

that focused on funding our government, instead we had to vote on a bill that contained numerous giveaways to private interests and that is why I voted “no.”

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. ROBERT HURT**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 12, 2014*

Mr. HURT. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for Roll Call vote #564, a recorded vote on H.R. 5699. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea.”

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. TIM MURPHY**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 12, 2014*

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 564 had I been present, I would have voted YEA.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

**HON. STEVE STOCKMAN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 12, 2014*

Mr. STOCKMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss today a very important and serious issue that is seemingly taking hold within our nation and that is an “assault on our freedom of the press”. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit a recent article in Roll Call entitled “Congress: Support Higher Level of Press Freedoms, End Propaganda”. In particular, the article opines “that administration officials have gone to great lengths to control media messages and the President’s refusal to grant free and easy access for photographers and reporters”. Mr. Speaker, clearly, restricting or controlling media messages is without a doubt—propaganda.

[From Roll Call, Dec. 10, 2014]

CONGRESS: SUPPORT HIGHER LEVEL OF PRESS FREEDOMS, END PROPAGANDA—COMMENTARY  
(By Maayan Jaffe)

It seems that recently, U.S. media took a turn for the worse. In 2013, Reporters Without Borders noted a profound erosion of press freedom, which included a year of attacks on whistleblowers and digital journalists, and revelations about mass surveillance. The U.S. plunged 13 spots on the group’s rankings to No. 46.

Simultaneously, reports continue to surface that administration officials have gone to great lengths to control media messages. Associated Press editors have decried the president’s refusal to grant free and easy access for photographers and reporters and equated his actions as tantamount to propaganda.

It’s striking that with what the Obama administration is doing—and is only getting away with it because the media use the handout copy and photographs—that America’s closest allies are regularly maligned. In the last month, for instance, it was reported with sensation and disdain that a top U.S. of-

ficial referred to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as “chicken-” and that U.S. ally Azerbaijan, apparently, is trying to promote its relationship with the U.S., instead of supporting radicals around the world like some others.

All this, while arch enemies—or countries that pose a risk to national security, sponsors of the murderous ISIS to the Mullahs of Iran—are given a free ride . . . even by state-sponsored media. The Washington Free Beacon reported that Congress was calling for an investigation into Voice of America’s Persian language news service as a result of the station’s systemic pro-Iran bias and cozy ties to the anti-American ruling regime, according to a letter sent recently to Secretary of State John Kerry.

The Free Beacon wrote, “Lawmakers and Iranian dissidents have long accused VOA’s Persian News Network (PNN) of producing sympathetic coverage of the Iranian regime and blacklisting prominent Iranian opposition voices . . . The call from Congress for an investigation into these alleged practices comes just a month after the Washington Free Beacon revealed that PNN had banned a prominent Iranian opposition member and placed him on a so-called ‘black list’ after he attacked Iran’s ruling regime for sponsoring terrorism.”

Earlier this year, I penned a piece in Roll Call about the tragedy of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s bias against Azerbaijan. I asked Congress why it allows \$750 million of American taxpayers’ money to fund a media outlet that is attacking our allies. That report—which found that in a one-month period RFE/RL had managed to publish 30 articles and videos about Azerbaijan (not one celebrating Azerbaijan’s accomplishments), while it ran nothing of pressure against America’s adversary, Armenia—was met with an explosion of Twitter fury.

Americans don’t want to face up to what the media has become: a propaganda machine, pandering to the special interests, superficial stereotypes, personal agendas and money, and fear of reprisal by extremist regimes.

Azerbaijan and Israel are attacked not only because attacks sell, but because they are two of the few Middle Eastern/Muslim countries with pro-Western, anti-terrorist governments and societies and therefore journalists are less afraid to come out against them. Israel is accused of war crimes for protecting itself from a daily barrage of rocket attacks and trauma, while the world is silent to Egyptian action recently taken against Gaza, a country which clearly understands the difference between Palestinian civilians and the terrorists of Hamas.

Israel and Azerbaijan take this pressure because the alternative is siding with extremism and neither country is willing to compromise their democratic, open ideals. But Congress needs to pay attention to this growing trend because good friends can only take so much bullying.

Israel and Azerbaijan—or any U.S. ally—are not without challenges and growth opportunities. Iran is a rogue regime developing nuclear weapons that could shift the world’s balance, and we are supporting a media outlet that panders to that regime. The media, with the support of Congress, needs to be bold about what is really happening on the ground. A truthful report here and there is not enough. We need to regain a top level of freedom of the press and be confident that if we tell the full truth, then truth will prevail.

Congress has an obligation to retain American freedom of the press. I hope this new Congress will see access to information as a fundamental freedom and strength. If we lose that right, I don’t want to think about what will be next . . .

IN MEMORY OF GERALD “JERRY” HOGAN

**HON. GREG WALDEN**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 12, 2014*

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to honor the memory of Gerald Hogan, who passed earlier this week at his home in McLean, Virginia. Jerry, as everyone called him, was a longtime outstanding advocate for the telecommunications industry, most recently with AT&T. Jerry is very well known throughout this Chamber and many of us regarded him as a close personal friend.

Jerry was always interested in you as a person and would ask about your family. He genuinely cared and would remember what you told him. If he learned it was your birthday, you could expect a phone call the next year. If you recounted a tale of your child, he would offer tips from a lifetime of parenting his children. Humble, generous, genuine, caring, funny and smart. . . . Jerry was all of these to his broad range of friends.

Jerry will be sorely missed for so many wonderful personal attributes, not least of which was his love for his children and their endeavors. The last few years Jerry and I had a fun gentleman’s bet as his youngest son played against my beloved Oregon Ducks. On a few big occasions my Ducks came out on the losing side of the contest but Jerry, always the funny and classy act, would see me with a twinkle in his eye and deliver some well-deserved ribbing. Our business meetings in the past were never quick as we’d joyfully spend the first portion of our time swapping stories about all of Jerry’s children and family and mine too before we’d get down to the official business matters. I will really miss all of my interactions with Jerry.

I am very privileged to have known Jerry and will always remember him very fondly. On behalf of many of my colleagues and my staff I want to let Jerry’s dear friends and family—especially his wife Donna, his two sons, Brian and Kevin, and his daughter, Kelly—know that all who knew Jerry always felt that he brought high respect and honor to his work. Our prayers are with you during this time of sadness, and may the luck of the Irish be with you always.

Mr. Speaker, a number of my colleagues have asked me to include their following comments.

Congressman FRED UPTON said: “My condolences go out to Jerry’s wife, Donna, and their wonderful children. We will miss Jerry’s bright smile, wit, and warmth. Jerry was one who, virtually every minute of his all too short life, truly lived the words of the poem ‘I shall not pass this way again.’ ‘I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.’ Thanks for all the love and laughs, Jerry. Godspeed.”

Congressman F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, Jr. said: “The world will be a little less full now that Jerry Hogan is no longer a part of it. Jerry was a truly wonderful person and I was blessed to call him a friend. I wish his wife Donna and his children the very best during this difficult time.”