

WYOMING COUNTY, 2015 SADD NATIONAL CHAPTER OF THE YEAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. JENKINS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Wyoming County, West Virginia, chapter of Students Against Destructive Decisions, also known as SADD.

The Wyoming County chapter has been named the 2015 SADD National Chapter of the Year. Consisting of 300 members from six different schools, these Wyoming County students work hard to encourage young people to avoid underage drinking, drugs, and other destructive activities.

Wyoming County and the surrounding area, like many parts of our State and country, are limited in the number of youth programs and social services leading to temptations for many teenagers. SADD helps fill the void and is a positive force in helping students make positive life choices and avoid destructive decisions.

These students represent our State's values and demonstrate compassion, commitment, and courage through their work. I know they will take the skills they have learned in SADD and become the next generation of leaders in West Virginia.

I congratulate these students and teachers and thank them for making Wyoming County a better place to live.

CONFEDERATE FLAG AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, as you pointed out, I am from Minnesota. Minnesota's Governor Ramsey was in Washington, D.C., shortly after the attack at Fort Sumter, and he was the first to offer up our support—1,000 Minnesotans—to keep our Union together.

Minnesota was at the Battle of Gettysburg. Our regiment suffered 82 percent in casualties, the greatest loss of any unit at Gettysburg on a single day.

So last night, when the Republican leadership put forward a last-minute amendment that would allow for the display and sale of the Confederate flag in our national parks, an amendment which we will vote on today that would allow this hateful symbol which evokes memories of racism and a painful period in our country's past to be displayed on public lands, I found myself shocked, outraged, and disappointed because the people in Minnesota sent me here to strive for what they strive for every day: to build a better, stronger America, an America in which we strive to give everyone hope and opportunity, that they too can pursue life, liberty, happiness, and justice.

So the flag that we are talking about is a symbol of a time when African Americans were enslaved, sold as

human commodities. It had been used as a rallying cry throughout our history for those who wish to keep our country segregated.

And we saw again last month in Charleston this flag being used as a symbol for many who carry hatred in their hearts, a man who carried so much hatred that he took the lives of nine parishioners because he viewed this flag as a symbol of his beliefs.

This flag should be no point of pride for any American, and we should take this flag down.

Just 2 days ago, without opposition, as I had the honor of being ranking member as we were doing the Interior bill, this body voted to adopt amendments which would prevent the sale or display of Confederate flags in national parks.

Those amendments were simple, commonsense efforts to place into law standards that the National Park Service had put forward last month. It was a moment of great pride for me.

All those new standards would do was bring the Federal Government in line with decisions made by many private sector retailers: Amazon, Wal-Mart, Sears, Disney. And other national retailers have all made the decision to take down this flag because of its racist history.

Private businesses are rallying behind a commonsense decision to stop peddling hateful symbols. So why in heaven and Earth is the House of Representatives, the Republican Caucus, working to ensure that the Federal Government allows them to be sold?

For House Republicans, it appears perhaps the cost of getting the votes to pass the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, which panders to polluters, is to wrap themselves in a banner of racism.

I think that is wrong, and I urge my colleagues to stand with people of great courage and great passion to say "no" to hate, "no" to racism, and "yes" to America.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on the Calvert amendment.

CLEAR LAW ENFORCEMENT FOR CRIMINAL ALIEN REMOVAL ACT OF 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to discuss H.R. 2964, the Clear Law Enforcement for Criminal Alien Removal Act.

This is a bill that I have had introduced every Congress since 2007. And we have many Members of this body, Mr. Speaker, who have joined as co-sponsors of this legislation.

What it would do specifically is this: It would ensure that State and local law enforcement officials have the tools necessary to help the Federal Government deport criminal illegal aliens from the United States.

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My legislation would require the Department of Homeland Security, when a State or local law enforcement agency arrests an alien and requests DHS to take custody of that alien, to do a few specific things. Number one, they have to take the alien into Federal custody and incarceration within 48 hours and request that the State or municipality temporarily incarcerate the alien or transport the alien to Federal custody. This would allow them to remove this individual from the country and bar them from coming back.

Mr. Speaker, the bill also requires the DHS to train State and local police in enforcement of immigration laws, the Federal Government to reimburse local and State governments, and to withhold funds from sanctuary cities.

Now, we have heard a lot about these issues in the last few days, and one of the problems that we have is the sanctuary cities. Mr. Speaker, I have before my colleagues a map that was prepared by the Center for Immigration Studies. We now have in this country 200 sanctuary cities. I am reading from this map. More than 200 cities, counties, and States across the U.S. are considered sanctuary cities.

Now, what happens in these cities is they choose to work around and to circumvent or not to abide by Federal law when it comes to immigration policy. That is one of the reasons passing the CLEAR Act is so important, holding them accountable.

Also, reading from the map, I find it so interesting that the Department of Justice has never sued or taken any measure, including denying Federal funds, against the jurisdiction that is a sanctuary city. On the other hand, we know that the Department of Justice actually sued the State of Arizona for trying to strengthen its immigration laws.

Mr. Speaker, I would come to the floor today as we talk about dealing with the criminal illegal alien population and highlighting H.R. 2964. I would ask my colleagues: What does your vote record say about your actions? Are you strengthening Federal law and abiding by Federal law? Or do those actions strengthen sanctuary cities? Do they provide more accountability? Is that what you are providing through your vote actions? Or is it something that allows a violation of Federal law to continue?

I think it is imperative that we address the issue of criminal illegal aliens, that we address the issue of sanctuary cities; and, Mr. Speaker, I think that it is imperative that we move forward with passage of the CLEAR Act by this body. It is a simple bill.

I encourage my colleagues to read it. It is 21 pages, and you will find in there that it addresses these issues that are front and foremost in our minds this day.

