

struggling across the globe to claim the fundamental rights and freedoms that belong to all human beings.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the House to take up my resolution and set aside today to recognize Human Rights Day.

#### CONGRESS NEEDS TO PROTECT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as I have said today on the floor and yesterday, the American people expect us to keep them safe.

Let me thank my colleagues for the support they have given the Homeland Security Committee on a number of bills and particularly note the legislation that I introduced, the FRIENDS Act, the sole purpose of which is to ensure that those who are first responders who have to be away for a period of time, that their families are protected.

I also think it is an important moment for bridging and building on law enforcement and community. I have had the opportunity to meet with a number of police chiefs of major cities. We have introduced—JOHN CONYERS and myself, along with a number of Members—the Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act, which really is an opportunity and a bridge to be able to provide an accreditation pathway for the law enforcement agencies to build upon the improvement and the best practices that they may have, including a medallion for those who have fallen in duty.

It is also important, as we look forward to the security of this Nation, to recognize the tragedy of San Bernardino. I offer to those families my deepest sympathy. There was a major failure which we need to correct.

Members of Congress need to come together so that we are not behind the terrorist act, but in front of it, to protect the American people.

#### CURRENT ISSUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

##### PUERTO RICO'S FINANCIAL CRISIS AND THE WAY FORWARD

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time.

I would like to begin this evening by yielding to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. DUFFY), my good friend and colleague.

Mr. DUFFY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

Tonight I rise to talk about our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico.

If you have watched the news recently, you are well aware that there is an economic financial debt crisis tak-

ing place right now in Puerto Rico. Our American brothers and sisters are going through an incredibly difficult time.

The island is \$73 billion in debt. That is 100 percent of their GDP, which is catastrophically high. This debt has had a huge impact on the livelihoods of those who live on the island.

The unemployment rate is over twice what it is on the mainland. It is at 12.4 percent. Forty-eight percent of Americans on the island are living in poverty. Again, half of the island citizens—Americans—are living in poverty.

Ten percent of the 3.5 million people on the island are leaving and they are coming to the mainland. It is great because they work hard and they have an amazing culture. It is wonderful they are coming. But if you are coming to the mainland, you should be coming because you want to come, not because you don't have economic opportunity in your home. We don't want to force people away from their families and their neighbors and their community because they don't have economic opportunity.

We have to stand together in this House and stand with our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico. We can't turn a blind eye. We have to work with them. We have to work for them so we can address this crisis.

Yesterday I introduced a pretty simple and straightforward bill that will help jump-start the Puerto Rican economy, help put people back to work, grow their economy, better paying jobs, and lift people out of poverty. It is very simple. It is called the Puerto Rico Financial Stability and Debt Restructuring Choice Act, and it has two prongs.

Prong number one is we are going to implement a financial stability board that is going to help the island with the management of its budget, its tax collection, and its finances.

Prong number two is Puerto Rico can access a chapter 9 bankruptcy. By the way, every State in America can access chapter 9. It will be the same rights as every State that we will offer Puerto Rico. It is pretty simple and straightforward stuff.

I also think it is important to note that no one wants to have a financial stability board shoved down their throat, and the citizens of Puerto Rico don't want that either. That is why we give them the choice. This doesn't go into effect unless the Puerto Rican legislative assembly approves the financial stability board and the Governor signs it so that they have a say in their future.

If we do this, we will allow Puerto Rico to restructure their debt, to get their finances in order, to grow their economy, and to let people on the island start living the American Dream. If we do nothing, if we turn a blind eye and say that we are not going to offer the same bankruptcy option that every State has, we are turning our backs on

our fellow American citizens on the island, and that is not who we are. We should stand together.

Now, there are others who have proposed different solutions for the island, and those solutions involve a bailout without real structural reform. I have got to tell you that, after the 2008 financial crisis, I think Americans have had it up to here with bailouts. We usually go with bankruptcy and financial reform, and that is what my bill does.

I would encourage all of my fellow Americans in this institution, whether you are a conservative or a liberal, you are a Republican or a Democrat, to note that our brothers and sisters, our fellow American citizens in Puerto Rico, are going through tough times, and it is our job to stand with them, not turn our backs.

If we can pass this bill, it is going to be a new day on the island, economic prosperity and opportunity. And then people have a choice to say: Do I want to stay on the island, raise my family on the island, or do I want to leave and come to the mainland?

The choice is theirs. They won't be forced into that choice just because they don't have opportunity on the island of Puerto Rico.

I encourage all of my colleagues and friends to reach out. Let's be part of the solution.

