

about banning any particular group of people.

Another shortsighted fallacy being propagated is that President Trump is the only President to ever implement restrictions on refugee admissions. Conveniently forgotten is the fact that in 2011, President Obama stopped processing refugees from Iraq for 6 months after a terrorist plot was uncovered involving two Iraqi refugees who had come into the United States.

□ 1015

Previous Presidents of both parties have responded to global threats with refugee admission limitations, so characterizing Trump's actions is unprecedented, is simply fiction and a gross demonstration of partisanship.

As ISIS has infiltrated the ranks of refugees in Europe, the President is similarly responding to global threats with the appropriate safeguards as he sees fit.

This is something that he should be praised for—not condemned.

The notion that the executive order is inherently un-American must be addressed as well. After all, America is the land made up of immigrants that has been a safe harbor to millions fleeing persecution around the world since her inception.

But in order for this to continue, we must be vigilant to protect our homeland.

America is the greatest Nation in the world, and if we let up on our pursuit of the highest national security standards, we will see this greatness slip away—to the detriment not only of all American citizens, but to the entire world.

Finally, I must address the false notion that having a Christian ethic demands that we accept all refugees with open arms. Well, if that is the case, why aren't we opening the doors wide to the 60 million refugees worldwide rather than only a fraction of 1 percent?

As a follower of Jesus Christ, I do believe that we should help those in need around us, and that America should be involved in helping the displaced and persecuted whenever we can.

Perhaps a more compassionate approach might be to take the money that we spend settling one refugee in the United States and, instead, for the same price, provide for 12, for a dozen, refugees in a safe haven near their own home countries.

Just as a father's primary responsibility is to care for his own children, the chief role of the President and other national leaders is to ensure the best interest of the citizens under their charge.

If President Trump were to overlook the safety of the American people, it would simply be an abdication of his own responsibility that the American people elected him to do.

It seems the President's opponents have cherry-picked particular Bible verses to suit their own political agen-

da, while ignoring other basic Biblical concepts of stewardship and responsibility out of sheer political convenience.

To conclude, the hysteria surrounding this national security executive order must come to an end.

After all, the main provisions of this executive order are temporary in nature and are in line with what many Presidents in the past have done.

ISIS presents one of the most extensive and complex threats to our Nation, and we do want our President to take every precaution to make sure that Americans are safe.

This—not the false narratives of Trump's opponents—must be the focus of the national dialogue, and we must share in what he is doing.

NSC APPOINTMENTS TO PRINCIPALS COMMITTEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MURPHY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today I will introduce the Protect the National Security Council from Political Interference Act.

I would like to thank my House colleagues who have signed on as original cosponsors of this legislation.

I have worked at the Department of Defense, and I am a member of the Armed Services Committee. I believe the most solemn responsibility of Federal policymakers is to keep the American people safe, and to do so in a way that is faithful to the moral and ethical principles that have made this country exceptional, and a force for good in a dangerous and unpredictable world.

Within the complex Federal bureaucracy, the National Security Council is, arguably, the most important institution when it comes to debating and deciding issues related to homeland security, foreign policy, intelligence collection, and the national defense. Choices about whether to deploy men and women into combat are made during the meetings of the NSC or its main subgroup, the Principals Committee. So, too, are decisions about how to defend the homeland against terrorism and how to support our allies and counter our adversaries across the globe. The NSC's deliberations are so serious because the stakes are so high.

Since the creation of this body by Congress in 1947, Presidents from Truman to Obama have prescribed the organizational structure and role of the NSC according to their personal preferences within the broad parameters set by Congress. This is how it should be. The NSC is a policymaking instrument, and the President is entitled to utilize this instrument in the manner that the President sees fit.

However, historically, there has been a bipartisan consensus that the NSC debates should be divorced from the world of electoral politics. The Presidents of both parties have sought to es-

tablish an NSC policy process that is not contaminated or perceived to be contaminated by political considerations.