THE CONFEDERATE BATTLE FLAG

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I would like, first of all, to thank the Speaker of this House and the other Members who came to Charleston last month to help us with the ongoing ceremonies for Senator Clementa Pinckney.

I would also like to thank especially my colleagues—Senator TIM SCOTT, Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, and Congressman MARK SANFORD—for joining with us as we stood with the Governor of South Carolina and called for removing the Confederate battle flag from the grounds of the statehouse.

This afternoon, at 4 o'clock, as a result of a very definitive vote early this morning of 94–20, the Governor is going to sign the bill, and tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock, the flag will be removed from the statehouse.

I regret that I am not going to be able to accept the Governor's invitation and be there this afternoon because, around 4 o'clock this afternoon, we are going to be voting here on this floor.

I understand there will be around 25 votes, and 24 of them, I might not feel all that bad about missing, but one of them, I cannot afford to miss because that one vote, the Calvert amendment, will reverse votes taken by this body to join with South Carolina, Alabama, and activities going on in Mississippi to get rid of any official application to this flag, the Confederate battle flag.

Now, I think it is important for us to point out that this is not the Confederate flag. The Confederacy had three flags. This was never one of them. This flag was the Confederate battle flag of the Army of Northern Virginia, Robert E. Lee's Army; and when Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox, he asked all of his followers to furl this flag.

"Store it away," he said. "Put it in your attics." He refused to be buried in his Confederate uniform. His family refused to allow anyone dressed in the Confederate uniform to attend his funeral. Why? It is because Robert E. Lee said he considered this emblem to be a symbol of treason; yet, Mr. Speaker, Calvert puts up an amendment that we are going to vote on this afternoon to ask us to allow this flag to be sold and displayed in our national parks.

I was so proud when the decision was made by the National Park Service, Fort Sumter, a national park where the Civil War started off the coast of Charleston, South Carolina, they decided to take away all of these symbols; but the Calvert amendment is saying: No, don't take them away, put them back, and we are going to ratify the action to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I call upon all of my colleagues who come to this floor this afternoon to remember that it was on this date in 1868 that South Carolina—where it all started—South Carolina was the State that gave the votes necessary to ratify the 14th Amendment.

To me, this was a very, very important amendment calling for due process and equal protection of the laws.

A BAD DEAL WITH IRAN IS WORSE THAN NO DEAL

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, in March, before a joint meeting of Congress, the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, warned "history has placed us at a fateful crossroads."

As a world leader at the forefront of this crossroad, I believe America has a responsibility to prevent a nuclear Iran. An Iran with nuclear weapons capabilities would further exacerbate and destabilize the region and would certainly inspire an arms race among other nonnuclear nations.

The Obama administration's foreign policy missteps do not inspire confidence that the current negotiations will conclude any differently. After numerous delays, negotiations are veering further away from any type of reasonable agreement that would contain Iran's nuclear ambitions.

I do not trust this administration as it approaches the reversal of a half century of nuclear nonproliferation policy. As Chairman ROYCE stated over the weekend: "The Obama administration's fundamental misread of the Iranian regime is part of what makes this potential agreement so dangerous to our national security."

The sanctions relief numbers that are being reported now are staggering and would directly undercut years of democratic success. Sanctions are a vital tool when working to keep our citizens and allies out of harm's way.

In dealing with an aggressive state sponsor of terror, there should be no daylight between the position of Republicans and Democrats in Congress, nor Congress with the President or the United States with our allies.

Civilized nations must stand united against the destructive output from rogue regimes like Iran. As it stands now, the reported details of the deal will not dismantle the nuclear ambitions of the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, if the past is any indication of the future, we can expect that Iran will continue to employ its stonewalling tactics, blocking any real transparency or inspections of its nuclear facilities.

Why isn't Iran answering questions asked 4 years ago by the International Atomic Energy Agency about their past activities? How can we trust a country that won't answer simple questions or allow scientists to be interviewed? How can we set up a sanctions relief system that is based on trust and verification if the country has proven objectively incapable of trust and transparency?

We certainly cannot continue to overlook Iranian compliance failures

as reported this week in The Washington Post, nor come anywhere close to lifting its successfully firm arms embargo. These negotiations will have long-term implications on every country on this planet.

I believe the United States has a responsibility to stand with Israel and other allies across the globe now more than ever. We must ensure our allies know they do not stand alone. With the current negotiations extended once again, it appears that the administration simply wants to get any agreement.

I believe it is a legacy item for the President, Mr. Speaker. This administration's willingness to ignore Iran's troublesome behavior throughout negotiations does not inspire confidence.

President Obama promised 7 years ago that he would not allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon. He is failing to keep that promise to the American people and the rest of the world, in my opinion.

The stakes are too high. Negotiations are reaching a critical moment as we speak here today. This administration needs to understand one indisputable truth: a bad deal is worse than no deal.

VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 40th anniversary since the end of the Vietnam war and 20 years of normalized relations between the U.S. and Vietnam.

This week, our President hosted the General Secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party, Nguyen Phu Trong, a political leader but not an official leader.

During that meeting, I know that the two leaders discussed more normalization of economic and military issues, and I know that President Obama brought up the issue of human rights; but I am going to say this: after 19 years in this Congress of fighting for human rights around the world, the Vietnamese Communist Government always promises, when economic issues are on the table, to do something better with respect to their human rights record, but they never follow through. In fact, it gets worse.

Today, Mr. Speaker, as the co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Vietnam, I don't want to focus on what the economic implications are and the trade implications are that are going on with respect to Vietnam, but I want to remind my colleagues about what is happening with respect to human rights in Vietnam.

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Nguyen Dang Minh Man is currently serving a 9-year prison term after being charged with "attempting to overthrow the government" under article