##### RECOVERING AMERICA

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, as I walked through the airport recently, I noticed a young teenager. She was traveling and was seemingly happy to be involved in whatever activity she was going to.

She wore a button on her lapel. It said: What you do matters. It caught my attention: What you do matters. I liked it. I am not sure what was motivating her, but she wanted to communicate an important value to elevate an ideal. I simply admired her willingness to take a stand.

Mr. Speaker, I should say this now, though: There is a troubling statistic out there, and a recent survey highlights this. A majority of Americans do not identify with what America has become. Many people feel our country is slipping away. In reality, most want to reclaim the promise of our great Nation.

Contrary to the barrage of negativity, most people hope for justifiable goals: to regain power over their own lives, to regain power over the government, and to regain power over their own economic prospects.

Mr. Speaker, one of the strengths of America's system of government is its capacity for constant replenishment. Opportunities sometimes present themselves unpredictably. That gives us a chance to reassess and realign in new and compelling ways, both to preserve important traditions as well as to restore the future promise of our Nation.

A stronger America might be glimpsed through what I call four interlocking principles, the first of

which is government decentralization; second, economic inclusion; third, foreign policy realism; and, fourth, social conservation.

Let's take that first point. A return to a more decentralized government will restore an important source of America's strength. When the Federal Government grows beyond its effective purpose, it infringes upon basic liberty, it stifles innovation, it crushes creativity, and it impedes our responsibility for one another in the community.

A creeping tendency to nationalize every conceivable problem and nationalizing every conceivable discussion erodes the community's input. While the Federal Government does have an important central role in maintaining the guardrails of societal stability, the rule of law, and a fair opportunity economy, America's governing system is designed to operate most effectively at varying levels. Those close to an opportunity or those close to a problem ought to have the first authority to seize the opportunity or to solve the problem.

Second: economic inclusion. Economic inclusion should help America recover from an arthritic economy. You see, Mr. Speaker, when power concentrates in a Washington Wall Street axis, where the transnational corporation is an emerging ruling entity and where small business—the source of most jobs in America—is suffocated under increasingly complex dictates, the opportunity for a strong and vibrant marketplace diminishes. A vibrant market actually expands the space for constructive interdependency and community dynamism, fighting poverty, and driving innovation.

Third: foreign policy realism. Foreign policy realism should chart a new course between isolationism and over-interventionism. America has an important leadership role to play on the world stage. Today, however, many Americans are alarmed by an exhausted, drifting, and often counterproductive foreign policy.

After World War II, America was cast in the role of the world's superpower and at great sacrifice. We, as a country, created the space for international order. But now we live in a multi-polar world. Other countries, which we helped empower through our generous sacrifice, must take a seat at the table of responsible nations.

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Leveraging America's strength through strategic international partnerships will help us navigate a 21st century that is marked by ever-shifting geopolitical frameworks.

The fourth point: social conservation. What does that mean? Social conservation preserves the condition for order, for opportunity, and for happiness.

We must fight back against dimming hope and diminishing opportunity and darkening shadows. A healthy society

depends upon more than politics for the promotion of sustainable values. America has many mediating institutions, as we call it—important civic institutions, if you will—which uphold greater ideas.

As an example, Mr. Speaker, I am a proud, long-time member of the Rotary Club in Lincoln, Nebraska. At every Rotary Club meeting across this country, in which hundreds of thousands of Americans participate, there hangs a banner at the front of the club, and it reads: "Is it true? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned?"

Perfect. Beautiful. Perhaps we ought to hang the banner right here, Mr. Speaker. That is a pretty good game plan.

As new leadership emerges on the national stage, perhaps this is the moment to think critically about how we regain the high ground of purposeful government, an opportunity economy, a balanced foreign policy, and a flourishing culture in a good society. We need to play all four quarters.

Ultimately, both the government and the marketplace are downstream from our culture; and with a heavy heart, I say this—everyone knows it—America's social fabric is fraying. Many people are experiencing deepening anxiety about the future direction of the country. The recent attack in San Bernardino has only intensified the feeling. A crazed couple, driven by its twisted religious ideology, murdered indiscriminately those at a social services center. It is a horrible tragedy and a grotesque irony, and our hearts feel for those who were so gravely harmed.

A genuine multiculturalism—long a hallmark of the American experience—will continue to decay into discord unless two mutually supporting conditions are sustained: a genuine appreciation of organic differences and a binding substructure of universal ideals and shared values. One such value is that we do no harm to others, and a religion that teaches killing is no religion at all. Other important values include trustworthiness, thrift, citizenship, courteousness, and so on. By the way, Mr. Speaker, a helpful list of these ideals, of these virtues, is found in the Boy Scout Law.

