

come for our star to shine, alongside the others, on the Flag of the United States of America.

#### GOVERNMENT OPPRESSION OF PATRIOTS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, early last year, I spoke with businesswoman Catherine Engelbrecht, also founder of True the Vote and King Street Patriots in Houston, Texas. True the Vote is a nonpartisan organization whose purpose is to train poll workers to uphold voter integrity at the polls, because, despite what many say, voter fraud is rampant in America. King Street Patriots is a group of liberty-minded, patriotic individuals in Houston who meet weekly to discuss what's going on here in Washington.

Catherine told me that both of these groups and her family had not only been harassed by liberal progressive groups but also by the Federal Government. It all began when Catherine applied for nonprofit status in 2010 for True the Vote and King Street Patriots. So began the tidal wave of government inquiries and harassment.

In a recent interview, Catherine said this:

We applied for nonprofit status in 2010. Since that time, the IRS has run us through a gauntlet of analysts and hundreds of questions over and over and over again. They've requested to see each and every tweet I've ever tweeted and each and every Facebook post I've ever posted. They've asked to know every place I've ever spoken since our inception, and to whom, and everywhere I intend to speak in the future.

We have learned that the IRS has even asked these groups, Mr. Speaker, for donor lists.

Mr. Speaker, this level of detail goes well beyond the business of the IRS, and it didn't stop there. The Federal Government's snooping included six visits by the FBI, as well as multiple unannounced visits from OSHA and, yes, even the ATF. Mr. Speaker, you may remember the ATF. Those are the ones responsible for smuggling guns into Mexico. How ironic it is they want to audit American citizens but lose track of guns where they were purposely sent to the drug cartels.

In any event, in addition to True the Vote, Catherine and her husband were also personally audited. Keep in mind Catherine and her husband have owned a small family business for 20 years and have never been audited by the IRS until all of this. Why now? It seems very coincidental.

I asked that question when I submitted a FOIA request on behalf of True the Vote and King Street Patriots to FBI, OSHA and the ATF asking if they were under criminal investigation. The reply from these agencies was that none of these individuals were under criminal investigation. Well, if they're not, why are they being treated

like criminals? Just because they question government.

Mr. Speaker, Catherine is not alone. The IRS has admitted to systematically targeting certain groups who have opposing views from the administration. According to USA Today, between February 2010 and May 2012, only one Tea Party group was granted tax-exempt status from the IRS. But during that same 2-year period, the IRS has approved dozens of liberal and progressive groups for their tax-exempt status. Coincidence? Yeah, right.

Not only does this behavior of the IRS threaten individual freedom and violate the Constitution; I think it may be criminal. It is unlawful for any Federal agency to use its law enforcement and its investigation power as a means to harass and target certain individuals whose political views differ from any administration. It would appear that such actions are also in violation of Federal law and the equal protection and due process protections guaranteed in the Constitution.

Private citizens should not be punished for questioning government. This is America, not a Third World dictatorship or the Soviet Union.

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This type of government oppression and political opposition is disturbing. I've written Attorney General Eric Holder to request him to direct the U.S. Office of Special Counsel to investigate any potential violation of the Hatch Act that may have occurred by IRS employees. I've also asked Attorney General Holder to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate all of this.

No government should be requiring citizens to furnish their schedules, donor lists, personal communications or political beliefs to any government agency. No government agency—whether it's the IRS, the FBI, the ATF, or OSHA—should be used as a tool to suppress those who are considered “opposition groups” and dare to question our government.

The IRS is abusing its power to tax by harassing and punishing those who have been “taxed enough already.”

And that's just the way it is.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 50 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

#### PRINTING OF PROCEEDINGS OF FORMER MEMBERS PROGRAM

Mr. MCHENRY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the proceedings during the former Members program be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and that all Members and former Members who spoke during the proceedings have the privilege of revising and extending their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

The following proceedings were held before the House convened for morning-hour debate:

UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS 2013 ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS

The meeting was called to order by the Honorable Barbara Kennelly, vice president of Former Members of Congress Association, at 8:05 a.m.

#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Lord God of history, and our salvation, when former Members return to Congress it must be similar to any American opening the Bible or their holy book at random. By doing so, people of the Book read between the lines, see the story of America, and rejoice.

Congress, too, holds old and familiar stories, strong exhortations, repeated corrections, and consoling confirmation of hopes that speak anew of love, patriotism, and light. Looking at Congress once again, these former Members, still Your stewards, hear the praise of Psalms, the lament of Job, and are strengthened by the sentiments of Gideon as well as Paul, the commands of Moses and the prayers of Jesus.

As the Good Book binds people into community, You tie together the years of Congress and make of them a prophetic voice that reverences the past, speaks to the present, and holds promise for the future.

May all former Members be rewarded for their contributions to this constitutional Republic and continue to work and pray that the goodness and justice of this beloved country be proclaimed to the nations.

Quicken life, promise, and fortitude in all here gathered that we may bring joy to the present age and long for eternal happiness, calling upon Your holy name, now and forever.

Amen.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Hon. Barbara Kennelly led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Ms. KENNELLY. The Honorable STENY HOYER will now address us.

Mr. HOYER. “Address us” overstates what I'm going to do, but I'm always so pleased to be with all of you. And I was kidding on saying that.

I want to tell you frankly, on the Republican side, you guys look so much better than you did when we served together, and we want all of you back on our side of the aisle. We're voting to reelect you.

But I am so pleased to be here with all of you. I had the opportunity to say just a few words yesterday, but I particularly wanted to be here, and I don't