

We find ourselves now with this minister indicating that he sees nothing wrong, it would be good for the State of Israel.

Now, dear friends, friends, if this official can say that he will do what is good for the State of Israel, is it wrong for me to stand in the well of the Congress of the United States of America, born here in the United States of America, born in Louisiana, lived my life here in the United States of America, no desire to live anywhere else or move to any other place, is it wrong for me to say that I think I should do what is in the best interests of my country?

He does what is in the best interests of his country; I do what is in the best interests of my country. I don't believe it is in the best interests of my country for us to continue to send billions of dollars to Israel when Israel's Knesset has voted from the river to the sea there will be no Palestinian state. From the river to the sea.

My God, can you imagine what would happen if someone stood here in the well of the House of Representatives and said, from the river to the sea there will be no State of Israel? I don't have to imagine it. I have seen what happens. They get punished. They become an anti-Semite.

What do we call the people who say, from the river to the sea, there will be no Palestinian state? Is there a double standard? Is there a double standard? I believe that there has to be a Palestinian state, so I am out of step with a good many people. Remember, however, I believe it is better to stand alone than to not stand at all.

I don't think that it is good for the United States to continue to fund wars that a good many people in this country do not support. I am one of them. I think it is time to bring this war to an end. It is time for us to move toward a two-state solution, but also more importantly or equally as important, it is time to bring home the hostages. Negotiate so that the hostages can be released. It is time for them to be released. Let them go home.

It is time for us to negotiate a serious two-state solution, but unfortunately the Knesset has said that it will not happen. This government says that it won't.

□ 1215

Well, I contend that if this government says that it won't, that it is okay. The government in Israel has every right to make these comments, but I also think that the government of the United States has every right to say: No more money, no more bombs, no more planes. You can do what you choose, you are a sovereign nation, but so is the United States of America.

We are a sovereign Nation, Mr. Speaker. We have every right to say: That if you can't agree on the two-state solution that was mandated in 1948, 1947, then okay.

We don't have to support eternal conflict. We don't have to support the war

where thousands of babies have been killed. We don't have to support the taking of the land from the Palestinians in the West Bank by the settlers. We don't have to support this.

But I don't speak for us. I speak for myself and everybody who agrees with me, and a good many people do, by the way.

I believe that our alternative to continuing to support the erosion of Palestinian land, the taking of Palestinian land, the declaring that there will be no Palestinian state, I think we should acknowledge that you are a sovereign nation, but so are we and that we will stand for what we have stood for for decades and that is a two-state solution.

I compliment President Biden for making this a significant issue as we go through this time of great turmoil. I compliment him, but I think that we have reached a point now where there has to be a change in our policy. If Israel changed its policy, we can change ours. It is time for a change in the American policy.

We can still be friends. The government of Israel, the country of Israel, will be our friend, but we don't have to support this war. We can ask for peace, and peace is the solution. There is not going to be a solution other than a peaceful two-state solution if you want peace.

Now, if you want eternal conflict or if you want calm, if you want things to calm down, then you can have a one-state solution. Remember this: There is a calm in a dungeon where people are suffering. You can have calm in a dungeon, but that is not peace.

If we want peace where neighbors can work together, you have to work toward it. You don't make peace with friends. They are already in a peaceful relationship. You have to make peace with people who have been antithetical to your views.

It is time to say you don't have to make peace, but we don't have to support what you are doing.

We have got an aircraft carrier with Americans out there at risk, nuclear powered. It is like a floating military base. When we send out these nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, I am told they can be fueled such that, if need be, they can stay for 25 years, and it has other ships and other aircraft there with it, some 90 aircraft.

Our people are at risk because we have a state, by and through its government, who is saying there will be no two-state solution, and we have now what appears to be a conflict that is expanding and may eventually become a conflagration. It is expanding.

I am for everybody having the right to defend themselves, and that has to include the State of Israel.

I am also for peace, and peace is not going to be gained by continuing the process of making war. At some point, either someone is going to trigger something that will take this to a different place, or we will back off and try

to have arrangements first and then peace to follow. All of the hostages should be brought home, all of them.

Now, I close with this, Mr. Speaker. I have said that I don't think that our government should continue to support the war, but I don't speak for the government, so I am going to speak for myself now. I didn't speak for the government before. Everything that I have said, I speak for myself and all of those who agree with me.

Here is what I say. If you bring a standalone bill to this floor, I am going to vote against it. If it is a standalone bill, just as the last one was—I believe it was the last—to send more funds to Israel, it is no secret, don't count me as a yea. Count me as a nay if you bring a standalone bill.

