

trade, exchanges information and intelligence and expands the Iron Dome.

Israel's security should be our first priority but this includes more than just weapons funding.

It requires joint-cooperation with the Israeli government and the Israeli people.

When Israel's national interests are protected, the United States' national security is enhanced.

Mr. Speaker, I have visited Israel almost a dozen times and each time I visit I am reminded of the challenges faced by Israelis every day.

The Israeli people face these challenges with confidence and self-assurance because they know they are an ally of the United States.

ACHIEVING A BETTER LIFE EXPERIENCE ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 3, 2014

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, it's a laudable and worthy goal to incentivize savings and ensure that families of individuals with disabilities have access to the resources they need. But Congress has a responsibility to ensure that limited resources benefit those who need the help the most. Unfortunately, this bill is yet another example of an upside-down tax code that provides the greatest benefits to those of greatest means, not to middle class families living paycheck to paycheck.

Additionally, as AARP has noted in the attached letter, "establishing the ABLE program should not be achieved by tapping into Medicare savings." Using Medicare savings to offset non-health related programs sets a dangerous precedent. While there are elements to this bill that both sides can agree on, this bill takes one step forward and two steps back.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF RETIRED PEOPLE,

December 3, 2014.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: As the largest non-profit, nonpartisan organization representing the interests of Americans age 50 and older and their families, AARP urges you to reject using Medicare savings as an offset to pay for non-healthcare programs, including the cost of the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act of 2014.

AARP has consistently advocated against using permanent reductions in Medicare to pay for other unrelated government spending. While we agree it is important to help individuals with disabilities maintain health, independence, and quality of life, we oppose using Medicare savings to finance tax expenditures or other non-healthcare programs.

The ABLE Act establishes tax-exempt savings plans for persons with disabilities, making it much easier for them and their families to save for future expenses. Although ABLE accounts are only available for individuals under the age of 26, the savings accrued will help with living expenses as the person ages. This is especially important because at ages 50-64, adults with disabilities are less than half as likely to be employed as those without disabilities.

However, establishing the ABLE program should not be achieved by tapping into Medi-

care savings. This is especially true at a time when Medicare faces its own long term funding needs, and when Congress will shortly need to find savings to pay for either permanent Medicare SGR reform or another temporary "doc fix" in 2015. We urge you to remove Medicare offsets from the ABLE Act. Sincerely,

NANCY A. LEAMOND,
Executive Vice President,
State & National Group.

TAX INCREASE PREVENTION ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 3, 2014

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, as Ranking Member of the House Budget Committee, it is abundantly clear to me that what our country needs most right now—and what we really should be voting on today—is comprehensive, pro-growth tax reform that encourages investment at home, drives job creation and delivers broadly shared prosperity to all Americans.

Instead, we are voting to retroactively extend a group of over 50, mostly business-related, temporary tax provisions that expired at the end of last year—until the end of this year. Which is now about four weeks away.

That's what today's legislation does. It retroactively takes these 50-odd expired provisions back to the beginning of the year, and then extends them forward for the next four weeks, at which point they will expire again and we'll be right back to square one.

Let me be clear: I support a number of these expiring provisions—like the R&D Tax Credit—and think they should be made permanent as part of comprehensive tax reform. And there are additional steps I think we should be taking—like extending the Health Care Tax Credit for trade-displaced workers and older workers whose pensions have been taken over by the PBGC. And ending the egregious practice of so-called corporate inversions once and for all.

I am reluctantly supporting this bill because, without it, many individuals and businesses would see an effective tax increase.

But Mr. Speaker, at some point, we're going to have to stop kicking the can down the road. From my perspective, that moment can't come soon enough.

THE STATUS OF THE TERRITORIES OF JUDEA AND SAMARIA ACCORDING TO INTERNATIONAL LAW

HON. STEVE STOCKMAN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 4, 2014

Mr. STOCKMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to convey to the House important information regarding the legality of the presence of the State of Israel in Judea and Samaria under international law. Due to the unique and sui generis historic and legal circumstances of Israel's presence in Judea and Samaria, this presence cannot be considered

to be an occupation. Moreover, provisions of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention, regarding transfer of populations, cannot be considered applicable, and were never intended to apply to the type of settlement activity carried out by Israel in Judea and Samaria. According to international law, Israelis have the lawful right to settle in Judea and Samaria, and consequently, the establishment of settlements cannot in and of itself be considered to be illegal. The following is an excerpt from the 2012 Levy Commission Report on the Legal Status of Building in Judea and Samaria that deals with international law. The full report can be viewed in its entirety at <http://regavim.org.il/en/levy-report-translated-into-english/>.

THE STATUS OF THE TERRITORIES OF JUDEA AND SAMARIA ACCORDING TO INTERNATIONAL LAW

3. In light of the different approaches in regard to the status of the State of Israel and its activities in Judea and Samaria, any examination of the issue of land and settlement thereon requires, first and foremost, clarification of the issue of the status of the territory according to international law.

Some take the view that the answer to the issue of settlements is a simple one inasmuch as it is prohibited according to international law. That is the view of Peace Now (see the letter from Hagit Ofra from 2 April 2010); B'tselem (see the letter from its Executive Director Jessica Montell from 29 March 2012, and its pamphlet Land Grab: Israel's Settlement Policy in the West Bank, published May 2002); Yesh Din and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) (see the letter from Attorney Tamar Feldman from 19 April 2012); and Adalah (see the letter from attorney Fatma Alaju from 12 June 2012).

The approach taken by these organizations is a reflection of the position taken by the Palestinian leadership and some in the international community, who view Israel's status as that of a "military occupier," and the settlement endeavor as an entirely illegal phenomenon. This approach denies any Israeli or Jewish right to these territories. To sum up, they claim that the territories of Judea and Samaria are "occupied territory" as defined by international law in that they were captured from the Kingdom of Jordan in 1967. Consequently, according to this approach, the provisions of international law regarding the matter of occupation apply to Israel as a military occupier, i.e. Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land. The Hague, 18 October 1907, which govern the relationship between the occupier, the occupied territory, and the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Geneva, 12 August (1949).

According to the Hague Regulations, the occupying power, while concerning himself with the occupier's security needs, is required to care for the needs of the civilian population until the occupation is terminated. According to these regulations, it is forbidden in principle to seize personal property, although the occupying power has the right to enjoy all the advantages derivable from the use of the property of the occupied state, and public property that is not privately owned without changing its fixed nature. Moreover, according to this approach, Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits the transfer of parts of the occupying power's own civilian population into the territory it occupies. Accordingly, in their view, the establishment of settlements carried out by Israel is in violation of this article, even without addressing the type or status of the land upon which they are built.