

ago. The stories they tell are blood-curdling.

One woman told of her cousin who had been rounded up in an antigovernment demonstration and taken to prison. After several years, the families were informed that their loved ones were to be released in the town square. When the excited families arrived for their long-awaited reunion, their sons were hanged before their eyes.

A doctor told me of his college days in Paris. He called home to tell his brother in Tehran of an anti-Khomeini demonstration. His brother was promptly arrested, tortured, and imprisoned for simply listening.

Now, a few months ago, after many years of silence, the brother in America received a call from his brother in Iran who wanted to tell him of the simmering unrest going on throughout that country. The American brother told him to shut up, to remember what happened the last time they had spoken so candidly. His brother in Tehran said: "I don't care anymore. They can't arrest all of us."

All of the Iranian expatriates I spoke with tell me the same thing: the economic sanctions and international isolation of the regime were bringing Iran to the brink of revolution.

And this brings us to the President's negotiation with Iran's fascist Islamic regime. Any agreement between Iran's leaders and the United States is meaningless because Iran's leaders' word is meaningless. Iran's government is a notoriously untrustworthy rogue state that has made it unmistakably clear that it intends to acquire nuclear weapons and, once acquired, to use them. The only way to avert this nightmare, short of war, is for the regime to collapse from within.

Over the last several years, the Iranian opposition has grown dramatically for two reasons: there is a strong and growing perception among the Iranian people that the Iranian dictatorship is a pariah in the international community, and the resulting international economic sanctions have created conditions that make the regime's overthrow imperative.

At precisely this moment in history, Barack Obama did incalculable damage by initiating these negotiations. By engaging this rogue state, President Obama has given it international recognition and legitimacy at just that moment when it had lost legitimacy in the eyes of its own people. Worse, by promising relief from economic sanctions, he has removed the most compelling reason the organized Iranian resistance had to justify the regime's overthrow.

It is not the outcome of the negotiations that matters because any agreement with Iran's conniving leaders is meaningless. It is the negotiations, themselves, that have greatly strengthened the regime, just when it was most vulnerable from growing opposition among its own people.

Now, the House just passed H.R. 1191 that purports to restore congressional oversight to these talks. I believe it completely missed the point.

First, our Constitution requires that any treaty be approved by two-thirds of the Senate. Well, that wasn't going to happen, so Mr. Obama simply redefined the prospective treaty as an agreement between leaders, an agreement with no force of law and no legal standing.

I fear the Congress has just changed this equation by establishing a wholly extra-constitutional process that lends the imprimatur of Congress to these negotiations with no practical way to stop the lifting of sanctions. Instead of two-thirds of the Senate having to approve a treaty, as the Constitution requires, this agreement takes effect automatically unless two-thirds of both Houses reject it—a complete sham.

But worse, I fear this bill gives tacit approval to extremely harmful negotiations that Congress, instead, ought to vigorously condemn and unambiguously repudiate.

We can only hope that in the days ahead what Churchill called "the parliamentary democracies" will regain the national leadership required to prevent these negotiations from producing what amounts to the Munich accords for the Middle East. That will require treating the Iranian dictatorship as the international pariah that it is, and it will require providing every ounce of moral and material support to the Iranian opposition that they need to rid their Nation of this fascist Islamic dictatorship, to restore their proud heritage, and to retake their place among the civilized nations of the world.

POSITIVE TRAIN CONTROL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, Mark Twain once said that "action speaks louder than words but not nearly as often."

Since last week's tragic Amtrak accident, we have heard plenty of words about the need for stronger rail safety measures and investments in our infrastructure, but it is time for Congress to back up these words with action. It is time for Congress to put its money where its mouth is.

We know how to prevent tragic accidents like the one that happened on Amtrak last week. We even mandated new technology called positive train control that would have prevented it. But what Congress has refused to do is to pay to actually get it done.