This values crisis is compounding this three-part problem of government overreach, economic exclusion, and cultural dislocation. A centralizing government seems decreasingly able to understand, much less address, the needs of its citizens it should serve. In the midst of this divisive political season, partisan dysfunction, and bureaucratic inertia, it is all hindering the proper progress toward addressing our country's most pressing problems, and it overshadows important local initiatives where certain problems can best be solved. Not everything is a Federal issue. A private sector which is consolidating corporate power, often underwritten by the State, is

disenfranchising the small business sector. A loss of genuine choice and genuine competition of economic pluralism reduces the ability of people to participate, own, and innovate in a marketplace that is truly free and can deliver widespread prosperity.

A culture of contrasting philosophies, more and more inflamed by caustic rhetoric, is contributing to what some believe are irreconcilable social divisions. An impoverished account of individualism, of a liberty reduced to autonomous choice and divorced of responsibility creates the conditions for social anarchy, which further creates the conditions for counterproductive government interventions, lawless overreach, and intrusive market manipulations. Then add into this mix a confusing assortment of values choices that are driven more by experimenting elites than by the stability of sound tradition, and you have the recipe for harmful disruption. No wonder there is so much sadness in the world.

As politicians and the media debate policy positions, we must understand that authentic solutions involve a return to essential value propositions. The application of proper principles to these problems would enable us in Washington to better assuage widespread and justifiable angst with appropriate government policy, with appropriate government decentralization, and with dynamic economic inclusion, supported by a hope-filled culture. That is our answer.

As you enter my State—I live in Nebraska—the sign reads: ". . . the good life." A good life is found in freedom and responsibility. A just and orderly society is founded and sustained by persons who care. What we all do does really matter, just like my young teenage friend—I would like to call her a "friend"—displayed in the airport recently.

Mr. Speaker, late this summer, before school began, I took my younger children on a family trip to western Nebraska. Near Valentine, Nebraska, which is in an area called the Sandhills, water from the underground aquifer—it is called the Ogallala Aquifer—seeps out of the ground and falls dramatically over rock formations and into a stream that then feeds into the Niobrara River. The area is called Fort Falls, and it is a part of the Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge. The stream's icy cold water flows like a river into the shallow warm water that is running in the Niobrara. What is even more interesting to ponder, as you look around, are the steep slopes on both sides of the beautiful river. On the north bank, rocky hill formations are covered with pine trees. On the south bank, the trees are much different. You see the last reach of the eastern deciduous forest, with a mixed variety of plants and hardwood trees just like you would see here in Virginia. It looks like California on one side, and across the river here in Virginia on the other. Right there, where

I live in Nebraska, we are the geographic center of our country, where east meets west.

As a part of that trip, we also took a drive northward into the State of South Dakota, into the Black Hills, to a place called Mount Rushmore. It happened to be the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally that weekend, so I and about 2 million other bikers were on the road. Everyone knows the four faces on Mount Rushmore. Each of the four American Presidents embodied great qualities and faced significant challenges:

George Washington was a transcendent leader who purposefully walked away from power, giving our early Republic a chance to grow into a vibrant democracy;

Thomas Jefferson's life was seemingly full of conflicts and contradictions, but his efforts gave rise to the Declaration of Independence, which poetically expressed an understanding of the dignity and the rights of all persons, which so beautifully still informs our culture and our government to this day;

Abraham Lincoln made a midcourse correction in his life. He rejected an early snarky, political, antagonistic attitude and turned toward a vision of that which is noble and good. His reputation as a skillful and humble leader extended well beyond the Civil War to many important endeavors, including the development of land grant institutions all over this country, like the University of Nebraska;

Theodore Roosevelt had to rebuild his life after his wife died at a young age. His boundless energy, translating into multiple accomplishments, perhaps helped him outpace a haunting melancholy from which he suffered. As an avid hunter, he grew to recognize the importance of wildlife preservation. Beyond the natural places that he preserved, perhaps Roosevelt's greatest legacy was one of trust busting—breaking up concentrations of economic power that locked so many Americans out of a fair shot at economic opportunity.

Four great Presidents. Four men who sacrificed greatly to give us what we have today.

Today, Mr. Speaker, many people in the country are experiencing a serious disquiet about all of these challenges that we are facing. They feel disconnected from the ability to control their own well-being. These concentrations of power are overwhelming the capacity of individuals to shape their own environments. Political and economic and cultural cartels are growing more powerful, and, in some ways, they are more hidden and destructive than in Roosevelt's time.

