

CELEBRATING REVEREND DR. F.N. WILLIAMS' 90TH BIRTHDAY

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to honor a great force in our community in Houston, Texas, in Acres Homes. This coming Sunday, he will celebrate 90 years of age, but decades in the ministry, Reverend Dr. F.N. Williams, whose father preceded him in the ministry, whose sons have gone on into the ministry.

He is a pastor of the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in Acres Homes, one of the oldest churches in our State.

He is a warrior. He is a fighter for civil rights and civil justice. He was there on the front lines when the Honorable Barbara Jordan was elected and Mickey Leland. But even before that, he was one who would lead the community on addressing their rights and the right to stand against inequality.

He was a friend of President George H.W. Bush, who happened to represent Acres Homes before we had the 18th Congressional District, which I represent. They had a relationship. They fought against drugs in that community.

And, as well, he believes in education. He believes in young people. He has a church that reaches those who are in need.

So tonight, this evening, I am delighted to honor his beloved wife and his family members, but to say to him: I salute you on your 90th birthday. Reverend Dr. F.N. Williams, you are deserving and, yes, you are a great American.

COWBOY RIDES AWAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is the final showdown scene, and while there are no swinging doors or clicking of spurs, eerie signs and sounds of silence or dust swirling behind me, I stand here today in the people's House to speak probably for the last time.

If they would let me cue the soundtrack, the king of country, George Strait, would sing: "Oh, the last goodbye's the hardest one to say. This is where the cowboy rides away."

I gave my very first speech as a Member of Congress from Texas on February 1, 2005, after I had come back from Iraq to see their first free elections ever. I went to Iraq, along with Chris Shays, a Congressman from Connecticut. Since that first speech, some might say I haven't shut up, and, well, they are probably right, Mr. Speaker.

I spoke, I understand according to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, over 2,000

times in my 14 years serving the good people of the Second Congressional District of the State of Texas—some very well received, I might add. My staff might say, however, some not so much.

They have gotten a few calls over the years asking, "Did your boss really say that?"—more often than not, "What in the world was he talking about?"

I have probably spoken more about Texas and the way we do things there than anyplace else. You, Mr. Speaker, being from Louisiana, understand how important it is to love where we are from.

And I say things a little bit different than folks up here in "Warshington." And, yes, that is "Warshington" with an R.

I am not going to relive every moment in a sad song good-bye, but there are a few things that I came here to say and do in my 14 years, and I would like to say some of those again.

First of all, thank you, thank you to the people of the State of Texas for trusting me to be their voice, their advocate here in this amazing place, the United States House of Representatives. It has been an honor of a lifetime.

I came here to advocate for issues that are important, important back home to the folks in Texas. And through the mud and the blood and the beer, I fought day and night to make sure that the interests of Texas came first. And there are a lot of them, Mr. Speaker.

I vowed that crime victims would have a voice; that those who serve and have served our great Nation in the military would receive the honors that they earn and deserve; to protect our privacy and make sure our most important right to freedom of speech was fiercely protected, protected by us in the House of Representatives.

If I look back, my order of priorities came about at an early age. I owe my career in public service to my grandmother, my mother's mother, and I can probably credit her with my outspoken opinions. She instilled in me the non-negotiable duty to serve.

That is what life is all about: to serve, to serve others. So I have. I have always been in public service.

I was in the United States Air Force Reserves. Then I taught school. That was too hard, so I went to law school, and I became a lawyer and a prosecutor in the district attorney's office in Houston, where I was the chief felony prosecutor. I spent 22 years on the district court bench in Houston, Texas, trying criminal cases, and now I am here in the United States Congress.

My grandmother educated me in the ways of the world more than anyone in my life, but unfortunately, to her dismay, I broke her staunchest Southern belief: being a Democrat. I don't know that she ever forgave me for being a Republican. Probably, she hasn't. She is still rolling over in her grave wondering where she went wrong all those years.

I was a Reagan Republican from the first time I saw Reagan speak at the 1968 Republican Convention in Miami Beach, when I was a representative from the College Students for Reagan.

My dyed-in-the-wool Democrat grandmother couldn't stand it, and she let me know, but that is one of the things I admired most about her. Well, to put it nicely, she was bluntly truthful. I never doubted what she said. And if she had told me that it was raining in my house, I would have run home and started putting plastic over the furniture.

She taught me to say: "And that is just the way it is." I think we can all agree I took that lesson pretty well.

