

basic oversight is essential to ensuring that the American people and our partners around the world are not paying for the Taliban's reign of terror.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. STANTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6586, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, even several years after our withdrawal, the United States continues to have important interests in Afghanistan, not only ensuring it is never again used as a base for terrorists to plan attacks against the United States but also keeping our commitment to the Afghan people.

Keeping that commitment means continuing to advocate for a more inclusive government that respects human rights, particularly for women and girls. It means that we continue humanitarian assistance to support the Afghan people, and it means that we never forget that too many Afghans who supported our decades-long mission are there.

The reports and strategy included in this legislation address the important issue of how we can prevent the erosion of our tools to influence Taliban behavior without a presence on the ground. We must ensure our assistance is not diverted or misused and that the international community remains unified in insisting that the Taliban fulfill their commitment and improves their record, particularly on human rights, before they can receive international recognition. We must ensure that the Afghan Fund, which holds the former assets of the Afghan central bank, is used for the benefit of the Afghan people.

I thank Mr. BURCHETT and Chairman MCCAUL for their collaboration with the Foreign Affairs Committee minority staff to improve this legislation, particularly in clarifying that what we are looking to address are actions that are inconsistent with U.S. law and policy. For example, we have made exceptions in sanctions against the Taliban to allow for the continued delivery of humanitarian aid, which supports our interests.

I hope that the reports mandated by this bill will offer valuable insights and assurances about our continued engagement in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this important bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. BURCHETT), the author of this bill.

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman, and I appreciate the kind words of the gentleman across the aisle and his support for this important piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, when the United States withdrew from Afghanistan in 2021, over \$7 billion worth of military equipment was left behind for the Taliban. This seems to be a usual occurrence for

this country, no matter who is in power.

I was the mayor of Knox County. With anywhere from \$10 million to \$15 million, we can build a high school in Tennessee. I can't imagine what \$7 billion would do across the country. Anyway, all that is outrageous.

Every cent our government spends comes from the American people, and right now, we are borrowing a whole heck of a lot of it. We are \$35 trillion in debt. The fact that their money has gone to terrorists, to me, is just a complete disgrace, Mr. Speaker. This bill would help prevent any more money from ending up in the hands of the Taliban.

The bill does three things.

First, it states the policy of the United States is to oppose financial or material support to the dadgum Taliban. It also calls for a report on any foreign countries that have given financial or material support to the Taliban and calls for the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to discourage foreign countries from providing support.

This came from a conversation I had in a committee. I want to give John Stout in my office some incredible kudos for helping me craft this bill. We asked a member, I believe it was, of the State Department, this money that we give to these organizations, these countries, is there any way to keep it from getting into the hands of terrorists? In fact, he said: No. In this case, there was not.

Second, this bill calls for a report on cash assistance programs in Afghanistan and puts safeguards in place to prevent the Taliban from accessing it, keeping them from getting to the money.

Third, it requires a report on the Afghan Fund and the Afghanistan central bank and what controls are in place to make sure these funds are not diverted or misused.

Thirteen brave servicemembers, including a constituent of mine, Staff Sergeant Ryan Knauss, lost their lives in the Afghanistan withdrawal. He was technically the last American to lose his life in Afghanistan. The road I live on, the State highway, has been named in his honor. I see it every day when I drive down it, and I think about that.

I have held his parents both when they have cried and I have cried, and it is just very emotional for me. These folks lost their lives in the Afghanistan withdrawal, and we need to make sure our tax dollars don't go toward terrorists who killed Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote for this bill, which keeps our government accountable and prevents the Taliban from getting its hands on any more of Americans' hard-earned money. I thank my friends across the aisle as well for their support.

Mr. STANTON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time that I am aware of, and I yield myself the bal-

ance of my time for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is critical for preserving the United States' ability to influence the Taliban and keep our commitments to the Afghan people.

Again, I thank Mr. BURCHETT and Mr. MCCAUL for working with the House Foreign Affairs Committee minority to ensure that this bill remains aligned with our values and aligned with our larger policy goals in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, the world cannot turn a blind eye while the Taliban continues to wreak havoc on the lives of the Afghan people.

