

Whether it was for citizenship or fighting someone's wrongful deportation, my office has done more than just help constituents. We have literally helped them preserve their families.

It is the legacy of helping families and individuals, and making this country a more welcoming place for people, people a lot like my parents from rural Puerto Rico, that is what I carry with me as I leave.

My work for America, her immigrants, and the character of our great Nation is not done. It is simply switching to private life. We who believe in freedom cannot rest. But to all of my colleagues, past and present, thank you for walking with me on this journey these many years.

INCREASING COAST GUARD ASSETS IN THE POLAR REGIONS

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the urgent need for increased U.S. Coast Guard assets in the polar regions of the globe.

America has been a world leader and a dominant force in the Arctic and Antarctic regions for over a century. While both of these areas are currently models of internationally shared territory, the geopolitical relevance of the polar regions is rising, and with it comes a larger and stronger presence of countries such as Russia and China.

Russia and China have both declared plans to grow and strengthen their presence in the polar region. China recently announced its status as a near-Arctic nation and continues to rapidly grow its ice-breaking fleet. Over the last 3 years, Russia has constructed six new bases in Russian Arctic territory.

These are concerning and clear signs that Russia and China have intentions to change the nature of their presence in the polar regions.

In order to compete with these countries, we must protect our sovereignty in the Arctic and our national interests in the Antarctic. It is time for Congress to reinvest in Coast Guard assets in this area.

The Coast Guard's sole heavy icebreaker, the Coast Guard cutter Polar Star, is 40 years old, and the task of accessing the polar region becomes more difficult for this ship every ice season.

Immediate investments in new heavy icebreaker ships, the Polar Security Cutter fleet, is critical to ensuring a long-term presence for the U.S. in these polar areas.

The U.S. Coast Guard has created a 6-3-1 approach to rebuilding its polar region fleets. With this 6-3-1 position, the Coast Guard will build a fleet of six polar icebreakers, including three Polar Security cutters similar to the Polar Star, and the U.S. Coast Guard's first Polar Security cutter.

These new heavy icebreakers provide continued access to the polar region

and, ultimately, will prevent the U.S. from ceding any ground to our political adversaries.

I appreciate the hard work done by the folks at the Coast Guard, not only in the polar regions, but across the world. Their efforts play a role in ensuring our national security, and it is vital that we continue to provide the Coast Guard with the funding they need in order to do their jobs.

This investment will arm the Coast Guard with the tools, equipment, and personnel it needs to complete its missions on the polar front.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in Congress to join me in supporting the requested \$750 million in funding.

ELIMINATE BIGOTRY AND HATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, once again, I rise, proud to be an American, proud to have the opportunity to speak for people who cannot speak for themselves in this place.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mention the midterm elections of 2018, said by many who count and who are supposed to know to be one of the highest turnouts ever, exceeding 100 million voters, said to be approximately 48 to 50 percent of those who are eligible to vote, depending on how you count and who is counting.

In Texas, it is said that, on November 1, the number of Texans voting early exceeded the entire turnout for 2014. The numbers indicate that 3.3 million or more 18-to-29-year-olds voted early, a 188 percent increase over 2014. It was a record turnout.

Why was there a record turnout? is the question that we have to grapple with. Yes, people turned out because they wanted better healthcare. They turned out because they want better jobs. They turned out because they want better schools, better education. They want better housing.

But they also turned out because they were opposed to bigotry and hate. Nobody can give you the empirical evidence to support entirely the number that turned out because they were antithetical to bigotry and hate. But we know by anecdotal evidence that many people turned out, in addition to the other things, because they want to see bigotry and hate not managed, but they want to see it eliminated in the greatest and richest country in the world.

Many people turned out with the expectation that we would do something about all of the things that I have named, including bigotry and hate. Many people turned out because they want bigotry and hate to become more than talking points. They want bigotry and hate in this country to become action items.

They want to see us visibly do something about the bigotry and hate that has found a means by which it can multiply, it can grow, in this country.

We have seen evidence of it in elections, a Senator who says: I'd go to a public hanging.

We have seen evidence of it in our places of worship, people killed in a synagogue.

We have seen evidence of it in the streets with words and behavior that are unacceptable. "Jews will not replace us," they said in Charlottesville.

We have to do something about bigotry and hate, and it has to be more than simply talk. Talking points are good; action items are better. It is time for the Congress of the United States of America to stand up for the many people who suffer from bigotry and hate in this country.

THE SPEECH POLICE

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the First Amendment is first for a reason. It is the most important right we have as Americans and at the very core of who we are.

Without the First Amendment, freedom of religion, free speech, freedom of the press, freedom in assembly, the rest of the Amendments are meaningless.

The purpose of the First Amendment is to permit free and open discussion about the important issues of the day. It protects the right to speak freely about the two most controversial subjects of the day: religion and politics. This is exactly what was forbidden under King George, and it is exactly why our Founding Fathers chose to make it first among the original 10 in the Bill of Rights.

□ 1015

But, somehow, the speech police have decided to replace free speech with their self-determined fair speech. If it is not fair to them, then it must be banned.

What does fair mean?

Fair means different things to different folks. In some places in our country like Texas, fair is where you take the chickens or prized pig to sell it or eat anything you want to on a stick when it is deep fried.

Fair means different things to different folks. But the word "fair" is not in the Constitution. The Constitution protects free speech, not fair speech. It says Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, and the Constitution applies to the elitist speech control police whether they think that is fair or not and whether they like it or not.

Our Founding Fathers established individual rights to protect our liberties, not our feelings. We have become so caught up in the politically correct restriction that everyone has the right not to be offended that we are, in fact, losing the right of free speech.

Where does the Constitution say you have the right not to be offended?