

from the influence of the other branches, as well as shifting popular opinion.

This insulation is referred to as judicial independence. It allows our Federal judges to make decisions based on what is right under the law, without facing politics, such as not getting re-elected; or, personal, such as getting fired or having their salary lowered.

As a member of the Judiciary Committee, I have often joined with the late Henry Hyde, then the chairman, who wanted to raise the salaries of our Federal judges.

So I think it is imperative to come before this body, my colleagues, to raise great angst when someone's ethnicity is called out as a reason that they cannot be fair.

I am appalled that we have come to this in 2016, where, if I were to symbolically ascend to a Federal bench, or maybe the colleagues who many of us and the Senate have supported and the President has nominated—the diverse bench that represents Asians, Hispanics, African Americans, and women and men, Anglos, Caucasians—anyone would raise a question.

I have been before a court and not welcomed the decision. There have been many reasons why I was not pleased with that decision. But I could not raise the question of race.

And so I think it is worth condemning that we would have this kind of public discourse where the race of a Federal judge is raised. Remember what I said: judicial independence warrants that we, in fact, cannot intimidate the bench and not, in fact, deny the freedom of the court to decide cases based on facts and the law, not based on public opinion, the views of special interests groups, or even a judge's own personal belief.

The right of every citizen to a fair trial is a cornerstone of our democracy. Why should anyone be diminished, and why should the petitioner independently attempt to intimidate based on race? It is appalling. It is absurd.

So I ask all of my colleagues, as protectors of the Constitution and people who are here making laws, to independently go out to the highways and byways of life and condemn those words. Need I say who it is? Condemn those words and condemn this kind of discourse.

I would offer to say that anyone who has said those words and who pretends to put themselves forward to uphold this Constitution is disqualified and unfit.

I would hope that we will have an independent executive under the Constitution, an independent legislative branch, and, of course, an independent judiciary—one of which I respect with the highest of authority.

I will close by simply saying I have won cases; I have saved a hospital. I have lost cases. I have been affected by cases in my redistricting and denied the rights of the Voting Rights Act. But I will never undermine and dimin-

ish the Constitution for right cases and wrong cases, ever.

I ask my colleagues to condemn those actions.

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CONGRATULATING ARMANDO VALLADARES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my dear friend and a true patriot, Ambassador Armando Valladares, for being awarded the Canterbury Medal, the highest honor bestowed by The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty.

Armando Valladares spent 22 years in Castro's gulags. He endured unconscionable torture while in prison. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because Armando refused to put a sign on his desk saying that he supported Fidel Castro.

No matter how much abuse he endured in prison, Armando fought his jailers every day. He protected his conscience from the constant and ongoing attacks of the brutal Communist dictatorship.

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan installed Armando Valladares as our U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Human Rights Council.

Earlier this year, Ambassador Valladares wrote about President Obama's misguided and dangerous overtures to the Castro regime—one-sided negotiations. In a recent op-ed that Armando Valladares wrote, he said: "In agreeing to meet with Raul Castro, Obama rewards a regime that rules with brutal force and systematically violates human rights."

Ambassador Valladares, thank you for your courage. Thank you for your principled stand against the Castro regime. Godspeed, my friend.

COMMEMORATING DEERING ESTATE'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 100th anniversary of one of south Florida's most notable cultural, historical, environmental, and archaeological treasures, the Charles Deering Estate, located in my beautiful congressional district.

Charles Deering, the first chairman of the board of International Harvester, bought the property in the year 1916. Now, as a jewel of the Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces system, the 444-acre Deering Estate serves as a center of community life in the very groovy village of Palmetto Bay.

It also conserves globally endangered native plant communities and is a focal point for the ongoing Biscayne Bay coastal wetlands restoration that aims to re-create more natural freshwater flows and to slow saltwater intrusion into our drinking water sources as sea levels rise. And the sea levels are, indeed, rising due to global climate change.

Mr. Speaker, the Deering Estate's future will be just as important as its past to all of south Florida. The Deering Estate is indeed a jewel in our already beautiful south Florida treasures.

BREAKING THE PROMISE

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, the House is expected to take up the PROMESA bill today regarding the Puerto Rican debt crisis. This bill has serious implications to every taxpayer in the country.

PROMESA applies a form of chapter 9 bankruptcy to the general obligation bonds of Puerto Rico that are guaranteed by the Commonwealth's constitution.

Article VI, section 8 of Puerto Rico's constitution explicitly provides that "interest on the public debt and amortization thereof shall first be paid."

Well, this bill ignores the Puerto Rican constitution and breaks that promise, and here is why this is so important to the rest of the country:

Every State government has similar constitutional provisions that guarantee its general obligation bonds. This is what allows States to borrow at extremely low interest rates: because their debt is constitutionally guaranteed and, therefore, the risk of default is extremely low.

If Congress is willing to undermine a territory's constitutionally guaranteed bonds today, there is every reason to believe it would be willing to undermine a State's guarantee tomorrow. This, in turn, invites credit markets to question such guarantees as being no longer secured on constitutional bedrock but, rather, dependent upon the shifting whims of Congress. This, in turn, means the value of these bonds is devalued, and interest rates paid by taxpayers on that debt will increase.

The Governors of six States have already raised this warning, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, whose credit is directly undermined by PROMESA, wants out of the bill for the same reason.

Now, PROMESA could have respected the \$18 billion of constitutionally guaranteed debt and focused instead on restructuring the \$54 billion of Puerto Rican municipal debt that is not constitutionally guaranteed. After all, there is no reason to treat San Juan's municipal debt any differently than San Jose's. But constitutionally issued debt is fundamentally different, and its reliability must be maintained. Tellingly, supporters of this bill voted down just such an amendment in committee.

Supporters have said they have addressed this concern by inserting instructions to the control board to "respect the relative lawful priorities in the constitution, other laws or agreements." But ironically, one of those