Another person in my life who taught me a lesson or two—some hard ones growing up, I might add—was my dad, Virgil Poe. Now 93, he hasn't stopped giving me advice, and he doesn't mind giving anybody advice whether they ask for it or not. He really is the greatest man I know. A charter member of the Greatest Generation, he went off to the great World War II when he was 18. He represents everything that is good and right about our country.

He and my mom, who is also 93, have been married for 73 years. She gives me quite a bunch of advice as well. They still live in Houston, not far from where I grew up. They still go to the same church, and they set examples for our family on how to do things the right way.

They are from a generation that believed in God, country, and family, and good old-fashioned American hard work.

Although they both grew up very poor in the Depression, they never thought they were victims, but they believed that here, only here in America, could they and would they have a good life. It was from them that I learned how important it was to be an American.

We are unusual people in an unusual country, and we should be proud of that fact. Never should we apologize for who we are. We must never forget that what sets us apart from the rest of the world—it is a basic word. We use it a lot, but it has great meaning. And that word is "freedom."

The most important right we have as Americans is, really, the freedom of speech. It is first because it is the most important. It is the very core of who we are as people. Without the First Amendment, freedom of religion, freedom of press, freedom of assembly, the right to petition government, and the rest of the amendments really don't make a lot of sense.

Of course, the Second was written to protect the First. Some of my friends in Texas believe that the Second Amendment is more important than the First, but it is not. It is the Second Amendment because it is to protect the First.

Nowhere in the Constitution is the word "fair" mentioned. Speech is to be free, not necessarily fair. Fair means

different things to different folks. Fair means to some folks in Texas where you take the chickens and cattle to on the weekends, to the fair.

We have an obligation to uphold the laws as they were intended. And our forefathers didn't scribble out these amendments in a tavern in Philadelphia after drinking some demon rum many years ago. They were carefully crafted to stand the test of time and make sure that all people—all people—had the power, and not government had the power.

We have seen government grow more and more powerful and intrusive in our lives, in our businesses every year. With more and more control over our speech being handed down by the self-appointed, self-righteous speech police, they are running neck and neck with Big Brother that is digging deeper and deeper into our private lives.

The Fourth Amendment, unique to America, is sacred, and it is sacred to this country and the Founders who drafted it. Privacy, the right of privacy in the Fourth Amendment should not be forsaken on the false altar of national security.

Yes, we can have both: the right of privacy and also national security.

As a former judge, I am very concerned about the loss of our Fourth Amendment right of privacy in the United States based on, in my opinion, the unconstitutional actions of the NSA.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the government authorized a once secret program by the NSA to collect information on the bad actors, primarily terrorists and foreign agents who wished to create mayhem. They were terrorists overseas. We fought to go after them and get them. Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act was written to go after terrorists, but it is being used to go after Americans, Mr. Speaker.

When I was a judge, I signed lots of warrants when peace officers would bring me a warrant. They would swear out an affidavit of truthfulness, so I would give them a piece of paper, a warrant, to allow them to go arrest or search a premises. That is all based upon the Fourth Amendment in the Constitution. And peace officers did exactly that. But that is not the case for many American citizens anymore.

You might ask, well, who is doing this? Is it a criminal organization? Is it a private investigator? Is it Google?

No. It is not a nefarious organization operating behind closed doors, and it is not even the Russians, Mr. Speaker. It is the spying eyes of the United States Federal Government.

As the chairman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, I agree; we should go after the terrorists with everything we have got, and our government should use techniques they have on those people who wish to destroy America and find out what those terrorists are doing.

But despite the overall intention of the law, the program has been corrupted. Not only does NSA collect information on terrorists, which they should do, but it collects data on ordinary American citizens.

What I mean by "data" is not just emails and text messages, but communications and conversations. This, I believe, is in violation of the Constitution.

□ 1730

The government does not use a specific Fourth Amendment warrant, a warrant based upon probable cause for a person—law enforcement—to go and search or arrest someone, but it uses it anyway under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, a lesser requirement, and still issues warrants to go and search and seize information.

The Fourth Amendment says the warrantless search and seizure is unconstitutional without a probable cause warrant. I don't see any exceptions there, Mr. Speaker. Our constitutional rights are not selected. They were written to keep big brother—government—in check. The government really doesn't get to pick and choose which ones they want to follow and which ones they don't.

It sounds like a page out of George Orwell's novel "1984" where it says:

Always eyes watching you and the voice enveloping you. Asleep or awake, indoors or out of doors, in the bath or bed, no escape.

We read "1984" years ago, Mr. Speaker, and we all thought that would never happen. But the government's ability to seize information, based upon information that is less reliable than the Fourth Amendment requires, and does so in secret I think is a violation of our rights.

