

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, as Americans, we mourn for the lives lost in the act of terrorism in New York last week. But New Yorkers are resilient. Violence will never break their spirit, and in the Northeast corridor, business has continued as usual.

Sadly, there are folks who want to use last week's terrorist attack for their cynical political reasons. They don't want to treat the root causes of extremism, whether based on racial resentment, twisted interpretations of religion, or political ideology. They do want to stoke fear in order to advance an anti-immigrant agenda, and they are trying to blame the Diversity Visa program for the violence.

Americans are smarter than that.

The Diversity Visa program strengthens the Nation by allowing people from places like Africa and the Caribbean to lawfully immigrate to the United States, where they help fill major shortages in the workforce and drive positive changes in their communities. We need them, and they need us.

Let's not sacrifice our national principles because of a trumped up fear of immigrants.

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the world's largest religion continues to be the world's most persecuted religion. Christians are assaulted, murdered, harassed, and their homes and churches increasingly are destroyed.

Recently, in Cairo, while Coptic Christian priest Father Rizkallah was collecting humanitarian aid, he was stabbed to death because he was a Christian.

Now persecution has taken a new twist. While Islamic extremism continues its genocide on Christians and other different sects of Islam, government-sponsored persecution is increasing worldwide. According to Open Doors, 9 of the top 10 countries where persecution exists have large Islam populations. But North Korea, the number one offender, is an atheist nation.

Ethnic nationalism is also a major driver of persecution. Weak and/or totalitarian governments use Christians as scapegoats to keep a grip on power.

Religious freedom is mentioned first in our First Amendment because it is the most important of all freedoms. It is a God-given right for all people of all religions. Americans should lead the way in worldwide religious freedom and in denouncing religious persecution of Christians.

And that is just the way it is.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the Open Doors USA Persecution of Christians Watch List.

OPEN DOORS USA PERSECUTION OF
CHRISTIANS WATCH LIST 2017

1. North Korea

2. Somalia
3. Afghanistan
4. Pakistan
5. Sudan
6. Syria
7. Iraq
8. Iran
9. Yemen
10. Eritrea

REPUBLICAN TAX PROPOSAL IS ANTI-LIFE

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak against the Republican tax proposal to raise taxes on the middle class. Moreover, congressional Republicans claim to be pro-life, but this tax bill takes a very different track.

Republicans eliminate the tax deduction for medical expenses, which will crush millions of seniors and people with chronic illnesses. This is antilife, not pro-life.

Republicans eliminate credits for adoption of children, including disabled children. This is antilife, not pro-life.

Republicans eliminate incentives for employers to provide childcare assistance to employees. This is antilife, not pro-life.

Oh, yes. Republicans also eliminate the student loan interest deduction, making payments for college more expensive. They threw that in there, too. This is antifamily, antilife, not pro-life for the next generation.

Meanwhile, the six biggest Wall Street banks, as well as big pharmaceutical companies, will have their taxes reduced by billions. Excess is rewarded again as taxes are raised on the middle class. The vast majority of benefits will go to big corporations, pushing more jobs offshore.

Multimillionaires are happily adding up their winnings. Trump, his billionaire buddies, and his heirs are laughing all the way to the bank.

The Republican tax plan is immoral, unfair, and antilife. I urge my colleagues to scrap it. Life matters.

RECOGNIZING RICHARD SYNEK, U.S. NAVY VETERAN AND FOUNDER OF FEED OUR VET- ERANS

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

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Richard Synek, a veteran of the United States Navy and founder of Feed Our Vets.

Rich served in the Navy during the 1980s and was serving aboard the USS *Peterson* during combat operations against Libya in 1986.

After his military service, Rich worked for the United States Postal Service, serving as postmaster for several local post offices. During his time as postmaster of the Vernon Center Post Office, Rich encountered a World

War II veteran who could only afford to buy one stamp and food for half the month.

After befriending this veteran, Rich bought him groceries so he and his wife could eat. Shortly after, Feed Our Veterans was formed.

Since 2008, Feed Our Veterans has served over 20,000 veterans and their families, providing over 445,000 pounds of food for those in need.

Our community is grateful to Rich for his service in the Navy, but especially for his continued compassionate service to our fellow veterans.

HUB OF HOPE

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

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, today I had the wonderful opportunity to join with a group of civic, business, and community leaders to introduce a new program in the city of Philadelphia called Hub of Hope. The brainchild of SEPTA and Project HOME, Hub of Hope is a new initiative to address homelessness in our city.

According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, more than 6,000 people are homeless in the city of Philadelphia, and 15,000 are homeless in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Ending homelessness requires a team effort on the city, State, and Federal level. I am committed to doing my part to ensure that people do not have to sleep on the streets and that their personal, physical security, and mental health needs are addressed in a comprehensive manner. I look forward to working with the people of SEPTA and Project HOME on the new Hub of Hope program.

Hub of Hope is another tool in our toolbox to help move our middle neighborhoods forward. With tools like Hub of Hope in our toolbox, I know that, together, we can continue to work to build a stronger Philadelphia, block by block.

MILK IS A CORNERSTONE OF STUDENTS' SCHOOL LUNCH

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a cornerstone of a student school lunch: milk.

Milk is the number one source of nine essential nutrients in the diet of many young Americans, and it provides significant health benefits. But over the past few years, milk consumption has been on the decline in school lunch programs. That is why, together with Representative JOE COURTNEY, I introduced the School Milk Nutrition Act of 2017.