Positive train control is a game-changer for rail safety. The technology would have likely prevented 140 train accidents that have caused more than 280 deaths and \$300 million in property damage since 1969. But this safety technology is also incredibly complex and expensive to implement. We have man-

dated technology that is expected to cost billions, and we are forcing the Nation's railroads to foot the entire bill.

Much of this last week's focus has been on Amtrak, but despite last week's accident, Amtrak is actually on target to implement positive train control by the end of the year.

For the already cash-strapped commuter railroads around the country, it is a completely different story. For them, Congress' refusal to fund positive train control has pretty much stopped implementation in its tracks. Expected to cost commuter railroads nearly \$3.5 billion, it is no wonder that over 70 percent of commuter railroads won't achieve positive train control implementation before this year's deadline.

Our commuter railroads are integral to the daily commute of millions of Americans. In fact, Amtrak's annual ridership pales in comparison to our Nation's commuter railroads. While Amtrak carries 30 million riders a year, commuter railroads carry close to 500 million.

In the Chicago area alone, Metra's ridership last year was over 80 million. With numbers like that, how can Congress justify mandating a policy that they know commuter railroads simply cannot afford while providing very little funding to help them do it?

This unfunded mandate is forcing commuter rails to sacrifice other investments that are crucial to railroad safety and efficiency. Fifty percent of commuter railroads are currently deferring other capital investments to implement positive train control.

And what happens when the commuters aren't able to implement this technology before the end of this year? They get penalized—fined. Instead of giving money to the commuters to pay for PTC, the Federal Government is actually going to end up collecting money from them for not being able to afford to do so.

For good reason, Congress mandated incredibly important and incredibly expensive new technology. But it has amounted to a lot of words and very little action.

The same 2008 law that mandated PTC also authorized \$50 million a year in rail safety technology grants to help Amtrak and commuter railroads pay for this implementation, but in the 7 years since the law was passed, Congress has only appropriated funding once.

Mr. Speaker, \$50 million a year wasn't enough then, and it is sure not enough now. That is why I introduced a bill with the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) in March to reauthorize PTC funding at \$200 million a year.

It is time for Congress to finish what it started. It is time for Congress to get serious about investing in our Nation's transportation infrastructure. And it is time for Congress to help our commuter railroads implement positive train control and prevent the kind of

tragedies that we saw on Amtrak last week.

RECOGNIZING MAX DEMBY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Max Demby. Mr. Demby is a former congressional intern from my office, a University of Colorado senior, and an outstanding young man of character who was recently recognized by his community and local police for an act of heroism when he stopped a sexual assault in progress on his school campus.

Mr. Demby, who is from Cortez, Colorado, is a dedicated student, pursuing a degree in accounting at CU. He fills his time outside of the classroom with extracurricular activities such as internships and also works as a Ralpie handler at CU, which involves helping to manage the school mascot.

Late one evening, Mr. Demby was walking on campus when he happened to come across what looked to be an attempted sexual assault. Acting with bravery and determination, Mr. Demby took action and ran off the attacker.

Referencing the confrontation with the attacker, Mr. Demby humbly stated: "I was able to be in the right place at the right time and do the right thing." By intervening, Max put himself in harm's way to help the victim, and his act of selflessness drastically reduced the irreparable damage that the criminal was intent on causing.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Demby's selfless act should not go unnoticed. He serves as an admirable example of what young men of character should be. By putting others before himself and by intervening to stop a crime without hesitation, he made his community and campus a safer place.

On behalf of the Third Congressional District and the State of Colorado, I would like to thank Mr. Demby for his selfless act of bravery.

HUNGER AMONG SENIORS GROWING IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, at the end of March, I had the privilege of spending some time with the Highland Valley Elder Services' Meals on Wheels program in Northampton, Massachusetts, as part of their "March for Meals Month" to raise awareness about senior hunger.

I began my visit in the kitchen at the Walter Salvo Elder House, where an average of 550 healthy meals are prepared from scratch every weekday for delivery to homebound seniors and disabled residents of Hampshire County.

