

Humanitarian access to those areas is not guaranteed by the regime, nor by its backers; international law and obligations be damned.

Some of the most heartbreaking news out of Syria has to do with the crisis in healthcare. The “weaponization” of healthcare in Syria is not new, but the depravity of it all still shocks me. According to a recent report by researchers at the American University in Beirut, “Syria has become the most dangerous place on earth for healthcare providers.”

According to the International Rescue Committee, in 2011, there was one doctor per 600 people in Syria. But now, in east Ghouta, there is only one doctor per 3,600 people.

Medical supplies are not allowed into besieged areas and terribly ill patients are not allowed out.

What military or political purpose is served by denying medical evacuation to women and children suffering from heart disease, cancer, kidney failure, and blood diseases?

Mr. Speaker, current policy is not working to end the crisis in Syria. It is time to change course, not by sending more Special Forces troops there without any authorization, nor by promising to keep them there indefinitely to fight against the next iteration of ISIS.

What we need is to reassert American diplomatic leadership and exert real pressure to end the war. We need a plan to transition Assad out of power. We need to pass H. Res. 632, condemning the senseless attacks on hospitals and medical personnel in Syria.

We need to shame Russia for its failure to ensure humanitarian access. We need to increase our contributions to humanitarian assistance for Syria and make full use of the option of cross-border assistance.

We need to open our hearts to the Syrian refugees and welcome more of them to our country. We need to do everything in our power to lay the groundwork to ensure accountability for Assad’s victims. That includes funding the international, impartial, and independent mechanism to assist in the investigation and prosecution of war crimes.

The Syrian conflict has gone on far too long. The horror of it all can be mind-numbing, but we must not lose our outrage. Now is the time to reenergize our efforts and find a way to end the suffering.

STANDING FOR THE UNBORN

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this Friday, more than 100,000 Americans will travel from across the country to take part in the world’s largest pro-life event right here in the Nation’s Capital.

The theme for the 45th annual March for Life is “Love Saves Lives.” This

embodies the true spirit and mission of the pro-life movement by enlisting the power of love to empower others to choose life.

Since the Supreme Court issued a decision in *Roe v. Wade*, tens of millions of abortion procedures have been performed throughout the United States. Although consistent attempts to overturn this decision have fallen short over the past 4 decades, support for Federal pro-life policies has remained strong.

We will witness this strength Friday when Americans from all corners of the country will march on Washington to highlight the progress of the pro-life movement and encourage strong support moving forward.

President Trump will address the marchers from the Rose Garden and show his commitment to protecting the unborn. He is the first sitting U.S. President to address the event via satellite from the White House in the event’s 45-year history.

President Trump has remained steadfast in his commitment to advance pro-life policy. One of his first actions in 2017 was an executive order reinstating the Mexico City policy, which bars international nongovernmental organizations that perform or promote abortions from receiving funding from the U.S. Government. This action, first instated by President Reagan in 1984, helps ensure that taxpayer dollars are not used to fund abortions overseas.

Members of this House also passed H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act of 2017, just 1 day after President Trump reinstated the Mexico City policy. This bill made permanent some longstanding policies that prohibit the use of taxpayer dollars to fund abortion, such as the Hyde amendment.

H.R. 7 also helps to ensure that health insurance companies remain accountable to consumers by requiring them to fully disclose whether or not their healthcare plans cover abortion services.

Another pro-life victory that passed the House in October was H.R. 36, the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. This bill outlaws abortions performed after the 20-week postfertilization period.

I have consistently voted to prohibit late-term abortions and to protect the unborn, and I will continue to do so as long as I am serving in the House. We must always demonstrate a strong commitment to protecting the lives of the defenseless.

The House will continue the fight this week. On Friday, we will vote on the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act. This means that, in the case of a child born alive during an attempted abortion, that child must be immediately transported and admitted to a hospital. If a baby born alive is left to die, the penalty can be up to 5 years in jail. I will certainly vote in support of this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, abortion is a tragedy not just because an innocent child died, but because of the lasting impact the abortion itself had on the mothers of those children.