Now, someone would say: Why wouldn't you just say that you are going to vote against any bill?

Well, because I have been here long enough to have the good sense to know that these things can be packaged such that you have to hold your nose and your breath and close your eyes and turn your back and just vote for it. You may not want to, but the way it is packaged can push you into a corner, a place that you dare not go and don't want to be, but you do.

If you bring a standalone bill, I am voting against it and probably will vote against others that are not standalone, depending on how they have been packaged. It is time for us to take a stand.

There is a song, a spiritual song, that has the words "just stand," "just stand." "After you've done all you can"—and I am doing all that I can.

After you have done all that you can, knowing that it is dangerous to be right in affairs where established men are wrong, after you have done all that you can, just stand. Just stand. Stand for liberty and justice for all as represented by that flag behind the Speaker.

Stand with Carlyle: "No lie can live forever."

Stand with William Cullen Bryant: "Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again."

Stand with Dr. King: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

Stand knowing that the words of C.A. Tindley are powerful and right:

Harder yet may be the fight;
Right may often yield to might;
Wickedness high may seem to reign;
And Satan's cause may seem to gain.
But there is a God that rules above,
With a hand of power and a heart of love;
And when I am right, I just believe that
God will help me fight.

Harder yet may be the fight, Mr. Speaker.

Harder may be the fight.

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

CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM PROCESS IN FLORIDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FONG). Under the Speaker's announced

policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, this November, Floridians in my home State are going to be asked to vote on two constitutional amendments, State constitutional amendments. Not only am I opposed to both amendments, but I am vehemently against using the constitutional referendum process in the State of Florida to legislate. That is not what the referendum process was created for. It was designed to amend our State constitution, not to legislate.

We have a legislature. We have a process to pass laws that do not involve radically changing our constitution. The referendum process seeks to circumvent Florida's legislative process by offering quick, easy, and often worse fixes to complicated problems.

Need I remind everyone—Mr. Speaker, this is amazing—that in Florida's State Constitution, we have pregnant pigs discussed. I am not making that up.

If you are unfamiliar, in 2002, Floridians passed a constitutional referendum that made it unlawful to confine a pregnant pig in an enclosure that would prevent her from being able to turn around safely in that pen. That is in our constitution. We were the laughingstock of the Nation.

While Florida's Constitution is silent on the rights of cows, horses, chickens, or other barnyard animals, it addresses in considerable detail the rights of pregnant pigs. That is unbelievable. We passed that into Florida law.

With referendums, voters are forced to make decisions about complicated issues with the little information they receive, which is sometimes often just from political messaging, TV and radio ads. It is whoever can buy the most influence through the media who gets their referendum passed by the people.

For those of you who don't know, Florida's referendum process requires signatures in support of a proposed amendment from 8 percent of the total votes cast statewide in the last Presidential election from one-half of the 27 congressional districts in the State of Florida.

Now, that is a tough challenge. It is an expensive challenge. It is a huge undertaking that is usually only backed by large organizations with immense financial capability. This is not something for the people. They buy and sell an idea they can't get passed through our State legislature. That is what this special interest money is able to buy.

State constitutions should be what define the supreme law governing a State, the civil liberties and the rights of its people and the structure and power of the State's government. It is a governing document. What we put in should be carefully defined and agreed upon.

Unlike writing legislation, definitions are not even required in these

constitutional referendums as long as the amendment is "clear to voters." That leaves so much room for interpretation, and it is up to the State to host a lot of unnecessary lawsuits.

□ 1230

That brings me to our current predicament this November. Neither Amendment 3 nor Amendment 4, I believe, should be voted on at the ballot box. These are structural State constitution issues. That is what referendums should be used for, not this Florida Amendment 3.

The issue needs to be thoroughly examined and decided on by our Florida State Legislature and the Governor. We are a democratic republic for a reason. Referendums are shortcuts to hard answers. In order to govern well, we must leave the legislating to our State legislatures.

Now, I am rising today firmly opposed to Amendment 3, which, as you can see, is the Marijuana Legalization Initiative, a referendum that Floridians are being asked to vote on this November at the ballot box.

There are so many misunderstandings about what this referendum will actually do, so let's get into them.

First, this amendment would not legalize homegrown marijuana, as you see in the top right here. This amendment, instead, allows only State-licensed entities to acquire, cultivate, process, manufacture, sell, and distribute marijuana and related accessories.

Currently, medical marijuana treatment centers are the only State-licensed entities. They will remain the only ones allowed to trade marijuana in the State of Florida, so, instantly, you create pretty much a monopoly.

