

Mr. GOHMERT. In conclusion, we pay tribute to a big man, as Jesus said to the poor man of Nazareth, who has now been carried to the bosom of Abraham by the angels.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

REAPPOINTMENT AS MEMBER OF SOCIAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's reappointment, pursuant to section 703 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 903) and the order of the House of January 5, 2011, and upon the recommendation of the minority leader, of the following member on the part of the House to the Social Security Advisory Board for a term of 6 years:

Ms. Barbara Kennelly, Hartford, CT

HOME RULE IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I come to the floor today to begin a series of half-hour conversations containing information that I believe many Members of our House simply do not have, especially considering how often the Constitution and the Framers are cited. I have no reason to believe that there is any intention on the part of any Member to deny democracy to any American citizen in our great country.

So during these half-hour Special Orders, I will be offering some evidence and information that go back to the Framers and come forward into the era when the District of Columbia was granted home rule in order to try to inform Members of the standing of the District of Columbia, which is often referred to as the "Federal district."

It, of course, is not a Federal district. It is a hometown of more than 600,000 residents, which has been granted full and complete authority to govern itself—too late, of course, but finally. It was too late in this era, but not too late in the history of the country because, as the country began, the citizens, indeed, at that time had that right.

The Framers, of course, were confronted with a dilemma. They wanted a capital to be located here in the District of Columbia, and they wanted that capital to have the same rights as any other Americans. They had had an experience in Philadelphia of some concern, when veterans had marched on that capital, about who would defend the capital. They tried to sort out this dilemma and thought they had by creating the District of Columbia—whose residents would have the same rights as every other American citizen, but

giving the Congress authority over the District. Let me indicate how that happened.

No one who has any knowledge of the history of our country can believe that the Framers fought against taxation without representation for everybody except the people who happened to live in the Nation's Capital. That would be sacrilege to say that of the great Framers of the Constitution, particularly since people from this very area, now known as the District of Columbia, went to war on the slogan of "no taxation without representation" and fought and died under that slogan. They didn't go and die under that slogan so that everybody but themselves could be freed from England and have full democracy.

It is also clear from looking at the Constitution that there were two Maryland and two Virginia signers who made clear that in the land they gave to the District of Columbia they weren't giving away their citizens' rights. So their citizens in Maryland and Virginia, during the 10-year transition period, in fact, voted for Members of this body and had the right to vote in Maryland and Virginia.

Some would call what Congress has done in the intervening years an abuse of power. I believe it is a failure to come to grips with what the Framers intended. In Federalist 43, James Madison says from the very beginning that there would be "a municipal legislature for local purposes, derived from their own suffrages." That's, of course, the man and the document we rely on when we need some legislative history about the Constitution.

It is very important to note that the first government in the city of Washington was established in 1802 when the District of Columbia became the Nation's Capital. At that point, contemporaneous with the Constitution, there was a city council elected by the people of the District of Columbia to fully govern this city the way the districts and the jurisdictions of the Members of this body are fully governed. In 1812, the city council was permitted to elect the mayor. Before that, the mayor was appointed. In 1820 and thereafter, the mayor was elected by the people. That continued until 1871.

It should be said that the status of the District of Columbia, until home rule was granted, was constantly a part of the mix, the long, tortured part of our history about racial segregation. Many of the perpetrators who denied home rule were Southern Democrats. It was only when a Southern Democrat who chaired the "District Committee" was defeated, after the Voting Rights Act was passed, that the District was granted home rule in 1973.

So this has not been a matter of party. If anything, the Republican Party had much cleaner hands until recently when, for its own purposes, it adopted the posture of deciding that there would be home rule when it wanted and that violates every stand-

ard, every principle of the Framers and Founders when members simply step in and try to abolish democratic policy and laws enacted by a local government to which they are not accountable.

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It's important to note that when the Home Rule Act was passed in 1973, the first line said that the purpose was to "restore" to the citizens of the District of Columbia, "restore". Those words, I think, were chosen with great meaning and understanding of history, "restore" because it was clear that the people who lived in this city had every right of every other American citizen before the city was created, that those from Maryland, Virginia, who gave the land, saw to it that these rights were preserved. Only in the political maneuverings of the Congress itself has that right been at risk, but that right has never been at risk except for Members of Congress who did not adhere to the principles of full democracy for every citizen of the United States.

The purpose of the Home Rule Act was to restore, not to create, rights. Congress can not create rights for people born in this country. The rights are given with their citizenship.

Now the District of Columbia, if one looks at the Home Rule Act, and the trends of all of the legislation preceding the Home Rule Act, was never given partial home rule except when Members of Congress from other jurisdictions decide they want to make changes in the District. That is found nowhere in the Home Rule Act, and that flies in the face of every principle of those who created the United States of America and those who died under the slogan of "no taxation without representation."

We created a very diverse democracy, and we have held it together through a principle of local deference and local control. We have people in one part of the country who detest some of the laws and policies in another part of the country, but the first thing they will do is honor local control and the right of local citizens to elect people who are accountable to them. When those who are not accountable to them want to get something done they must go to those who are, indeed, accountable to them.

Congress thought about what enacting home rule would mean. It said, there are some specific exceptions. Congress did not leave it to the discretion of Members of this body to decide what those exceptions would be. Congress, in fact, did something very specific with respect to those exceptions because it understood that once home rule is granted, there would be differences between the local legislature and the Congress of the United States. So it said, this is what we mean, and this is what we do not mean.

These limitations on the District and its council need to be rehearsed and need to be understood by anybody who