Our bill would ease unnecessary regulations preventing milk consumption

in school lunch programs. The bipartisan bill recognizes the importance of milk to the health and well-being of school children. It also works to improve the variety and availability of milk offered in schools, which was supported by U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Purdue earlier this year. In May, Secretary Purdue directed USDA to begin the process of allowing schools to serve 1 percent flavored milk through the school meals program.

When schoolchildren don't drink milk, they are missing out on essential nutrients. I urge my colleagues to support this bill so another generation of children can fall in love with milk.

EXTEND TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE STATUS FOR HAITIANS AND CENTRAL AMERICANS

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I am joining the Congressional Black Caucus to ask for an extension of the temporary protective status for Haitians.

I am absolutely appalled that this government would deny this extension and only allow it for 6 months. Apparently, they are not aware of the scarcity of food in Haiti and the cholera epidemic. All of these challenges are continuing since 2011.

Along with the Haitians, I understand that they have now taken away TPS from 300,000 Hondurans, Nicaraguans, and Salvadorans as well. This is an outrageous act, and it is important for them to act immediately.

I also stand against the scam tax plan. The scam tax plan would, in fact, take away opportunities for Americans to have higher education, build the deficit way beyond one's recognition, would not create jobs, would send jobs overseas, would allow for 80 percent of the benefits to go to the top 1 percent, and, frankly, would provide no benefits for middle class, hardworking Americans.

This plan is not tax cuts and jobs; it is a tax scam with no jobs.

I ask my colleagues to vote against this tax bill, and I ask this administration to do what is right and provide humanitarian relief and extend the TPS for Haitians and all others similarly situated for 18 months.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SPILLWAY AT THE OROVILLE DAM

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, after the near disaster we had in Butte County, near Oroville, with the breakage of the spillway at Oroville Dam, I am very happy to congratulate the folks of Kiewit Construction, and so many others, on their reconstruction

of the spillway, phase 1. We will have a working, viable spillway for this upcoming rainy season, if needed, due to the intense and incredible efforts to rebuild that project.

If you had seen the size of, basically, the canyon that was carved out where the old spillway stood from having to release water to keep the lake level, in February, at a safe level, you would see how amazing it was, the work that was done in order to rebuild that spillway in its current phase. It will be able to handle 100,000 CFS and be able to keep the lake stable for the upcoming year.

However, we do need to have balance in the process and have that lake be able to store enough water for California's needs this coming year, because we will still have those needs in 2018, and not drain the lake all the way because of an overcautious thought process.

So congratulations on a viable lake that works for all.

□ 1930

TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE STATUS AND OTHER ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands?

There was no objection.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to anchor this CBC Special Order hour. The Congressional Black Caucus, under the leadership of the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. RICHMOND), is committed to sharing with this Congress, as well as with the American people, the issues of great importance to the Caucus, to Congress, and to the constituents we represent.

For this Special Order hour, at this time, we believe it is very and vitally important to discuss the temporary protective status of Haiti and other countries.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague, the gentlewoman from Utah (Mrs. LOVE), to discuss this very important issue.

Mrs. LOVE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues at the CBC for the opportunity to speak at this Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, I traveled to Haiti to investigate sex trafficking, as part of my work on the Financial Services Committee's Subcommittee on Terrorism and Illicit Finance. While I was there, I had the opportunity to observe conditions as well as meet with leadership and the President.

What I saw was a nation struggling to rebuild after the 2010 tragedy that hurt and rattled the nation with an earthquake, a cholera epidemic, and Hurricane Matthew. What I heard was the nation was not prepared for the tens of thousands of Haitians that were to return.

Haitian TPS recipients contribute significantly to the United States' economy and to the Haitian economy. As Haiti works not only to rebuild, but to rise itself out of poverty that has plagued it for years, I ask the White House to please take a moment to help our friends and allies in Haiti and to extend the temporary protective status.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman so very much for her moving words. I know that this is an issue that is very close to her heart, being of Haitian-American descent, and we are grateful for her leadership on this, being supportive of the letters to the President, letters to the Secretary of Homeland Security, and for her working in a bipartisan fashion to support the people of Haiti as well as other countries on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. RICHMOND), the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus who is leading us in this discussion that is affecting the people of Haiti as well as other countries, along with the President's tax plan and how it would affect those Americans who are the least of us and would have the most repercussions for that.

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for leading this Special Order and for the outstanding work that she has done as her island, the U.S. Virgin Islands, recovers from two devastating hurricanes.

Being from New Orleans, I understand what two twin hurricanes can do. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita ravaged our city, our State, along with Mississippi, Texas, and the Gulf Coast. To be very candid, the people of the Virgin Islands, unfortunately, are doing this too much on their own.

Part of what makes America exceptional, part of what makes us the greatest country in the world is that when we find our citizens in a vulnerable position, through no fault of their own, we come in as a government and we help. When you look at the Virgin Islands and the fact that the damage they have received is more than their capacity to rebuild, and it is through no fault of their own, it is Mother Nature. It is an act of God.

Some would say it is global warming and climate change, but it doesn't matter what caused it. What matters is the United States' response to how we fix it. So when we start talking about our response to the Virgin Islands, it is a great segue into Haiti and temporary protective status.