

horses for human consumption. Regardless of gender, political affiliation, or whether they live in urban or rural areas, Americans oppose this awful practice.

The last U.S. horse slaughterhouses were closed in 2007 but, despite public opposition, Congress recently restarted horse meat inspections, paving the way for slaughterhouses to reopen. That's why we need to pass the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act, which would prohibit the sale and transport of horses for slaughter in the United States, as well as prohibit their transport across the borders to Canada and Mexico. The passage of this critical bipartisan bill would save the lives of approximately 100,000 American horses exported for slaughter each year.

Horses have a special place in our Nation's history and folklore, and they are not raised for food. This bill would make sure that these majestic creatures are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve. It should be passed now.

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SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

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

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, today is Israel's independence day, Yom Ha'azmaut, and I recognize our great ally's many achievements over the past 64 years.

Israel has endured against all odds, against border attacks, against deniers of a right to exist, against international bias; and even in the face of the threats posed by Iran's nuclear ambitions, Israel valiantly strides forward.

Israel is a world hub for biotechnology, for medical research, green energy and innovation, and she is also a welcoming home to those seeking freedom and equal rights as the region's only true democracy.

So as we celebrate Israel's independence day, let's remember why our bonds run so deep. It's more than strategic cooperation or shared security. It's the values that Americans and Israelis share. For democracy and freedom, for basic human dignity, that's what forms the bond; and it's a bond that I will always work to protect and support.

NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

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

Mr. SCHILLING. Mr. Speaker, a few months ago I had the opportunity to visit the Children's Advocacy Center in my hometown of Rock Island, Illinois. The work that they do there to help children and their families that are

victims of crimes is truly amazing, and I am grateful for their commitment to helping the children that need it the most.

April is recognized as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Unfortunately, sexual abuse of children is still a serious problem in our country, and too many cases go unreported.

My colleague from California and I have introduced H.R. 3486, the Speak Out to Stop Child Abuse Act, which would require States that receive Federal funding under their Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to have a law on the books that makes it a criminal penalty for any adult who knowingly fails to report the sexual abuse of a child.

H.R. 3486 simply asks States to help by requiring adults who witness the sexual abuse of a child to report it. I want to thank Congresswoman BASS for introducing this legislation, and I also recommend all of my colleagues help support this, also.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

(Ms. BASS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BASS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. During this month, it is important that we acknowledge the role that we all play in promoting the social and emotional well-being of children in our communities. Unfortunately, throughout this congressional term, we've been astonished by a few high-profile child sex abuse cases; and in some situations, the abuse was unreported for years, leaving dozens of youth vulnerable to further maltreatment for decades. This is unacceptable. Adults should never turn a blind eye after seeing sexual abuse firsthand.

Sadly, failing to report child sexual abuse is not new. In 1999, Sherrice Iverson, a 7-year-old girl from Los Angeles was attacked in a restroom. A witness didn't stop the attack or even call for help. She was ultimately murdered. Fortunately, California enacted a law in her name to help ensure this never happens again.

At the end of 2011, Representative BOBBY SCHILLING and I introduced a similar bill here in Congress. The bipartisan Speak Out to Stop Child Abuse Act requires all adult witnesses to report child sexual abuse to law enforcement or Child Protective Services. I ask my colleagues to cosponsor this bipartisan bill.

EPA

(Mr. FLEMING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, the EPA is out to get you and crucify you. That's the message from one of President Obama's EPA appointees to our country's oil and natural gas companies.

Yesterday, we learned that an official at the Environmental Protection Agency based in Dallas used the Roman Empire to illustrate the kind of philosophy that he's followed at the EPA. Here's what he said:

The Romans used to conquer little villages in the Mediterranean. They'd go into a little Turkish town somewhere, they'd find the first five guys they saw, and they would crucify them. And then you know that town was really easy to manage for the next few years.

That's exactly what he did as an EPA official, going after a company that was safely using hydraulic fracturing to drill for gas. He led the charge to crucify this company with no proof that the company had done anything wrong in a case that was finally dismissed last month by a Federal court.

This is enviro-fascism at its worst; and if someone needs to be made an example of, it's this EPA official who disregarded science and facts to radically and negligently pursue the Obama administration's war on energy.

VA DISABILITY CLAIMS

(Mr. MCNERNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss issues affecting veterans throughout California, particularly the VA disability claims backlog and inaccuracy rates at the Oakland regional office.

A Vietnam veteran from my district, like many others across the country, is suffering from stage 4 lung cancer caused by exposure to Agent Orange. He made great sacrifices to defend our country, but waited for more than a year for the Oakland office to process his claim.

My office was able to help him, but such delays are unacceptable. Unfortunately, long waits have become the norm for veterans in northern California. With more and more veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, it is imperative that the VA take action now to address the backlog in Oakland.

While I welcome the news that the entire staff at the facility will be retrained, much more is needed. I call on the VA to implement a concrete plan to address the inaccuracies and delays at the Oakland office. Our region's and Nation's veterans deserve no less.

STUDENT LOANS

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss an important issue to young America: that's access to affordable higher education.

Young Americans today are graduating college with a degree but also with \$25,000, \$50,000, and \$100,000 in student loan debt. Thirty-seven million people have outstanding student loan debt totaling over \$1 trillion. Two-