

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

STOP SETTLEMENT SLUSH FUNDS ACT OF 2016

SPEECH OF

HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 7, 2016

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5063) to limit donations made pursuant to settlement agreements to which the United States is a party, and for other purposes:

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chair, I rise today in opposition to this bill. I offered an amendment to rename it Another Wall Street Request to Avoid Accountability for Fraud. But, my amendment for a more accurate title was not accepted.

Today, the majority wants to defund the organizations and attorneys that help people have a fighting chance against deep-pocketed multi-national corporations and banks.

Mr. Speaker, Congress returns after a seven-week district work period. During that time, I held many constituent meetings. Not one person asked me to weaken regulations on hedge fund managers or Wall Street bankers. And yet, Wall Street requests are what the majority prioritized for our first week back.

This bill would defund the network of housing counselors and legal aid attorneys who help homeowners facing foreclosure.

Homeowners who were tricked into buying a home with teaser rates that exploded into unaffordable payments.

Homeowners who deserved a chance to catch up after a missed payment or two but were unable to get a response from their lender.

And homeowners like Alan Schroit. Alan, a retired cancer researcher, visited his rental house in Galveston, Texas. He found the locks had been changed, the electricity shut off and a notice on the door said Bank of America was foreclosing on his home. Alan did not have a mortgage with Bank of America. Alan didn't even have a mortgage. His home was paid off. It took him 30 days to get someone at Bank of America to call him back.

Homeowners like Nilly Mauck who lost all her possessions when a company mistakenly evicted her instead of her neighbor.

Or homeowners like Charlie and Maria Cardoso who bought their retirement home with cash in 2005. While they continued living in their primary home, they rented their retirement home out. Their tenants came home one day to find the house cleared of all the possessions—again by Bank of America.

Nilly, Alan and Charlie and Maria's foreclosures were some of thirteen million between 2006–2010. Far too many of them were fraudulent, people foreclosed on by firms who did not have clear title to the property. A significant number of these foreclosures could have been prevented if the lenders involved had followed the law. The new book, Chain of

Title, by David Dayen reports that across our nation, homeowners who should have received assistance with a loan modification, or allowed to cure a delinquency, instead were hit with outrageous late fines, sold over-priced forced-placed insurance, punished with monthly property inspection and other junk fees. Using robo-signing, their eviction papers were signed by people who had no ownership of the loan.

Congress and the states demanded change. Legal settlements pursued by the Department of Justice, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the banking regulators and the states made sure that people have a fighting chance against deep-pocketed multi-national corporations.

And yes, to correct this massive wrongdoing required that Bank of America, JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup, Ally Financial and others pay fines. Some of those fines supported non-profit agencies who knew how to get banks to respond to homeowners and follow the law. The funds supported legal aid attorneys who knew how to ensure the banking doing the eviction actually had a right to the property. When lenders foreclose on the wrong people, or lie about their ownership of a mortgage, there should be consequences.

When we require banks to fund housing counseling and legal aid agencies, we leveled the playing field. We realized it was unfair to require each individual person to figure out the unresponsive, complicated and too often predatory home mortgage market on their own.

I oppose gutting initiatives to help homeowners, small business owners and families do battle with global corporations who have defrauded them out of their home or business, polluted their water or land or harmed their health.

Therefore I will oppose H.R. 5063.

I urge my colleagues to do the same.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY

SPEECH OF

HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 8, 2016

Mr. BABIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of conservative icon and founder of the Eagle Forum Phyllis Schlafly.

Phyllis Schlafly was a courageous and determined leader who spent her entire adult life fighting for America and our traditional family values. She stood up and spoke up when others did not.

She was a fearless and outspoken defender of the unborn—and a leading voice in protecting America's sovereignty and supporting the U.S. military.

Until her final day on Earth, Phyllis Schlafly fought tirelessly for these commonsense principles and the conservative foundations that

have made America strong. She never stopped exposing the absurdity of the liberal left and the appalling failures of the policies they advocate.

Often referred to as the "First Lady of the Conservative Movement," Phyllis Schlafly's leadership, candor and tenacity was a breath of fresh air—and it will be greatly missed.

While we have lost a powerful voice and advocate for the American people, we can be certain that Phyllis Schlafly's tremendous pride in America and passion for the conservative movement will undoubtedly live on and continue to inspire future conservative leaders for generations to come.

My thoughts and prayers are with the entire Schlafly family during this very difficult time. On behalf of the many Americans she inspired, we say thank you.

INTRODUCING THE IRAQ AND SYRIA GENOCIDE RELIEF AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2016

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 9, 2016

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce H.R. 5961, the Iraq and Syria Genocide Relief and Accountability Act of 2016. Since ISIS' blitzkrieg across the multi-ethnic and religiously diverse mosaic of eastern Syria and western Iraq in 2014, I have chaired four hearings focused on the implications of this appalling advance for religious and ethnic minorities in those areas. Events in the region and the expert testimony of witnesses quickly revealed that ISIS was not merely focused on territorial conquest—the group was ideologically committed to exterminating ancient religious communities and cleansing its self-proclaimed caliphate of anything but its vicious and fundamentalist interpretation of Islam. Many of my colleagues and I were certain early on that ISIS was committing genocide. We pressed the Administration to formally acknowledge that fact until the Secretary of State did so in March of this year. But the most pressing question issue has always been the lives of those religious minorities right now that face extinction under this tyranny of terror.

The Iraq and Syria Genocide Relief and Accountability Act of 2016 is an answer to the question of what the United States can do to mitigate this suffering, save lives, and build a more sustainable future for Syria and Iraq. The bill tackles this overwhelming challenge on three fronts by directing the Administration to take additional measures to improve the lives of displaced genocide survivors, provide some of them with an additional lifeline to escape their war torn lands, and support efforts that will help preserve the presence of religious minority communities in those areas for years to come.

In a hearing this May that I chaired called "The ISIS Genocide Declaration: What Next?"

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