I had the opportunity to chat with Highland Valley director Allan Ouimet and nutrition program director Nancy

Mathers. Then I helped volunteer driver Arthur Mongeon pack up the day's meals in insulated coolers to keep the food hot. This day's meal was home-made chicken covered in gravy, mashed potatoes, green beans, cranberry sauce, applesauce, and milk. The food looked and smelled delicious and reminded me of what my grandmother used to make.

I joined Arthur on his normal N1 route, making stops at 15 homes in Northampton. At each stop, I had the opportunity to deliver the meal and chat with the residents. It was an eye-opening experience, and I thoroughly enjoyed hearing people's stories.

Each meal delivered contains one-third of the daily nutritional recommendations. For many individuals, the meal they receive from Meals on Wheels is the only well-balanced meal they eat all day.

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The individuals who receive these meals are low-income and often have significant health challenges that make it simply too difficult to prepare a full meal, never mind going out to the grocery store to shop.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most interesting things I learned from my visit is that Meals on Wheels is so much more than just a meals program. People who are homebound—many, who live alone—look forward to the brief, daily visits from the volunteers. These visits lift their spirits and allow them to socialize, and volunteers can check in and see how they are doing. Because of programs like Meals on Wheels, seniors can stay in their own homes where they are most comfortable and live independently longer.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about food insecurity in this country, nearly everybody talks about children, and we are right to want to do everything we can to end childhood hunger. But lost in that narrative is the reality that, among the food insecure, the rising population is seniors. One in twelve seniors in our country is faced with the reality of hunger. That is 5.3 million seniors who don't have enough to eat. Many are living on fixed incomes that often force them to choose between prescriptions and food—or paying their medical bills or heating their homes.

Seniors and the disabled represent about 20 percent of those who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, benefits. The average SNAP benefit for households with seniors is a meager \$134 per month. Unfortunately, we also know that eligible elderly households are much less likely to participate in SNAP than other eligible households. Many seniors may not realize that they qualify for assistance, or they may simply be reluctant to ask for help.

Seniors have unique nutritional needs. Hunger is especially dangerous for seniors and can exacerbate underlying medical conditions. Food-insecure seniors are at increased risk for

conditions like depression, heart attack, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

Mr. Speaker, May is Older Americans Month, and national organizations like Feeding America, the nationwide network of food banks, are focused on raising awareness about senior hunger through their #solveseniorhunger social media campaign.

In July, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Older Americans Act, which provides a range of critical services, including Meals on Wheels, that enable about 11 million older adults to stay independent as long as possible. To honor that significant anniversary, I hope that Congress will pass a strong reauthorization of OAA programs, which have been flat-funded over the past decade and without a long-term authorization since 2011. Demand for OAA programs and services continues to rapidly increase as our population ages, and to think that more and more seniors will experience hunger is heartbreaking. It is unacceptable in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent the wonderful people and the work that they do at Highland Valley Elder Services throughout western Massachusetts. Every day they are making the lives of seniors a little better and a little brighter. We in Congress should do our part to ensure that our Nation's seniors don't go hungry. We should pass a strong reauthorization of the Older Americans Act and adequately fund programs like Meals on Wheels, and we should reject harmful cuts to SNAP that will disproportionately harm the most vulnerable among us: children, seniors, and the disabled.

Mr. Speaker, we should urge the White House to hold a White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Hunger to come up with a comprehensive plan to end hunger once and for all in this country. We can and we should end hunger now.

PROTECTING SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. REED) for 5 minutes.

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight an issue that is coming upon us very quickly.

Mr. Speaker, many people across the Nation have talked about Social Security and Medicare and the trust funds going bankrupt for the retirement fund and Medicare sometime in 2033, 2034, but, Mr. Speaker, there is a more impending crisis coming down upon us. The Social Security disability trust fund is scheduled to go insolvent in 2016. That means, if we do nothing, what is going to happen in 2016 is millions of Americans across this Nation who receive those lifesaving disability benefits monthly will see a reduction in their benefits to the tune of 20 to 21 percent. That is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.