

Egypt and the United States are important partners in the fight against terrorism in the region. Egypt's role at Camp David has led to some of the closest ties between the United States, Egypt, and Israel in their history.

I am reintroducing this resolution because the Egyptian Government can do more to protect its Christian citizens.

I have great respect for President el-Sisi, someone I have had the opportunity to meet with on two occasions, and I applaud the changes and message that el-Sisi has made in the areas of religious tolerance and plurality.

He continues to say and do the right things at the top level of government: having a good relationship with the Coptic Pope, attending mass on multiple occasions, getting some churches reconstructed while constructing the largest Christian cathedral in the Middle East in the new administrative center outside Cairo, and holding terrorists accountable for their atrocities.

But, Mr. Speaker, there is more to do. I stress to the Egyptian foreign affairs officials when I meet with them that this is not an attack on President el-Sisi. To the contrary, I acknowledge the support and partnership and friendship that we have with Egypt. But there is more that can be done in the area of protecting religious freedom and human rights, especially in the rural parts of the country.

The State Department's 2018 religious freedom report on Egypt names Minya province as a particular area for concern. The Egyptians routinely claim that they have no minorities in Egypt. "We are all Egyptians, and we all take our water from the Nile," is something that is frequently said.

But from my studies and in my view, there is a population in Egypt that does not have the same protections of rule of law as others. The country must do better in places like Minya province.

Following Secretary Pompeo's recent visit to Egypt, Hamza Hendawi of the Associated Press wrote: "El-Sisi's widely publicized policy to staunch sectarianism, however, has done little to protect Christians in rural Egypt, where Muslim extremists frequently attack their homes and businesses or force them to leave their homes after violent disputes.

"Critics and activists say discrimination against Christians there is often tolerated by local authorities and branches of the security agencies."

Mr. Speaker, my resolution calls on the Egyptian Government to end this culture of impunity for attacks on Christians and to undertake the arrest, prosecution, and conviction of individuals who carry out attacks on Copts and other Christians in Egypt. It calls on the government to hold accountable these local government officials who fail to enforce the law.

I stand with Secretary of State Pompeo and support his message that: "More work certainly needs to be done

to maximize the potential of the Egyptian nation and its people. I'm glad that America will be a partner in those efforts."

However, as the second highest recipient of American military aid in the world, the United States Government must use the tools that it has to hold our allies to a higher standard, if they are to continue to receive our aid.

I encourage Egypt to live up to the legacy of Camp David at home, working to achieve what former President Anwar Sadat called "permanent peace based on justice."

Today in America, we commemorate Virginia's 1786 adoption of Thomas Jefferson's Statute for Religious Freedom. In his proclamation today, President Trump urged all Americans to help "secure this blessing both at home and around the world."

All people around the world, regardless of their religious affiliation, deserve the same freedom to practice their chosen religion like we have enjoyed here in the United States of America for more than 200 years.

Permanent peace based on justice for the Coptic Christians of Egypt, that is my goal with this resolution.

As President Reagan said: "Respect for human rights is not social work; it is not merely an act of compassion. It is the first obligation of government and the source of its legitimacy."

Mr. Speaker, the respect for human rights and religious freedom is fundamental to the American position, and I will continue to promote this issue for Coptic Christians and all Egyptians who take their water from the Nile.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the irresponsible government shutdown that is hurting people not only in my district, but throughout California and our Nation. There is no good reason for our government to be shut down.

As national leaders, one of the most important responsibilities as Members of Congress is, in fact, to pass a budget every year on time and always to keep government open. But since 2010, we have seen a phenomena take place where groups on both sides think, well, there can be justification to shut down government for an agenda, usually politically motivated, and put all of our other responsibilities aside.

Over half the Members of Congress have been here less than 6 years.

I say this government shutdown, any government shutdown, is irresponsible. We are supposed to have a budget for our country, like every family has a budget and every business has a budget.

When the government shuts down, people suffer, families suffer, veterans suffer, all Americans suffer. Approximately 800,000 Federal employees are

currently furloughed or working without pay across the country.

Last Friday, in my home State of California, over 37,000 Federal employees did not receive their paychecks. That is irresponsible.

□ 1030

Yesterday was payday for the United States Coast Guard. Protecting our seas throughout our Nation is a vital part of America's national security. They got a paycheck with a printed "0" on it for their wage.

Our national parks are operating without full staff or guides. We have had, already, Americans die as a result of the shutdown, one in Yosemite close to my district.

The government shutdown is putting Americans in danger in other ways as well. By shutting down the government, the President is making border security—supposedly the reason for all of this—more difficult and has stopped paying key law enforcement personnel, including Customs and Border Protection officers, Federal prosecutors, immigration judges, Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, and members, as I said earlier, of the Coast Guard.

This is a manufactured crisis in order to pursue a political agenda. It is just not right. It is not the way our government is supposed to function.

Within the United States, Homeland Security investigation agents who investigate human trafficking, drug smuggling, and transnational criminal gangs are working without pay. Does that make any sense? I thought this was supposed to be about national security. We ought to be paying these folks.

The Department of Justice has stopped processing discretionary grants that support State and local law enforcement, which is critical, I can tell you, in California, where we have many of these challenges. I have been listening to the people back home. That is our job. We are supposed to listen.

For 25 days now, the shutdown has been hurting the people of San Joaquin Valley. Middle-class families are suffering. We have IRS officers and large numbers of Federal employees in my district who are working or not working, and they are not receiving paychecks.

Many of these individuals have shared that they don't even know how they are going to be able to feed their children or pay their mortgage or their car payment, because the majority of families live—what?—from paycheck-to-paycheck. In fact, a group of Federal employees in my district is at the point of needing to take out loans and trying to find other jobs—which makes no sense—to keep themselves and their families afloat.