It is hard to believe this is happening, but we need to wake up and remember this. Remember, Mr. Speaker, the Bill of Rights was intended to protect us from government. People have rights. Government has power. Government has no rights. It has power that they take or we give it to them. But it is the individuals in this country who have rights, including the right of privacy to be secure in our persons and our places and our homes from unlawful searches and seizures.

I think government has gotten out of the box because of this Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act allows secret courts to issue secret warrants to law enforcement to go and do things that the person who is having their information seized may know nothing about. It was intended to be used against terrorists, but now it is being used against Americans and seizing that information against Americans.

Congresswoman ZOE LOFGREN and I co-founded The Fourth Amendment Caucus to protect our privacy. When I was first elected to Congress, they gave me a BlackBerry. That was new technology back then, Mr. Speaker. We

could get emails on our phones. I called it a Strawberry. And I can't tell you how many of those things I have lost all over the world.

Now we have smartphones that are smarter than most of us most of the time. While technology continues to change, the Constitution does not change. The rights we have in the Constitution still apply to us today, even with technology.

It is the duty of government to balance the interest of protecting Americans, while respecting constitutional rights. So the caucus has fought to protect Americans against warrantless searches and seizures, closing privacy violating surveillance loopholes, and champion reform efforts to protect and restore Fourth Amendment rights.

The FISA abuse—the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act—allowing secret courts to operate in secret and issue secret warrants against people who never know about it reminds me of the Star Chamber back in merry ole England, that operated in secret and issued secret warrants, all in the name of protecting the Crown, and that is what it seems like we have gotten to.

Mr. Speaker, the First Amendment also talks about the right to practice the religion that we wish. The First Amendment states in part that "Congress"—of course that is us—"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

You notice, Mr. Speaker, the First Amendment doesn't just give us the right to believe any religion we want to, it gives us the right to practice the religion that we have: the free exercise. And Congress can make no law to prevent that.

The freedom to practice one's own religion is the reason why many of the colonists settled and founded in this great country. Modern revisionist historians don't want to talk about that, but it is true. One of the primary reasons why people left England and Europe was to seek religious freedom. That is why it is in the First Amendment along with freedom of speech.

When Thomas Jefferson, who is the author of the Declaration of Independence, wrote it, he proclaimed that God gives us our rights. He wrote "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;" and that governments are instituted among men to secure those rights. We get our rights from the almighty. We don't get our rights from government or the king.

Jefferson's reference to God is echoed throughout this Nation: our currency mentions God; our government buildings have religious scenes and words on them; we pledge allegiance every day in this House Chamber to one Nation under God; we even have the great law-giver Moses on the far wall looking down directly on the Speaker; and above the flag is the phrase, "In God We Trust."

Those who argue we cannot mention God or religion in public government places are looking to destroy the very freedom that our country was founded on. The mention of God in our culture is not an establishment of religion; it is a freedom. Note that the right to practice one's religion, Mr. Speaker, is a right that we have, as well as the right to believe whatever we wish when it comes to religion.

We have this concept in the Declaration of Independence that we are worth something as individuals; that we are worth something as individuals not because government gives us rights, or politicians, or the king, but the Declaration of Independence says that we are endowed by our creator with certain unalienable rights.

The truth is our Constitution says that we are guaranteed freedom of religion, not freedom from religion. I believe, as many Americans do, that America is a special place, a chosen place, an exceptional place, and America is more than just another country on the globe.

Throughout our history, we have served as a beacon of light in an often dark world, and one reason is because we say and believe "In God We Trust." We cannot follow this fundamental principle that sets us apart to be taken away by those who want government to be the highest power of the land.

In the end, I do not believe I will ever answer to my government for my time on this Earth, but I do believe I will answer to my God, and the freedom of that choice is what America stands for.

Mr. Speaker, as a judge, I saw every imaginable crime. In 22 years on the felony court bench, about 25,000 felony cases worked their way through the courtroom—or the palace of perjury, as I referred to it in those days—everything from stealing to killing and everything in between.

One of my first actions in Congress was to establish the bipartisan Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus, along with Congressman JIM COSTA from California, to advocate on behalf of victims in our Nation's Capital. I am very proud of the work we have done for victims of crime. The consequences of devastating crimes stay with victims for the rest of their lives.

I saw victims every day at the courthouse come down there, their lives shattered because of some person committing a crime against them. Many of those victims recover and many do not recover, and they spend the last days of their lives in hopeless despair. So we started that caucus to promote the rights of victims.