If someone wanted to legally grow and/or sell marijuana products, they would have to get approval from the State legislature first, but this will create a monopoly for big marijuana corporations that already have licenses to legally sell marijuana to anyone over 21 in the State.

Now, this is one of the most amazing parts of this that you never hear talked about in the ads that they actually are producing, and that is the fact that these corporations that are going to have this monopoly also get legalized immunity.

It will not get fentanyl-laced marijuana off our streets, as some have said. Supporters of this amendment claim it will better regulate the marijuana circulating, but the evidence tells a very different story.

In States where recreational marijuana has already been legalized, we have seen illegal drug markets flourish. People still turn to illegal and unsanctioned drug dealers to purchase marijuana because it is cheaper or easier to purchase, no matter your age.

According to Rutgers' Center of Alcohol and Substance Use Studies, California, which legalized it, produces about 40 percent of the Nation's mari-

juana, the vast majority of it grown by unlicensed growers. With three-quarters of the U.S. marijuana market made up of illegal products, that means that California is fueling a massive underground economy.

Of course, with a flourishing black market comes an increase in crime. Again, take California for example. It was the first State in the Nation to legalize the medical use of the drug in 1996. The State would go on to legalize recreational use in 2016.

Recent California police reports suggest that arrests for marijuana-related crimes have increased following legalization. Among such reports, there was a series of police records secured by the Los Angeles Times in early 2019 showing that arrests actually rose 166 percent since 1996.

Just this year, California has reported several massive illegal cannabis busts, with one resulting in the confiscation of over \$1 million worth of illicit weed cultivated by unlicensed growers.

It doesn't go away. It just stays underground.

California's Department of Cannabis Control has raided at least 60 alleged grow houses over the past 2 years, and they suspect well over 100 more remain in operation. You heard me right: California actually had to create a separate department to go after the marijuana.

Rutgers also suggests illegal operations have increased in States where it has been legalized due to lax oversight, with some sellers skipping the acquisition of a legal license yet still operating out of storefronts, presenting themselves as licensed dealers.

Mr. Speaker, we do not want this in Florida. We do not need this in our community. We certainly don't need it in our own backyards.

Legalized weed sales do not get rid of dangerous fentanyl-laced marijuana either, another lie that is being told on the television ads that are trying to procure support for the referendum on Amendment 3.

In fact, in Missouri, a State where recreational marijuana is legal for people over 21 years of age, doctors are seeing more cases of marijuana being mixed with fentanyl—more, not less.

According to Dr. Michael Wenzinger, a psychiatrist at the Washington University School of Medicine, they have seen an increase in cases of teenagers inadvertently consuming these deadly combinations.

Dr. Wenzinger also suggests that people believe that since weed is sold in dispensaries, it is safe to consume. That is a lie. They are lulled into a false sense of security, thinking they are buying legal marijuana when, all too often, that is not the case.

Reports also show State law enforcement has found marijuana laced with fentanyl in Illinois and New York, two States where recreational use is legal, as well as Alabama and Louisiana, States where medical marijuana is legal.

It is clear that even in States with government-regulated dispensaries at the ready, people still choose to buy their marijuana on the black market, mainly, as we all know, because of their age.

We have also seen the potency of marijuana increase drastically. Mr. Speaker, this is the part of this issue that concerns me as a 41-year law enforcement officer. The percentage of THC, the main psychoactive component in cannabis, has increased by more than 200 percent from 1995 to 2015—more than 200 percent.

Even more concerning, a May study in the journal of Psychological Medicine found that schizophrenia cases in men ages 21 to 30 may have been preventable by up to 30 percent without the persistent use of marijuana.

We think we have a mental health issue in this country now. Wait until we have had all these 21- to 25-year-old or 18- to 25-year-old young developing brains on high levels of THC for extended periods of time, and we begin to see the increase in schizophrenia, paranoia, and other psychotic breaks.

Florida's Amendment 3 increases crime and illegal distribution of marijuana. It doesn't reduce it.

It monopolizes the industry, creates blanket legal immunity for big marijuana corporations, does not legalize home growth, and promotes marijuana use that is linked to psychotic disorders.

Mr. Speaker, for all these reasons, I am adamantly opposed to Florida's Amendment 3 in November.

I also want to mention Amendment 4, as I discussed earlier, because Floridians are being asked to vote on Amendment 4, and this one really is just a travesty. If passed, this amendment would prevent any law from prohibiting, penalizing, delaying, or restricting abortion before viability, or when necessary to protect the patient's health, placing the decision in the hands of the healthcare provider.