Of course, today, political problems are on everyone's mind. This concentration of power stifles innovation and creativity; and as money flows into the political system, it pays for the polarization which hinders the ability of our body to find constructive solutions.

This transcends, by the way, the current partisan divide.

Our increasingly interconnected world offers significant benefits and opportunities to us, but globalization also introduces forces that can leave so many Americans feeling helpless. Transnational corporate conglomerates, often buttressed by oligarchic political systems, are shrinking the space for genuine choice and competition in the private sphere. As I talked about earlier, the stress of small business is very real. This concentration of economic power endangers true free market principles, which should be working for the many.

On a deeper level, America's political disrepair and economic malaise signal an underlying brokenness in our society, in our culture. Persons—humans—thrive in relationships with our families and communities in a healthy society, which creates the preconditions for this human flourishing. Cultural consolidation and social discord have left more and more people, again, feeling directionless and feeling alone. Weakening relationships and weakening social institutions foreshadow and prefigure political and economic problems. Ultimately, renewing America—restoring America's government and economy—requires reclaiming a vibrant civil society, which is the true source of our Nation's strength.

Mr. Speaker, if you have ever driven through those Black Hills, which I spoke of earlier—the one-lane tunnels and winding hairpin turns—they form a very beautiful but a very arduous journey, even without all the motorcycles around you. As you continue that journey, looking for something, an opening then appears in the trees, and you see it—that magnificent piece of art, carved in stone, with four of America's greatest Presidents.

Their likenesses are in the rock, timeless and unchanging; but the ideals they represent must be reestablished in each generation. The renewal of America will depend, in large part, on whether or not we can grasp what these leaders stood for and whether or not we can make the sacrifices necessary to reclaim our country's potential in this time, our time.

Mr. Speaker, what we all do matters.

I yield back the balance of my time.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, December 11, 2015, at 9 a.m.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3740. A letter from the Director, Issuances Staff, Office of Policy and Program Develop-

ment, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Mandatory Inspection of Fish of the Order Siluriformes and Products Derived From Such Fish [Docket No.: FSIIS-2008-0031] (RIN: 0583-AD36) received December 8, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

3741. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting notification that the Department intends to assign women to previously closed positions and units across all Services and U.S. Special Operations Command, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 652(a); Public Law 109-163, Sec. 541(a)(1); (119 Stat. 3251) and 10 U.S.C. 6035(a); Public Law 106-398, Sec. 573(a)(1); (114 Stat. 1654A-136); to the Committee on Armed Services.

3742. A letter from the Under Secretary, Comptroller, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's semiannual report on the account balance in the Defense Cooperation Account and a listing of personal property contributed, as of September 30, 2015, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2608(i); Public Law 101-403, title II, Sec. 202(a)(1) (as amended by Public Law 103-160, Sec. 1105(b)); (107 Stat. 1750); to the Committee on Armed Services.

3743. A letter from the Under Secretary, Comptroller, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's semiannual report on the account balance in the Defense Cooperation Account and a listing of personal property contributed, as of September 30, 2015, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2608(i); Public Law 101-403, title II, Sec. 202(a)(1) (as amended by Public Law 103-160, Sec. 1105(b)); (107 Stat. 1750); to the Committee on Armed Services.

3744. A letter from the Comptroller, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Office's annual report on actions taken to carry out Sec. 308 of the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989, pursuant to 12 U.S.C. 1463 note; Public Law 111-203, Sec. 367(c); (124 Stat. 1556); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3745. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's 2013 Report to Congress on Outcome Evaluations of Administration for Native Americans (ANA) Projects, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 2992(e); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

3746. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's FY 2015 Agency Financial Report, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3515(a); Public Law 101-576, Sec. 303(a); (104 Stat. 2849); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3747. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's Semiannual Report to Congress for the period April 1 through September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act) Sec. 5(b); Public Law 95-452, Sec. 5(b); (92 Stat. 1103); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3748. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's semiannual report to Congress for the period of April 1, 2015, to September 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act) Sec. 5(b); Public Law 95-452, Sec. 5(b); (92 Stat. 1103); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3749. A letter from the Director, Peace Corps, transmitting the Corps' Performance and Accountability Report for Fiscal Year 2015, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3515(a); Public Law 101-576, Sec. 303(a); (104 Stat. 2849); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3750. A letter from the Acting Administrator, United States Agency for International Development, transmitting the