One such story that affected me personally, and has made its way through my career as a prosecutor and as a judge, was a case I prosecuted a long time ago. Kevin Wanstrath was his name. He was a 14-month-old adopted baby. It was his murder, along with the murder of his mother and his father and his grandmother. Four outlaws had plotted to kill all four of them so they

could collect the estate and the inheritance.

I still have that picture of Kevin Wanstrath that I had on my desk as a prosecutor, on my desk as a judge, and on my desk here in the Rayburn building. I keep it with me to remind me really kind of why we are here: to protect those who cannot protect themselves.

Kevin was assassinated, shot in the back of the head, sacrificed on the altar of greed. Fortunately, after a long duration of finding out who committed the crime, the four killers were brought to justice. All were convicted by juries in Texas. Two of them have received the death penalty and have been executed.

Kevin was born the same year my son Kurt was born. It is about people. We are in the business here, as Members of Congress, to really help people, help other people in our country. Since that case changed my life, that is one reason why I have been so passionate, as others—JIM COSTA, for example—in protecting victims of crime. We are not judged by the way we treat the rich folks or important folks. We are judged by the way we treat innocent people: the weak, the unfortunate, the elderly, and the young.

Since its inception in 2005, the Victims' Rights Caucus has taken the lead to protect programs that provide critical support for victim services throughout the Nation, including the Victims of Crime Act. It is called VOCA. What a great concept this was.

President Reagan had the idea, Congress passed it, and the VOCA, Victims of Crime Act, does this. When criminals commit crimes, judges have the ability to fine those criminals, along with sending them to the Federal penitentiary, and that money goes into a fund that helps victims of crime. It is called the Victims of Crime Act, and it is a marvelous idea. It is not taxpayer money. Criminals are paying the rent on the courthouse, they are paying for the crimes that they have committed and putting that money into a fund.

But every year, Mr. Speaker, Mr. COSTA and I have to fight the bureaucrats in government to let go of that money. Right now, there is about \$12 billion in the Victims of Crime Act fund and only about \$800,000 of that was used this year to help victims. What happens to the rest of that money?

Well, I don't understand the math, but they use that money as an offset for other government programs, and, therefore, they don't spend it on crime victims, and I think that is wrong. Enough of the offsets. If the money goes to victims, it ought to be given to the victims. The government ought to keep its hands off of it because it doesn't belong to the government, and it doesn't belong to the taxpayers.

I hope in the future we will let go of that and that that money goes into a lockbox and it remains always for victims of crimes. Because those Federal judges, God bless them, they are nail-

ing people who violate the law with large fines and fees, and that fund continues to grow every year.

Besides the VOCA funds, we have worked on the Violence Against Women Act, VAWA as it is called, and the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act.

The caucus was also instrumental in the enactment of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act in 2006. That bill had to do with the abduction of children and then those children were sexually assaulted throughout the United States. It protects them and makes sure that we keep up with those child predators who roam the streets and byways of our Nation. So we have reauthorized that act this year.

We have also passed the Cruise Vessel Safety and Security Act, the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act, the SAFER Act of 2013, and the Victims of Child Abuse Reauthorization Act. All this was bipartisan, Mr. Speaker. All of it was bipartisan.

May I ask of the Speaker how much time I have left.

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 43 minutes remaining.

Mr. POE of Texas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We are in the midst of a situation in the United States, and throughout the world, where slavery has crept back into our environment and into our communities, and it is the slave trade of women and children for sexual assault. People don't want to talk about it, but it is taking place. Unfortunately, my hometown of Houston used to be one of the hubs in the United States. What I am talking about is the buying and selling of people, primarily women and children, on the marketplace of sex slavery.

□ 1745

A lot of Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle worked on this very issue to try to get a grip on what is taking place in our country. We had 11 bills in the House that had to do with helping stop this scourge.

I was glad to work with CAROLYN MALONEY from New York. I mean, that is about as bipartisan as you can get, CAROLYN MALONEY, a New York Democrat, and TED POE, a Texas Republican. We are separated by common language, but I worked with her, and that is about as bipartisan as you can get.

We passed those 11 pieces of legislation. Members of Congress had sponsored several pieces of those. It passed the House overwhelmingly. It went to the Senate, and they combined those 11 pieces into two, sent it back. We passed it, and it became law. President Obama signed it.

What it does, this legislation goes after the trafficker, the person who buys and sells women and children, and makes sure that our law punishes those people to the fullest extent.

That is why we build prisons, our Federal prisons and our State prisons,

for people like that. But what it also does, it takes the victims and treats them like victims instead of treating them like criminals.

