, but it is opening up. Vietnam has made great strides in the last 15 to 20 years, moving in the direction that we would like to see, with an open society, free markets, as much as they can be in a communist country.

When I was there, the thing that surprised me was the vibrancy of the people, their outlook on life. They yearn for freedom and liberties, just like all people do. That is an innate thing that our creator has endowed all of us with, that yearning of freedom and liberty.

I became aware of Michael Nguyen's plight. We have intervened on phone calls. We have written letters. We have talked to the incoming chair of ASEAN. We just asked them; I am not going to demand. I am not going to try to have a power game against Vietnam. But what I do want to do is just talk to them, human to human.

We have an individual who left Vietnam, adopted America, and become an American citizen.

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He has been a model citizen. He is the parent of four children, a family man, a businessman, and he went over to Vietnam with the intent of visiting relatives, elderly relatives, and he got caught up in a situation.

We talked to the Ambassador. We talked to people in the legislature from Vietnam and said: I don't want to

interfere in Vietnam law, and, certainly, if this guy is involved in what you are saying, by all means, prosecute to the fullest extent of the law because we would do the same thing.

But I think what you have here is a case where a person was caught up in something. If you look at his past here and his record here and the people we have talked to in Vietnam, this is a good man. This is a family man that went over there for honorable reasons. And so we asked the people of Vietnam to look into this matter and to address this and do what is right, do the humanly right thing.

If you are a parent, if you are married, you have got a mother and father. You have got a spouse. Think of your children. If you were to be removed from your family with no phone calls, no lawyer—and these are things that we value in this country, the liberties and freedoms that we have, that we have had and we have been fighting for over 200 years to preserve and protect. To have that taken away from you is just unthinkable.

I know the pain and the suffering that not just Michael Nguyen, but his family is going through. Here we are in the Christmas season, and this is the season that we should all come together.

I am asking Vietnam, the leaders of Vietnam to look into this case and to rapidly go through it as fast as we can. Because, like I said in the beginning, we value our relationship. They are our 16th largest trading partner. We have a military agreement where they have allowed our military vessels in there for other reasons for national security.

This is something that we want to make sure that our relationship with Vietnam continues to grow. But I can say this: If human rights issues get in, as Mr. GREEN brought up, this is one of our own American citizens. If Vietnam overlooks these things, it is going to be hard for us as a nation to move forward with them in relationships.

So I am going to plead with the Vietnamese leadership to expedite the case of Michael Nguyen and to do what is right. Return him back to America. Return him back to his family, and let's try to do that before the end of the year.

I appreciate Mr. GREEN for doing what he has done. He has done a stellar job. And I appreciate all of the Members who have stood up for such people. These are things that happen in Congress that the American people don't know we do, that they should applaud both sides. This is not a partisan issue. This is an American issue that we all should be proud of that we are fighting for somebody who is an American citizen.

I know Vietnam, if they are listening, and I am sure they are, they will do the right thing, and the right thing is to return Michael.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments, and I want to reiterate what he

said about this being a bipartisan issue.

This is an issue that crosses the lines that sometimes divide us. There is no chasm between us when it comes to the extrication of Mr. Nguyen. We want him back.

I would like to call to the attention of all who are within the sound of my voice, who are viewing this at home, that there is another Member who is not here tonight but who has played a significant role in this effort to bring Mr. Nguyen home. He is Mr. ALAN LOWENTHAL. Mr. LOWENTHAL is from California's 47th Congressional District, and he has been a real champion on causes such as this.

He understands the laws of Vietnam. He understands the culture of Vietnam as well as any, and he has really had a major push to try to get Michael home. I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. LOWENTHAL) for what he has done. While he is not here physically, I do know that he is here in spirit.

What has been said about Michael's detention is correct. Michael is being detained without bail, as has been indicated previously. In Vietnam, unfortunately, the investigation can go on for weeks, months, and can exceed a year.

When investigations go on for this length of time and the person being detained does not have the opportunity to visit with family members, is denied access to family members during holiday seasons, such as what is occurring here now in our country, when a person is detained without the benefit of bail, without the benefit of speedy trial, when this happens, unfortunately, the detention itself becomes punishment. The detention itself becomes egregious. The detention itself becomes reason for us to complain to the Government of Vietnam.

If you have charges, yes, you should investigate, but you should file your charges. You should not detain and then at some point have some charges brought that may or may not necessitate a long period of additional detention.

This is an American citizen. We have expectations. We believe that every country has a right to its autonomy, every country is sovereign unto itself. But we also believe that every country should respect the human rights and dignity of people who are within the confines of their country.

Mr. Nguyen has a necessity to be with his family and his four young children. They miss him. They want to be with him. This is their father who is expected to be at home, especially around this time of year when we are all celebrating the holidays, many different holidays, but they are celebrated in this country.

We are making an appeal, a human cry, a clarion call to the Government of Vietnam to release this husband, release this father, release this man who has been on missions of mercy to Vietnam to work with his wife as a volun-

teer when they are helping young children to receive surgery.

He has demonstrated his love for the people of Vietnam. He has demonstrated his willingness to go above and beyond, to be of service to the people of Vietnam, and I ask that the Government of Vietnam release him. Let him come home. If you have charges, sure, you should file them; but if not, let's not allow the investigation to become a form of punishment.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all of the Members who have appeared on the floor tonight. There are others who would be here, but circumstances do not permit.

I want to thank the leadership for allowing us to get this message out to the masses, to the American people, and, hopefully, to officials in Vietnam.

I want to thank the Secretary of State and our Ambassador to Vietnam for their intervention. We are all doing as much as we can, but we all have to do more. Until he comes home, we have not done enough.

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

RECOGNIZING SPECIAL CONSTITUENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a few special constituents in my region who deserve recognition.

HONORING THE LIFE OF BILL CHANATRY

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, this past October, the Mohawk Valley lost a local businessman, leader, and a dear friend when Bill Chanatry, owner of Chanatry's Hometown Market in Utica, New York, passed away at the age of 89.

Bill was raised in Utica and graduated from the highly acclaimed Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute—many of you known as RPI—and enjoyed a 40-year career as an engineer, eventually serving in the Army Corps of Engineers in Japan during the Korean war; and later he joined General Electric Aerospace Electronics Division, where he served as a project manager for the U.S. Navy E-2C Surveillance Radar Team in Utica, New York.

Chanatry's, the family grocery store, was founded in 1912 by Bill's father and his two uncles. In 1991, Bill eventually retired from General Electric, GE, and became the president of Chanatry's and oversaw a significant expansion and innovation, using his unique skills in engineering to really bring Chanatry's into the forefront and to maintain it as a family, home-owned business catering to the needs of families in our community.

But along with all of these lifelong achievements that Bill had, Bill's legacy is better defined by his terrific family: his loving wife, Janet; five children, Ameena, Joanne, Michael, Bob,