"NO" on rollcall vote No. 212 (on agreeing to the first LaMalfa Amendment to H.R. 2028), "NO" on rollcall vote No. 213 (on agreeing to the second LaMalfa Amendment to H.R. 2028), "YES" on rollcall vote No. 214 (on the motion to recommit H.R. 2028, with instructions), "NO" on rollcall vote No. 215 (on passage of H.R. 2028).

HONORING JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL OF NEW YORK IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 15, 2015

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, this May we celebrate Jewish American History Month, to recognize the social, political, and cultural history of America's Jewish community. I am pleased to recognize the myriad contributions Jewish Americans make every day to improve our City, State and Nation often in the face of un-speakable discrimination and adversity. America is blessed to have such a vibrant community that impacts so many lives through the spirit of tikkan olam, or repairing the world.

It is my great honor to represent the Upper Manhattan Congressional District and the Bronx, which is home to many distinguished institutions, such as The Jewish Theological Seminary, Yeshiva University, and Touro College, as well as almost thirty active synagogues of all denominations. I am proud that my dear friend, Rabbi Arthur Schneier, who is world-renowned for his efforts to promote peace and justice, has been recently knighted by Pope Francis and made a member of the Papal Order of St. Sylvester at a ceremony in New York.

Over the years, I have worked closely with New York based institutional organizations like the Jewish Community Relations Council, Met Council of Jewish Poverty and the American Jewish Committee on a variety of issues. I have led past efforts to assist Jews seeking refuge from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia, and I am proud to have worked with my colleagues in Congress on various bills to fight anti-Semitism and racism. Just recently I supported a resolution urging the Administration to the second LaMalfa Amendment to H.R. 2028, for crafting legislation that makes meaningful reforms to many NSA surveillance programs—including Section 215 of the Patriot Act—and is a departure from the untenable status quo. However, despite these positive reforms, this bill fails to address Section 702 of the FISA Amendments Act, an even more invasive invasion program than Section 215 which allows the government to collect both data and content of Americans without a warrant.

Last year’s version of the USA Freedom Act similarly scaled back many of the surveillance programs the NSA currently has at its disposal. Unfortunately, Section 702 was not one of them. Throughout the process, we were repeatedly assured by Chairman GOODLATTE and Congressman SENSBRENNER that there would be a real future effort to address Section 702. At that time, Rep. SENSBRENNER stated, “Section 702 of FISA has been improperly used to obtain the content of Americans’ private communications without a warrant, which is unconstitutional under the Fourth Amendment and a blatant violation of Americans’ civil liberties.”

Like Rep. SENSBRENNER, I have also consistently said that Section 702 opened the door to some of the most troublesome surveillance practices that have come to light in recent years. Last year, I strongly supported the effort to fix those aspects of Section 702. Unfortunately, as I indicated last year, last minute changes stripped out provisions that would have “prevented the NSA from being able to search government databases for foreign communications content of American citizens without a warrant.” When those important provisions were removed, Chairman GOODLATTE and Rep. SENSBRENNER still have not allowed for a full debate and vote on this issue. Despite the Chairman’s supposed support to end Section 702, when Congresswoman SLEET offered an amendment during markup of the USA Freedom Act to prohibit these warrantless backdoor searches, Chairman GOODLATTE said, “this is