Children are not prostitutes when they are forced into sex slavery. Children can't be prostitutes. They are victims of crime. So it rescues them and treats them with the dignity they deserve.

But it also goes after the buyers, the people who buy those women and children on the marketplace of sex slavery. We make sure that the law goes after those people and punishes them to almost the extent of the trafficker as well.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the progress we have made as a Nation to support victims of crime and crack down on those outlaws that run our streets.

There is one piece of legislation that I hope we see passed before I leave Congress on January 2. Megan Rondini was a student. She was from Austin, Texas, and she went off to the University of Alabama. She met a person there at a bar, and they went to his place. He lived in a big mansion, and he sexually assaulted her. She jumped out the window to get away, and she went to the hospital.

She wasn't treated right at the hospital. They botched the sexual exam. The sexual assault kit was botched.

She went to the police department—the sheriff's department, to be specific—and when they found out who the alleged perpetrator was, they backed off and told her that they weren't going to prosecute him, file charges on him.

She went to the university, and the university offered her counseling, but the counselor knew the people involved, the defendant's family, so the counselor said: I can't help you. It is a conflict of interest.

But no other counselor was provided. She went into deep depression. She withdrew from the University of Alabama, and she went back to Texas and went to SMU for the next semester.

She wasn't at SMU very long at all before she took her own life because the criminal justice system wasn't justice for her. It failed her.

As a result, we have offered bipartisan legislation. Representative JAYAPAL and others, Representative SEWELL. We have offered legislation, the Megan Rondini Sexual Assault Victims Protection Act, which is to make sure that a sexual assault forensic examiner or a sexual assault forensic nurse is available for people like Megan when they show up at a hospital, that universities make sure that they have the right medical exam. Otherwise, we end up with people like Megan who take their own life.

That piece of legislation is pending, and I know the Ways and Means Committee and Energy and Commerce Committee are working on that. Hopefully, we can get it to the House floor next week before we recess.

Topics like human trafficking, sexual abuse, and domestic violence are topics that we need to discuss to make sure that we can get a grip on it and stop that. Counseling, resources, and shelters are much more readily available to victims of crime than ever before in our history.

Human traffickers and those caught buying human trafficking victims can no longer escape the long arm of the law, and that is one of the things I like about the long arm of the law. It can go after those individuals.

Of course, our system is not perfect because it is run by people, but it is still the best that we have. The men and women who pledge to protect and serve as our first responders overwhelmingly do so with honor throughout our country. Those who pin the badge over their heart and go out there every day to protect and serve the rest of us always deserve our utmost recognition and respect.

As a prosecutor and a judge, I worked with some of Houston's finest police, as I call them. During my time in Congress, I had the privilege of getting to know the Texas sheriffs along the Texas-Mexico border. They are a special breed of law officers.

I have visited every county along the southern border, from El Paso to the mouth of the Boca Chica at the Gulf of Mexico. It is 1,254 miles from New Orleans to Washington, D.C. That is about the distance of the Texas-Mexico border.

I have held field hearings, flown the Rio Grande with the Texas Air National Guard. I think I may have walked all of those 1,254 miles, including much of it that goes to California from El Paso.

I have made several dozen trips down there, and I have traveled the Rio Grande River with our peace officers, in particular, the Texas Department of Public Safety in their fast boats.

Down on the border, I have seen the good; I have seen the bad; and I have seen a lot of the ugly. I have met a lot of people on both sides of the border.

No matter what our position is on the issue of immigration, our total disregard for border enforcement has cost our State and our Nation tremendously, from the lives lost to the communities on both sides of the border. It has been destroyed by the cartel violence.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the cartels control the southern border. They control the border with Mexico on the southern side. They control what takes place. And they control the violence.

We cannot turn a blind eye to the real issues because it is eroding our national security. Border towns on both sides of the border are unique, and the Texas border towns have their own personalities like no others. For some people, they are the lyrics in country songs and stories of college days.

Long before a Houston billionaire added the Cadillac Bar to his restaurant empire, it was an institution

in Nuevo Laredo that generations of Texans and Mexican families enjoyed together. But now, Nuevo Laredo, across the river from Laredo, is a ghost town, like many other border towns that we share, because the drug cartels control the environment.

It seems to me that we haven't done enough, and border security and immigration must go hand in hand. We must do both, but they are not the same. It is not, nor will it ever be, an either-or option. We have tried to do all we can in my office to cut the red tape and send more money and boots to the border, and tell the hard, unpopular truth about what is going on in our southern border.