The Biden administration and our partners and allies have a responsibility to ensure that funding flowing to Afghanistan solely benefits the Afghan people and not their Taliban overlords. We must not be complicit in funding Taliban atrocities in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MCCORMICK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6586, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### KOREAN AMERICAN DIVIDED FAMILIES NATIONAL REGISTRY ACT

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7152) to direct the Secretary of State to establish a national registry of Korean American divided families, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7152

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Korean American Divided Families National Registry Act".

#### SEC. 2. NATIONAL REGISTRY OF KOREAN AMERICAN DIVIDED FAMILIES.

The Secretary of State, acting through the Special Envoy on North Korean Human Rights Issues or such other individual as the Secretary may designate, shall—

(1) collate information on Korean American families who wish to be reunited with family members in North Korea from which such Korean American families were divided after the signing of the Agreement Concerning a Military Armistice in Korea, signed at Panmunjom July 27, 1953 (commonly referred to as the "Korean War Armistice Agreement"), in anticipation of future

reunions for such families and family members, including in-person and video reunions; and

(2) establish a private internal national registry of the names and other relevant information of such Korean American families—

(A) to host such future reunions in South Korea, the United States, or third countries; and

(B) to provide for a private internal repository of information about such Korean American families and family members in North Korea, including information about individuals who may be deceased.

**SEC. 3. ACTIONS TO FACILITATE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND NORTH KOREA.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State shall take such actions as may be necessary to ensure that any direct dialogue between the United States and North Korea includes progress towards holding future reunions for Korean American families and their family members in North Korea as described in section 2.

(b) CONSULTATIONS.—The Secretary of State shall consult with the Government of the Republic of Korea in carrying out this section.

(c) REPORT.—No later than one year after enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for 5 years, the Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on—

(1) the status of the national registry established pursuant to section 2(a)(2);

(2) the number of individuals included on the registry who—

(A) have met their family members in North Korea during previous reunions; and

(B) have yet to meet their family members in North Korea during previous reunions;

(3) a summary of responses by North Korea to requests to hold reunions of divided families; and

(4) a description of regulations in North Korea and actions taken by North Korea in the year previous to submission of each report that prevent the emigration of family members of Korean American families.

(d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this Act, “appropriate congressional committees” means the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MCCORMICK) and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STANTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the sorrowful legacy of the Korean war is with us even today, more than 70 years after the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed.

The Korean Peninsula remains divided between a nation of free people

and a totalitarian state that subjects its people and its population to utter tyranny and refuses to allow them to connect with the outside world from fear of losing control.

The sinister Kim regime continues to threaten the peace and security of the region and the world. We watched with alarm last week when Vladimir Putin visited North Korea, and the two rogue regimes signed a new strategic partnership agreement.

Meanwhile, families remain broken, from those still fighting to bring the remains of their loved ones home to those with extended family members still in North Korea.

Our vibrant Korean-American community feels this legacy strongly. More than 100,000 have relatives in North Korea, family members and descendants of those trapped on the north side of the 1953 armistice line.

The Korean American Divided Families National Registry Act requires the Secretary of State to establish a voluntary data repository for Korean Americans interested in participating in future reunions with their relatives in North Korea.

This bill also helps to ensure that any future dialogue between the United States and North Korea includes progress toward reunions for Korean-American families.

I thank the authors of this bipartisan bill, Congresswoman WEXTON and Congresswoman STEEL, for their work to help bring peace to Korean-American families. At the February 6 markup of the Foreign Affairs Committee, H.R. 7152 was unanimously adopted by a vote of 49-0.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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Mr. STANTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 7152. First, I thank Representative WEXTON for her inspiring leadership on this important bill, and I thank Chairman MCCAUL for working in a bipartisan way to move this important legislation forward. This bill addresses a deeply human issue: the separation of Korean families caused by the Korean war.