We continue to see efforts by the pro-life movement making an impact. Data shows that the annual number of abortions performed in this country is in decline, including my State of Pennsylvania. There are legislative efforts across the country to protect unborn children and provide assistance and hope to their mothers. These efforts are one of the keys to ending abortion in the U.S.

Pro-life education is having an impact on our culture and in the lives of women facing unexpected pregnancies, but there is much still to be done. That is why I look forward to participating in the 45th annual March for Life, where we will redouble our commitment to protecting the sanctity of human life in all phases and conditions. Attendees will hear stories of love, courage, and victory through God’s mercy and grace.

Mr. Speaker, human life is sacred and, through education, love can protect the most vulnerable. The pro-life movement is a voice for the voiceless, and I am incredibly proud and honored to be a part of it.

GENERAL KELLY’S DEFINITION OF BIPARTISANSHIP

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

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I had an interesting meeting yesterday with General Kelly. Twenty-five Members of Congress, almost all of whom are descendants of immigrants who came here with nothing, whose parents came here with nothing, sat down with the Chief of Staff of the President of the United States. He said, basically, that we are the wrong kind of people in America, and that people like our parents who came here to this country really are bringing the country down. Because when he says he is for a merit-based system, he is saying he is not for my mom and my dad being able to come to this country.

But interestingly enough, all of us who came to this country because of a family-based immigration system wound up as being Members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

But he was saying: You know, I am meeting with a group of Congressmen, and you really shouldn’t be here because your parents really are tearing the country apart and bringing it down.

That is what he means when he says: I want to replace the system with a merit-based system.

And that was very telling in the meeting yesterday.

But, you know, we want a system that is family-based. That is the system the Democrats want because we believe that businesses are created by

immigrants and that it is essential for their families to be united as they come to this country so that they can achieve American success and we can all achieve the American Dream together.

That is exactly what they want to stop with the merit-based system; unless, of course, they come from Norway, then they continue to come.

We hear from the party of family values and the party of Donald Trump, who even employs his children at the White House. The Trump Organization, just think about. Here is an organization where the dad created the business, handed it down to the son. The son is now going to hand it down to his children. But they don't want immigrants to be able to do exactly the same thing and follow the same course that, apparently, has been so successful for the President of the United States.

Here is something else we learned from the Chief of Staff: when people from one party work with people from another party, that is not bipartisanship, he said. Bipartisanship, defined by General Kelly and this White House, is when people with completely different, opposite views of the world work together.

So only a Senate deal between people who believe in immigration and those who don't believe in immigration and who want to end our immigration system as it is, unless you come from Norway, that is the only way it is bipartisanship. That is like saying that if a Republican and Democrat are working together on an environmental issue, it is not bipartisanship because it is a Republican and Democrat, unless the Democrat and the Republican are persons who believe in climate change, working together with a Republican who believes that climate change is a hoax created by the Chinese.

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Do you know what kind of legislation you get? You get nothing. You get a stalemate. You do not move the agenda forward. But that is their bipartisanship, and that is what we learned at the meeting yesterday.

Look, Democrats and Republicans are working together—Senator GRAHAM, Republican; Senator DURBIN, Democrat. They put a proposal on the table, and the President rejected it. That includes, just so that we are very clear, Democrats giving up things that are unprecedented in that Senate deal that was put on the President's desk.

Members of the Hispanic Caucus meeting with General Kelly can't fathom supporting the Senate deal. But guess what. That is bipartisanship. That is what it comes down to, which brings us to the votes this week.

Republicans might not need our help because you are the majority party, we are the minority party. But just in case you do need our help in getting a budget approved, I want you to know we are ready to stand to help you to keep the government open and to approve a budget.