Obviously, our Nation needs to secure the border. We are debating that very issue these last 2 weeks we are in session, about whether or not to secure the border. Well, I would think that we should. We cannot afford anything less. A country without borders will cease to be a country at all.

Mr. Speaker, I don't understand why we secure the borders of other countries but we don't secure our own. I have been to Afghanistan, and we are protecting their border against the bad guys coming in from Pakistan. We have American troops protecting the border of the Koreans and all over the world. We are protecting the borders of a lot of countries, but we don't protect our own, and I don't understand why.

As a veteran and a son of a World War II veteran, as I mentioned, I think the United States has the greatest military that has ever existed. I have been in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other places to see our military. They are the best in the world, no question about it. Second place isn't even close. We must recognize our military's contributions, both during service and after our troops come back home.

I am proud to represent southeast Texas. I think that is the most patriotic place on the planet. People where I come from, we love the military. We even have parades when the military is on Active Duty and the National Guard or the Reserves come back home. They march down the street. Can you believe that? It is still happening in parts of the country down in southeast Texas.

I host a lot of veteran events. My staff, of course, does all the work. One of my favorite events is our annual honor-our-heroes event. We pick a day that nothing else is going to go on, and it is usually in the summer. We invite veterans and Active Duty military to come to the event. It is a pep rally for our military.

We let each one of them come up to the microphone and tell us about their career in the military and try to do it in 60 seconds or less.

It is a great honor for them to tell other people about what they did, whether it is World War II or Korea or last week when they got off Active Duty in Afghanistan.

The final event that we had just a few months ago was marked by a surprise visitor. Vice President PENCE just

showed up, walked into the room. Everybody was whooping and hollering when he showed up, showing support for our military.

I say all of that to say that we have to continue to support the military, those on Active Duty and those who have served in the past.

Some of the legislation I am proud that we have accomplished: EMANUEL CLEAVER and I worked on bipartisan legislation to establish a commission to build a memorial in Washington, D.C., for all the World War I veterans. There is no memorial for all of the World War I veterans. Here we are, 100 years after the war was over, and there is no memorial.

We have one for World War II, as we should. We have one for Vietnam. We have one for Korea. But we don't have one for the Great War of World War I.

We have been working on that for several years. We finally got that passed, and groundbreaking has taken place, and they will build it. It will not take another 100 years before we see it, Mr. Speaker. It will be done soon.

My only regret was that my friend, and the last American doughboy, Frank Buckles, Jr., didn't get to see that happen. Corporal Buckles came up to Washington and went around the House and the Senate, talking about getting that memorial built. He died before the legislation passed. He died at the age of 110.

He lied to get into the Army in World War I. He said he was 15. He was probably 14 when he got in and served in World War I. In World War II, he was captured by the Japanese, because he was in the Philippines and he spent 3 years in a prisoner-of-war camp. He was a great American.

So we owe it to people like that. All of them have died and gone away. Get that memorial built.

I thanked Mr. CLEAVER, Congressman CLEAVER—preacher, as I call him—for his support in getting that legislation passed. We have to remember him, Mr. Speaker, because the greatest casualty of war is to be forgotten.

I could fill hours talking about the tremendous men and women who serve our country, but I know that you are watching the clock, Mr. Speaker, and I won't do that.

I have also spoken about the Greatest Generation as much as any other topic. I have lamented for those who fought in Vietnam—that is the war of my generation—because of the way they were treated when they came back home.

Finally, America is getting to understand that we should honor those men and women who served and welcome them back home as well. There are no words that can come close to express how we should change our opinion of those individuals.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 22 minutes remaining.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege to serve on the Foreign Affairs Committee. My district stretches—or used to stretch—all the way to the Texas-Louisiana border, where the Speaker is from. Some say that is why I was on the Foreign Affairs Committee, because the Texas border has that other international border with Louisiana. Be that as it may, I am glad that I have been able to serve on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

But during that service, I have been able to see our men and women in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Europe, the Philippines, and other places throughout the world, and I am impressed with their duty of service. As we know, they are all volunteers. Every one of them is a volunteer.

□ 1800

When men and women join our military now, they know that they are probably going to be in combat somewhere in the world, but yet they continue to volunteer.

I can always spot the Texans, though. When I was in Fallujah right after the Marines went in and eliminated Fallujah, I saw a Texas flag flying on the back of a Humvee as it was speeding down one of those streets. Somebody had written on the side of a bombed-out building: "Don't mess with Texas."

I don't know who did that, but we do have that proud attitude of Texans who serve in the military.

