

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