And the pain radiates, broadly affecting our local economies. Small businesses in downtown Fresno, Madera, Merced, and many other communities

throughout my district are being impacted, along with the Federal officers who are involved in the United States Department of Agriculture and the ability to operate their offices.

And there are those who contract with the government who are looking at not receiving paychecks. It is affecting our Nation's economy. And there is clear proof of that.

Mr. Speaker, this harm must stop. Let me say it again. There is no good reason for a government shutdown. We have our differences, to be sure, and we ought to be negotiating those differences on border security and other matters.

On December 18, the Senate passed a bipartisan agreement, unanimously, to keep the government open that was acceptable to both Chambers and the President, and it did not include funding for a border wall. The next day, the President changed his mind.

This shutdown is not about securing our border, but it is about consistently providing funding to improve our border security, and we can do that. We should do that.

I urge my colleagues to get to work. The American people expect better.

HONORING BOB KIRK

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

Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize a true public servant and a friend of mine, Bob Kirk, from Dyersburg, Tennessee.

Bob has served as an alderman for the city of Dyersburg for 51 years. He leaves this position this month not only with many years of dedicated service, but also as the longest serving elected official in the State of Tennessee.

Bob Kirk's service to the Nation and to our State started immediately following his high school graduation, when he dedicated 4 years to the United States Air Force. After serving in the military, Bob returned home to start his career at Colonial Rubber Works, where he was a loyal employee for 30 years until his retirement in 1996.

During Bob's tenure as an alderman, he played an instrumental role in securing a Tennessee Highway Patrol office in Dyersburg, and he has been present and active for so many economic wins on behalf of the city of Dyersburg.

In addition to his elected position, Bob has remained extremely active in numerous community organizations. Last spring, the Tennessee Municipal League honored Bob by creating a new award in his honor that will bear his name. It is the Bob Kirk Local Government Leadership Award. This award is going to be given annually to outstanding public servants who not only go above and beyond the call of duty, but also do a great job in serving their communities.

To Bob and to his wife, Carol, I speak on behalf of west Tennessee and the State of Tennessee and I say thank you for your service to the city of Dyersburg. Thank you for your service to Dyer County. You epitomize public service and your love for the community.

OPPOSITION TO BIGOTRY AND RACISM

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, and still I rise, proud to have the pre-eminent privilege of serving in the Congress of the United States of America, a proud American, and proud to say that, yesterday, this Congress went on record indicating that it is opposed to bigotry. It went on record saying it is opposed to hate.

I read to you the style of the resolution, H. Res. 41. It reads: "Rejecting White Nationalism and White Supremacy." That is the style of the resolution.

I will not read all of the whereases, but I do think it appropriate to read the resolved.

"Resolved, That the House of Representatives once again rejects White nationalism and White supremacy as hateful expressions of intolerance that are contradictory to the values that define the people of the United States."

I thank all of my colleagues. I heard many of them speak, and much of what was said really touched my heart. I thank them for saying it, because it was made very clear yesterday that we reject bigotry. It was made very clear that bigotry will not be tolerated.

I am appreciative that this happened because there was a time in the history of our country where such a resolution would not have been brought before the House of Representatives. There was a time when people would deny the existence of racism and bigotry and hate, xenophobia, homophobia, anti-Semitism.

There was a time when people would have denied the existence, and then when you deny the existence of something, you don't have to deal with it because you say that it isn't there and it doesn't exist. Why would you deal with it? But yesterday, we went on record not only saying that we reject it, but we also acknowledged the existence of it, which is important.

I also have to single out just one Representative, Congressman BOBBY RUSH, who voted against the resolution—one vote against. I want to acknowledge that he was right. He was right because he said it wasn't enough. I concur.

I thank my colleagues for the resolution indicating that we oppose bigotry, but the real question that we have to answer at some point in the future is the corollary that flows from being in opposition to bigotry. The corollary is this:

If you oppose bigotry, if you reject bigotry, will you reject the bigot? If you reject racism, will you go on record rejecting the racist? If you are antithetical to anti-Semitism, will you go on record rejecting and opposing the anti-Semite?

This is the question.

I appreciate greatly and I am going to be eternally grateful to those who brought this resolution. It was timely. It was something that was necessary. But I also appreciate Mr. RUSH's position, because the corollary has to be addressed at some point.

We cannot continue to say we are opposed to something. That is a talking point. We have to get to the action item, which is: What are you going to do about it if you oppose it? What will you do about it?

What will you do about it when it emanates from the highest office in the land? What will you do about it? Will you simply say "I oppose it," or will you take a vote to indicate that it is an action item and you are going to reject it?

One step closer to impeachment, yesterday's resolution brought us one step closer. The clock is ticking. Impeachment is not dead.

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

HERE ARE THE FACTS

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

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, during a meeting in the White House, our newly elected Speaker of the House interrupted Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, who was reciting statistics relating to the border.

"I reject your facts," Ms. PELOSI said.

Well, here are the facts:

Fact: Last year, 17,000 people with prior criminal convictions were stopped trying to cross our southern border.

Fact: The recent 8,000-plus caravan that attempted to breach our southern border contained over 600 confirmed criminal migrants.

Fact: Approximately 90 percent of the heroin seized by Customs and Border Protection is interdicted along the southwest border of the United States at and between the ports of entry, and Mexico continues to be the primary supplier of heroin to the United States.

Fact: The Department of Homeland Security reports a 73 percent surge in the deadly synthetic opioid fentanyl interdicted at the southern border over the last 2 years.

Fact: Over 72,000 Americans died of an opioid overdose last year.

Fact: In my home State of Kentucky, we suffer from the fifth highest opioid overdose rate in America.

Fact: The administration's request to Congress is not funding for a sea-to-sea