The enemy we fight today is not the enemy of the Greatest Generation. Our country is under threat from volatile, nuclear-armed rogue nations like we have never seen. We have leaders of foreign nations who are not only untrustworthy, they are outright treacherous, and they want to cause harm in the world.

We have little Kim of North Korea, and we have the little man in the sand in Iran. These rulers pose an increasing threat to not only our security, but to everybody throughout the world. They are determined to cause trouble. They are determined to cause terror in the world.

As the chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs' Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade Subcommittee, it has been my goal to bring attention to some of the most pressing international threats to our country and global stability. Many of my bills, including legislation that targeted Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Iran's proxies—the North Korean regime and incitement taught to kids in Saudi Arabia through Saudi Arabian textbooks—have all been shared security interests of the United States and our besieged Israeli allies.

I have authored lots of pieces of legislation, and I am glad to see that many of them have been passed and signed into law.

I do believe in America, Mr. Speaker, and I don't apologize for it. It is the

beacon of light for other peoples everywhere.

I do believe that all Members of Congress on both sides want what is best for the country. We just disagree sometimes on how to get there. I am convinced of that. One of my greatest honors in being in the House of Representatives is to serve with people from all over the country who are passionate about making sure we make the right decisions on all types of legislation. We do have the freedom to disagree.

People ask me what I am going to do when I retire. I don't know what I am going to do. I haven't decided. I just know that I am leaving Washington. I have often joked that D.C. stands for the Devil's city. But I will miss being here, Mr. Speaker. I will miss representing Texas.

Since I was elected in 2004, our four kids, Kim, Kara, Kurt, and Kellee, were all single or just recently married. Now, in those 14 years, I have 12 grandkids: Barrett Houston, Shaelyn, Elizabeth, Jackson, Brooklyn, Payton, Hallie, Olivia, Levi, Presley, Rosalyn, and Ivy. Of course, they all have names, Mr. Speaker, but I call them by their birth number, 1 through 12. I just say, "Twelve or Three, get over here. Six, leave Seven alone."

I call them by their birth numbers. You might try that, Mr. Speaker, when you get a little older and have grandkids.

I am looking forward to being back in Texas where we have sweet tea. We have bluebonnets that bloom. And football under Friday night lights is the greatest. We have sunsets that are burnt orange. Sorry, Aggies, it is not maroon.

For people to understand what I am saying—and people understand mostly what I am saying—there isn't any doubt in anyone's mind that Texas is the end all and be all for me, personally. I have had the time of my life sharing the stories of Texas on this floor.

I have been through six hurricanes as a Member of Congress: Katrina, Rita, Humberto, Gustav, Ike, and Harvey.

I will miss being around Members of Congress. It is an honor to serve the people of Texas in the people's House, and there are many Members that I could thank. I want to thank them all for working with me.

I have told a lot of stories about where I am from, Texas, including my hero William Barret Travis, Sam Houston, remembering the Alamo, and taking you all on our fight of independence in the marshy banks of the San Jacinto where we had folks from Louisiana come and help us out to win the independence of Texas. We are saving, currently, the Battleship Texas, the oldest dreadnought in the world, making sure that it maintains its dignity in the Houston Ship Channel.

I have spent a lot of time talking about Judge Roy Bean. It is not true that Judge Roy Bean was my grandfather. Some said that at the courthouse, but he was not.

Of course, my favorite law enforcement group in the whole world is the Texas Rangers.

Above all, it has been an honor to recognize servicemembers from the Second Congressional District who gave their lives for our country while I have been in Congress. In my office here and my office in Texas, we have the photographs, 8-by-10s, of the 40 men and women from my congressional district, of all races and all branches of the service, who have been killed in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and in other places in the world. I am grateful that the incoming Member of Congress, Congressman Crenshaw, is going to keep those 8-by-10s, all 40 of them, on our wall here in Washington, D.C., so that we can remember those men and women who served and gave their lives for the rest of us.

I have had the honor to represent people in southeast Texas from Beaumont to Port Arthur, Sabine Pass, Dayton, China, Liberty, Hull-Daisetta, Baytown, Ames, Nome, Highlands, Kingwood, Humble, Porter, Mont Belvieu, Tarleton, Cleveland, Champions, Spring, Klein, Spring Branch, Memorial, parts of Houston, and where I am from, Atascocita. I see so many wonderful people along the way.