Here is what is amazing about this: Under current Florida State law, in order to receive an abortion, it must occur before the baby reaches 6 weeks of gestation. However, there are exceptions built into the State law, including rape, incest, and human trafficking, that allow for the procedure up to 15 weeks of pregnancy.

It also allows physicians—physicians, and I say that specifically—to terminate a pregnancy if necessary to save the life, not just for health reasons, but to save the life of the mother or to prevent a serious risk of substantial and irreversible physical impairment. Two physicians are required to approve such a procedure.

Let's get this straight. First, Amendment 4 does not define what "viability," "healthcare provider," or "patient's health" means. As you see in the left bottom here, it does not define any of that.

Under current Florida statutes, "viability" has been defined as the state of

fetal development when the life of a fetus is sustainable outside the womb through standard medical measures, but there is no universal consensus.

As science continues to advance, the age of viability of a fetus has become earlier. In the 1960s, infants weighing less than 1 kilogram, equivalent to about 27 weeks, were considered non-viable. In the 1970s, when *Roe v. Wade* was established, viability was estimated to be between 24 to 28 weeks. Today, it is closer to 23 to 24 weeks, with some hospitals even successfully delivering and caring for babies at 22 weeks.

Not only does Amendment 4 not define "viability," it doesn't define "healthcare provider," leaving it up to interpretation. This means anyone can decide a woman should get an abortion, and I mean really anyone.

"Patient's health" is left up to the interpretation of these so-called healthcare providers, whoever they are. It is not to save the life. It could be for any reason.

Under current Florida State law, abortions are not allowed past 6 weeks. With this amendment, there is really no limit to when an abortion can be performed. It says abortions are legal "before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health."

A so-called healthcare provider could decide it is best for the patient's health to terminate that pregnancy at 9 months, as late as they want, and with total disregard for the viability of the baby.

Mr. Speaker, they are talking about taking limbs off of babies when they are aborted at 9 months, ripping them apart in the womb when they can feel pain. We know they feel that pain.

□ 1245

It is unconscionable that that is going on in America. They want it to go on. It is actually already happening. In Wisconsin, there are eight documented cases. This is essentially approving a rubber stamp for late-term abortions going even further than *Roe v. Wade*. This is extreme.

With *Roe v. Wade*, in the first trimester, zero to 12 weeks, there was almost no regulation.

In the second, 13 to 27 weeks, there were regulations to protect women's health when necessary.

In the third trimester, 28 to 40 weeks, it allowed States to ban abortions so long as exceptions were made to protect the life and health of the mother, as defined by a physician, I might add.

Amendment 4 would allow abortions without restrictions up to viability, which is currently believed to be 23 weeks, a time that is well into the second trimester. Even under *Roe v. Wade* it would have only been allowed at that time to protect the woman's health or life.

With amendment 4 in Florida, what they are trying to do is that abortion could occur for whatever reason one decides whenever they decide.

As you can see in the lower left here, Mr. Speaker, this removes parental approval, parental consent. Currently, minors have to get parental consent to get a tattoo, to have their ears pierced, or any other medical procedure. That is not Florida law.

This amendment, however, would only require notification but not permission. That means parents can be notified immediately before or even after their 14-year-old daughter has had an abortion by one of these healthcare providers at any time in her pregnancy. There is no parental consent required.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if you watch the television ads that are being run in the State of Florida right now, you would not think that to be the case. This constitutional amendment No. 4 is the most deceptive amendment I have ever seen. It is not what it seems, and it has no place being voted on in the ballot box.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, this is amendment 4. This is amendment 4 printed out. It is just this little piece at the top. It is less than one-quarter of a page to take the life of a baby at 9 months old, where we are going to rip its limbs off to abort it. It is less than one-quarter of a page.

This is a tax referendum, and it is eight pages. We are more clear about how we are going to cut taxes than we are about how we are going to execute a baby in the womb. Mr. Speaker, tell me that is not deceptive.

The ads that they run are so misleading. They create such falsehoods. A referendum on taxable values of a home is far more fleshed out and defined than one concerning the life of a child. It is ridiculous.

This is bad legislation. This is a bad way to legislate. In our Constitution, it is a bait and switch trying to fool Floridians into changing our constitution to include abortion without any restrictions.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Floridians to vote "no" on this amendment.

Referendums are shortcuts to hard answers. Let's leave the hard answers to the State legislature where they belong. That is why we are a democratic republic. Let them do their job. Do not allow those with special interest money to decide what the law is going to be in Florida.

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

FARM BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EZELL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, America is facing a farm and food crisis. As we are here speaking today in the Nation's Capitol, there are farmers and ranchers who are