One of the most painful outcomes of the Korean war was the division of families, a wound that, 70 years after the war's end, has yet to heal. This separation has caused immense suffering, not only for those in Korea but also for Korean Americans here in the United States. Over 100,000 Korean Americans have been unable to see or hear from their loved ones in North Korea.

Despite its ongoing tensions with North Korea, South Korea has managed to facilitate some family reunions through video calls, letters, and in-person meetings. Unfortunately, Korean Americans have not had similar opportunities. Currently there is no formal U.S. Government process to help them reunite with their relatives in North Korea.

H.R. 7152 aims to fill this gap. It calls on the State Department to gather information from Korean Americans who wish to reunite with their families and work toward facilitating those reunions. This bill also calls on the State Department to make family reunions a priority in any discussions with North Korea.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is about honoring families and ensuring that our Korean-American constituents can stay connected to those taken from them as a result of war and borders. Let's give them a chance to reunite, to heal, and to find peace.

I encourage my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. STANTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Virginia (Ms. WEXTON), the leader on this bill.

Ms. WEXTON. Mr. Speaker, as you may know, last year I was diagnosed with progressive supranuclear palsy, or PSP. It is basically Parkinson's on steroids, and I don't recommend it. It has affected my ability to speak, so I am using a text-to-speech app to make it easier for you and our colleagues to hear and understand me.

I rise today in support of my bipartisan Korean American Divided Families National Registry Act, which will help Korean Americans reconnect with the families they left behind in North Korea decades ago in the wake of the Korean war.

For more than seven decades, Korean-American families have not been able to see or speak with their relatives left behind in North Korea, and second- and third-generation Korean Americans know nothing but stories and heartbreak about their separated family members.

Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago, I participated in a bipartisan congressional delegation to the Republic of Korea and saw firsthand some of the lasting consequences that families have faced as a result of the war and displacement.

I have heard the stories of Korean-American families in Virginia and across the country who have sought for most of their lives for a chance to reconnect with their loved ones but have faced too great of a challenge in accessing any official channels to do so.

My bipartisan legislation being taken up by the House today helps to fix that problem. This bill would establish a data repository through the State Department of information about Korean-American families across the U.S., as well as their separated family members in North Korea, both living and deceased, and encourage cooperation between our government and that of North Korea for the purpose of offering the opportunity for these families to reconnect either in person or digitally.

The South Korean Ministry of Reunification, which is tasked with ensuring that South Korea is prepared for reunification when and if it occurs, maintains a similar registry of families that

were separated by the war and its aftermath.

By taking up this legislation today, we are giving these Korean-American families hope. This is a long overdue step to help make these families whole again, fittingly on the anniversary of the start of the Korean war.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this bipartisan bill to reunite Korean-American families.

Mr. STANTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, our conversations about the Korean Peninsula are often dominated by North Korea's nuclear and missile policy. While these are important conversations to have, we cannot lose sight of critical humanitarian and human rights concerns on the Korean Peninsula.

This bill is about a very personal and universal issue. It is about family. It is about connection. It is about bringing people together across generations and across borders.

Korean Americans who yearn for the chance to reunite once again with long-lost family deserve a chance to make that dream a reality.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me and support this important bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for closing.

As a member of the AI task force, that was pretty cool to watch that actually go down just now for Ms. WEXTON.

For far too long, the totalitarian regime in P'yongyang has denied Korean-American families the opportunity to reconnect with their family members in North Korea.

The Divided Families National Registry Act helps to lay the groundwork for those eventual reunions for which we continue to hope and work for. May that day arrive soon.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I wish to add my voice of support for H.R. 7152, the Korean American Divided Families National Registry Act, introduced by Rep. JENNIFER WEXTON and Rep. MICHELLE STEEL, good friends and colleagues of mine on the Congressional-Executive Commission on China.

This bill is a very tender-hearted one, for it recognizes the pain which still lingers so many decades after the Korean War Armistice, which divided family members in the North from those in the South.

By creating a registry of those who wish to be united with family members, this bill recognizes the depth of that pain, while offering hope that at some point in the future, a more permanent reunion may be possible.