I have a staff that I would put up against any staff. I have the best staff in Congress. I always have. It is fortunate for me, and it is fortunate for the folks in our congressional district. Of my four chiefs of staff, Heather Ramsey-Cook was my first one. She was my chief of staff when I was a judge. She was my chief of staff when I started here, and she is now my current chief of staff. Others were Janet Diaz-Brown, who has since moved off to Seattle, Washington, with her family, and Gina Santucci who is now Gina Foote. My latest was Tim Tarpley, and now Heather Ramsey-Cook again. My chiefs of staff have been excellent, and I think all of us owe a lot of our success in getting things done to the people who work for us.

My caseworkers in Texas are great. Viviana and Amy are both veterans: one from Afghanistan, one from Iraq. One of them is a wounded warrior. They deal with the casework. They get it. They understand veterans' issues. One of the major things we do as Members of Congress is casework for our veterans.

But all of my staff have been excellent, and I want to thank them for their proud work that they have done, especially in constituent services.

So I don't know what is next, Mr. Speaker. I do know that it is time to dance with the one that brung you and pack up my old 1998 Jeep and head on home. By the way, my gaudy Jeep left a mark here in Washington as well. Aside from being the only '98 Jeep with a lift kit and lights across the top—you never know when you will see deer up here, Mr. Speaker—there is a special oil stain on the White House front drive that President Bush didn't take

too kindly to. It is fitting, leaving a little Texas oil on the driveway of the White House when you leave town.

So this is where the cowboy rides away, Mr. Speaker. Also, at the end, there is really no better good-bye than the words of Davy Crockett when he left Congress, when he said, affectionately: "You may all go to hell, I am going to Texas."

And that is just the way it is.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Lasky, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2) "An Act to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes."

#### IS AMERICA FIRST?

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, following the gruesome murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi ordered by the Saudi Arabia Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the world raised its voice in condemnation. Noticeably quiet was the leader of the free world, our own President. A closer look at President Trump's deeply troubling financial connections and conflicts of interest likely explain why.

In August 2015, the President himself said on the campaign trail: "Saudi Arabia, I get along with all of them. They buy apartments from me. They spend \$40 million, \$50 million. . . . I like them very much."

That same month, The Trump Organization registered eight separate companies to do business in Saudi Arabia.

Indeed, The Hill newspaper reported that a 5-day stay from the Saudi crown prince at the Trump Hotel caused a 13 percent surge in revenue in the first quarter of this year. How about that?

Mr. President, the American people wonder, is it America first, or is America for sale to foreign interests?

Given the President's clear conflicting interests, Congress must assert its power to limit the ability of corrupt regimes to influence our politics. Our colleagues on both sides of the aisle must reaffirm America's values of liberty, justice, and equality, and restore America's faith in our politics.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

#### HEALTHCARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity. There are so many things that we need to consider.

Today, the President announced that he is going to do his best to shut down the Government of the United States, and he wants to call it the Trump shutdown.

I wonder if he really understands what that means to Americans. The Department of Homeland Security—about which there is so much discussion as to the security of the border, the Coast Guard, all of the ICE agents and so forth—presumably would stand down. I guess that is what a shutdown means, that we would have no border security.

So I am curious exactly what the President has in mind when he says it will be the Trump shutdown.

We don't really want to do that. I have been there before in the mid-1990s, when Speaker Gingrich decided to shut down the government. I was over at the Department of the Interior as the Deputy Secretary, and I think that the Department of National Parks and the Bureau of Land Management and on and on simply shut down. The National Parks shut down, the Washington Monument.

So the Department of the Interior would apparently shut down—not apparently, would definitely shut down—under a Trump shutdown. I suppose the Washington Monument, the memorial to World War I, World War II memorials, Yosemite—that would be a problem actually. We usually go to Yosemite on the 18th of December. That is my anniversary.

So, Mr. President, do you have any idea what you are going to cause here in America? The Department of Agriculture would shut down. Food safety, presumably, would shut down. It goes on and on, and all of that over a border wall that nobody other than the President thinks would be useful.

We do need border security, no doubt about it. We just heard our colleague from Texas talk about this a little bit. Yes, we do need border security. But nobody thinks a big, massive, beautiful wall from here to there, from the Caribbean to the Pacific Coast, would solve the issue of border security.

By the way, if you shut down the government, it is the Coast Guard that shuts down, and the Coast Guard has confiscated 10 times more drugs than the Border Patrol. So I guess we will have the President shut down that part of border security also.

Nobody says a wall is the answer. They said use technology. Use observation devices of various kinds that sense and watch remotely, drones and unmanned aerial vehicles and things of that sort.

By the way, why don't we beef up and provide the kind of security and the