But what I learned from the meeting with General Kelly, and everybody should understand, is that Democrats are more united than ever before. If you want our help on the budget, you have got to release the 800,000 DREAMers you are holding hostage. You have got to do it. Democrats aren't going to blink. We are going to stand by our values.

There comes a time that, if you say you stand for justice, you have to actually take a stand and hold it and not back down, and that is what Democrats are going to do this week. We are not going to back down.

Need our help? Release the 800,000 DREAMers you hold hostage. And guess what. We are ready to pay a handsome ransom for their release.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

SAVE THE POLITICAL THEATER FOR ANOTHER DAY

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my great frustration with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for their reckless behavior that is threatening the safety and security of the American people.

Let me explain. Some Members of the House and Senate are holding funding for the Federal Government, including funding for our Nation's military, hostage in an effort to advance their immigration agenda.

I understand that immigration is a very important issue. I have many priorities in the immigration debate myself, like increased border security. But I understand that there will come a time and a place to debate immigration issues. That time is not now, and that place is not on a bill dealing with funding our military and other essential functions of government.

Mr. Speaker, this is what the American people hate about Congress. Instead of simply doing one of our most basic jobs, funding the government, we are having an unrelated debate about an immigration issue.

Let's be clear about what is going on here. Congressional Democrats are using our military men and women as pawns in a political game. They think they can use funding for the military as leverage to get their way on a very complex immigration issue. I think that is not only wrong. I think it is irresponsible and it has very grave consequences.

I want to strongly reject the notion that this is a Republican problem. The House passed a bill back in September, over 4 months ago, to fund the military and the entire Federal Government. That bill has been stuck in the Senate, where 60 votes are necessary to pass the bill. There are only 51 Republican Senators, so that means it will be necessary to have bipartisan support to

get any bill across the finish line. I vehemently reject this is an issue just facing congressional Republicans. Frankly, that is a lie.

So why am I so passionate about this issue? Because our Nation's military is facing a serious readiness crisis, and we as the Congress are making things worse. We have the smallest Army since before World War II, the smallest Navy since before World War I, and the smallest and oldest Air Force we have ever had.

General Daniel Allyn, vice chief of staff for the Army, put it best when he said the budgetary problems have "left the Army outranged, outgunned, and outdated. As a result, the Army risks falling behind countries like Russia and China."

There are similarly alarming quotes from the other services as well. Our military needs and demands funding certainty in order to make purchases and perform long-overdue maintenance.

Every time we pass a continuing resolution and kick the can down the road, that hurts our military. It hurts the very men and women we send into battle each day. It makes their job harder, and, frankly, it puts lives at risk.

We have seen fatal accidents aboard the USS *Fitzgerald* and USS *McCain* caused by insufficient time to train sailors and maintain ships. We have also seen fatal aviation accidents in the Marine Corps as their equipment ages and their training is limited.

The average age of Air Force aircraft is 27 years, and only 5 of 58 Army combat brigades are "ready to fight tonight."

Continuing resolutions also hurt our taxpayers. In fact, the Secretary of the Navy recently said that the lack of funding certainty has cost the Navy between \$4 billion and \$5 billion. It makes it costlier to buy military equipment, and that added cost is ultimately passed on to the taxpayer.

The threats we face today are so great. From China to Russia, to Iran, to North Korea, to terrorist groups around the globe, we haven't seen this serious a threat environment since World War II.

What makes this issue even more frustrating is that both the House and the Senate, in an overwhelmingly bipartisan manner, have passed a defense authorization bill showing our clear support for funding our military at \$700 billion. The bill passed with 356 votes in the House and on a unanimous voice vote in the Senate, yet we find ourselves at a deadlock and our government on the verge of a shutdown because congressional Democrats want to advance their immigration agenda.

Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. I know my colleagues may not like our President; I know my colleagues may not agree with me on immigration; I know my colleagues have different priorities than I do; but for goodness' sake, can we not at least agree that we