It also harbors no illusions about the Kim regime in the Communist North, requiring that our State Department raise the reunion issue in any dialogue between the U.S. and the

North, in consultation with our ally, the Republic of Korea, without allowing the North the ability to use this emotionally fraught issue as leverage in negotiations.

In other words, the aims of this bill are limited, and tempered by an understanding of the political dynamics on the peninsula, while taking a practical step towards eventual reunion of family members.

I ask my colleagues to join me in support, and I commend Reps. WEXTON and STEEL for this effort to help Korean-American families,

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MCCORMICK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7152, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN PAKISTAN

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 901) expressing support for democracy and human rights in Pakistan, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

##### H. RES. 901

Whereas Pakistan is an important and valued partner of the United States;

Whereas, on December 10, 1948, Pakistan became one of the original signatories to, and supported the creation of, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR);

Whereas, on June 23, 2010, Pakistan ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR);

Whereas, following the end of the most recent period of military rule in 2008, Pakistan completed its first peaceful transition of power between civilian governments led by different political parties in 2013, but the military continues to exert undue influence on the politics of the country;

Whereas, during previous elections, most recently in 2018, election monitors expressed concern about constraints on the freedom of expression and freedom of association and noted allegations of influence by the military-led establishment on the electoral process;

Whereas the Department of State's Country Report on Human Rights Practices has often highlighted significant human rights issues in Pakistan across multiple years, including unlawful, arbitrary, and extrajudicial killings, forced disappearance and arbitrary detention by the state or its agents, the taking of political prisoners, serious restrictions on free expression and media, and substantial interference with the freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association;

Whereas, on April 9, 2022, the National Assembly voted to remove Imran Khan as Prime Minister through a vote of no-confidence motion;

Whereas, on August 10, 2023, President Arif Alvi dissolved Pakistan's National Assembly on the advice of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to allow for new elections, although the Election Commission of Pakistan subsequently announced the postponement of elections until February 2024 to redraw constituencies of the National Assembly to reflect the 2023 Census;

Whereas, on September 1, 2023, caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said the Government "was committed to safeguarding and upholding the rights of all its citizens", and that the Government "would provide constitutional continuity till the next general elections are held in the country";

Whereas, on February 8, 2024, millions of Pakistanis participated in Pakistan's general election, with record numbers of women, youth, and members of religious and ethnic minority groups registered to vote;

Whereas Pakistan's 2024 general election was marked by allegations by credible international and local observers of interference in the electoral process, including electoral violence, intimidation, arrest of political actors, restrictions to freedom of assembly, restrictions on freedom of expression, and restrictions on access to the internet and telecommunications;

Whereas, on February 9, 2024, the Department of State noted that it shared the assessment of observers that the election included "undue restrictions on freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly", condemned "electoral violence" as well as "restrictions on the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms", and called for the full investigation of fraud or interference in Pakistan's general elections;

Whereas the Constitution of Pakistan states that "the Federal Government shall have control and command of the Armed Forces", and the oath taken by members of the Armed Forces swears they will "uphold the Constitution" and "not engage in any political activities";

Whereas an essential safeguard of democracy is civilian command and control of apolitical military and security forces; and

Whereas democracy, development, rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) affirms its strong support for democracy in Pakistan, including free and fair elections reflecting the will of the people of Pakistan;

(2) calls on the President and the Secretary of State to strengthen engagement with the Government of Pakistan to ensure democracy, human rights, and the rule of law are upheld;

(3) urges the Government of Pakistan to uphold democratic and electoral institutions, human rights, and the rule of law, and respect the fundamental guarantees of due process, freedom of press, freedom of assembly, and freedom of speech of the people of Pakistan;

(4) condemns attempts to suppress the people of Pakistan's participation in their democracy, including through harassment, intimidation, violence, arbitrary detention, restrictions on access to the internet and telecommunications, or any violation of their human, civil, or political rights;

(5) condemns any effort to subvert the political, electoral, or judicial processes of Pakistan; and

(6) urges the full and independent investigation of claims of interference or irregularities in Pakistan's February 2024 election.