

CRISIS IN FLINT, MICHIGAN

(Mr. KILDEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, the ongoing crisis in my hometown of Flint, Michigan, is a real tragedy. This failure of government has affected 100,000 people—adults and children—who, after months and months, still do not have clean drinking water.

It is my view that the State of Michigan bears the principal responsibility for this crisis and should step up and do more. It was the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality that failed to a great extent.

I know there are Members who share my view that there is responsibility at every level of government. We could argue about how we apportion that responsibility, but in the meantime, people in Flint still can't drink the water, and they need help. They deserve help from the State and from the Federal Government. They are citizens of Michigan, but also citizens of the United States, who are facing a disaster, a crisis, and have every right to expect that their government will step in to help them, especially when it is clear that it was the government that made the decisions that led to this crisis.

So I ask that we not recess until we take up legislation to provide direct help to the city of Flint. It is something that I think is our moral responsibility. It is unconscionable that we would leave this body without acting.

LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR V. BURWELL

(Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today the High Court is considering the Little Sisters of the Poor v. Burwell, a most important case regarding religious liberty and the First Amendment.

The Little Sisters of the Poor is a religious institution dedicated to assisting the elderly poor, but an unfair and unjust dilemma has been forced upon them. They must choose whether to violate their religious beliefs by complying with the HHS mandate or pay massive fines.

The government cannot compel people to violate their conscience and their religious faith. But today we are watching the government force people to choose between their faith or a government decree. To place citizens of this country in this inescapable position is not only reprehensible, but also a direct violation of the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I pray that the Court be granted the wisdom and discernment necessary to resolve this case in support of religious liberty and conscience rights. People must not be forced by the government to violate their faith.

LATIN EXPRESS BAND 40TH ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. VEASEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a legend since 1976 on the Dallas-Fort Worth music scene. The Latin Express Band is celebrating its 40th anniversary.

The Latin Express Band, founded by Carlos and Leo Saenz, comes a long way from their humble roots of playing high school dances. Over the past 40 years, they have played in music venues throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolis and the country. In 2001, they were one of the music groups invited to perform at the Presidential Inaugural Ball. They were recently inducted into the Tejano R.O.O.T.S. Hall of Fame in 2008.

Along with their musical accolades, the Latin Express Band has inspired future generations of local musicians through their support of music education for children, youth, and adults.

On March 31st, the Saenz brothers will perform at Fort Worth's historic Casa Manana Theatre in honor of Cesar Chavez' birthday. Carlos and Leo have come a long way from their days playing at Sadie Hawkins dances back in the day, and I am honored to recognize their achievements.

Congratulations to the Latin Express Band.

SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS

(Mr. GIBBS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the decision by the U.S. Supreme Court earlier this week regarding the Second Amendment.

By overturning the decision by the Massachusetts Supreme Court, the Court has reaffirmed not only that Americans have the right to self-defense, but also that stun guns are covered under the Second Amendment.

The case began when a woman named Jaime Caetano was continually threatened by an abusive ex-boyfriend who, at one point, put her in the hospital. At the urging of a friend, she began carrying a stun gun for protection.

After an incident that a restraining order against her ex-boyfriend failed to prevent, the threat of a nonlethal device prevented any harm of Ms. Caetano. Yet, Massachusetts had previously outlawed the ownership of stun guns, and she was arrested.

Massachusetts' highest court sided against the Supreme Court's Heller decision, which set clear standards for the Second Amendment. The Supreme Court Justices clearly saw the foolishness in the State court's decision and reversed it this week, reasserting that the right to bear arms "extends to all instruments that constitute bearable arms, even those that were not in existence" when our Nation was founded.

This is a reminder that the rights of all Americans must be defended vigilantly by every generation. I commend the Supreme Court for its decision and Justice Alito for his concurring opinion that gives individuals in all States a necessary nonlethal option for protection against violence.

TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF CONXITA MARTORELL CARRION

(Mr. GUTIÉRREZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a great woman of Puerto Rico, Conxita Martorell Carrion. Along with my wife Soraida and my family, we are deeply saddened by her loss.

Conxita was raised in Barcelona, but truly adopted Puerto Rico as her homeland. She loved Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans like few people I have ever met. From the beaches to the narrow streets of Old San Juan, the island was deeply loved by Conxita.

Conxita and Richard raised a beautiful family, but what I remember most about her is her passion and compassion for her adopted island home, and especially how she donated her time and love to shelter abused and battered girls.

She is in the thoughts and prayers of all Puerto Ricans.

And now, just a line or two in Spanish.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

Mr. Speaker, my wife and our daughters will deeply miss the great generosity and welcoming spirit Conxita Carrion shared with our family. Here in the House I wanted to offer my humble thanks and my sincerest condolences to her husband Richard and their family.

Sr. Presidente, mi esposa y nuestras hijas profundamente extrañarán la gran generosidad y el espíritu acogedor que Conxita Carrion compartió con nuestra familia.

Aquí, en la cámara quisiera ofrecer mi humilde agradecimiento y mis más sinceras condolencias a su marido Richard y a su familia.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Illinois will provide the Clerk a translation for the RECORD.

HONORING MARY SMITH

(Mr. WALBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, as I travel throughout Michigan's Seventh District, I have had the privilege of getting to know some incredible women who have made a lasting mark on our communities. Mary Smith from Coldwater is one of them. If you live in Branch County, you know Mary. She is family.

Over the last 40 years, Mary has spent countless hours volunteering at