Josh Bolton, chief of staff to President George W. Bush, may have put it best while explaining why President Bush excluded political counselor Karl Rove from all NSC meetings: "... the President ... knew that the signal he wanted to send to the rest of his administration, the signal he wanted to send to the public, and the signal he especially wanted to send to the military, is that, 'The decisions I'm making that involve life and death for the people in uniform will not be tainted by any political decisions.'"

I am filing this bill because I believe that President Trump's directive organizing the NSC breaks from this longstanding, bipartisan tradition of constructing a wall to separate national security policymaking from domestic politics to the greatest extent possible.

Specifically, the President's directive authorizes the Assistant to the President and Chief Strategist Stephen Bannon to be a permanent member of the NSC and to attend all NSC and Principals Committee meetings. Mr. Bannon's role in the administration has a strong political component. Indeed, it appears unprecedented for a political counselor so deeply enmeshed in politics to serve as a permanent member of the NSC.

Senator JOHN MCCAIN, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, described Mr. Bannon's appointment as a radical departure from any National Security Council in history.

Therefore, my bill will amend Federal law to ensure that no individual, whose primary responsibility is political in nature, shall be designated as a member of the NSC or be authorized to regularly attend meetings of the NSC or the Principals Committee. This language would apply to Democratic Presidents and Republican Presidents alike. Our men and women in uniform, our intelligence and homeland security professionals, and our citizens should feel secure in their knowledge that the critical decisions made by the NSC are free from political considerations. The American people deserve a national security policymaking process that inspires confidence, not cynicism.

My bill also contains a second provision. The President's directive prescribes a diminished role on the Principals Committee for the Director of National Intelligence and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The directive limits their attendance to only those meetings where issues pertaining to their responsibilities and expertise are to be discussed.

While this language is not unprecedented, it has caused concern among many experts of all political stripes, particularly when it is juxtaposed against the decision to give Mr. Bannon unfettered access to the NSC PC meetings.

Accordingly, my bill will express the view of Congress that the DNI and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, given their importance to national security, should have a standing invitation to attend all PC meetings.

I invite my colleagues to support this legislation which seeks to protect the NSC from political interference, and to ensure that the President receives the best possible advice from his national security experts—experts who will recommend actions because they are in the best interest of the American people and not because they are politically expedient.

FAREWELL TO SCOTT GRAVES

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I just came back from the organizing committee meeting with my good friend from California for the House Agriculture Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to work with this gentleman and all of the folks who serve on that committee that really provides policy to our Nation's agriculture industry.

It is about making sure that Americans have access to affordable, high quality, and safe food. I actually look at the Agriculture Committee as well as having a dual mission of making sure that the rural economies of our Nation are robust or successful.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to say thank you and farewell to Scott Graves, staff director of the House Agriculture Committee, an individual who served well for many years.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, there is a right way to do business here in the House, and Scott Graves has understood what it takes to manage the Agriculture Committee, the chairman's personal affairs and agenda. But he also has found time to help out members of this committee from both sides of the aisle.

Knowing is one thing; execution is everything.

I have always been impressed with the way we have been able to work on the committee in a bipartisan manner for the good of agriculture, and 320 million Americans have benefited from safety, innovation, and forward thinking of the agriculture industry.

Under Scott's leadership, he made this look easy. Now, as he embarks upon the next step in his career, I wish Scott Graves all the best, his wife, his little boy, and his little one to be born later this year.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has a slogan on every road sign entering the State, and the sign reads, "You've got a friend in Pennsylvania." Well, Scott, you don't have to drive far, but realize this holds true for me and all of my staff, you've got a friend in Pennsylvania.

SNAP HELPS LIFT PEOPLE OUT OF POVERTY

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Agriculture Subcommittee on Nutrition for the 115th Congress, I am confident that we must work to ensure that the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program known as SNAP is meeting the needs of those that it is intended to serve.

The House Agriculture Committee hearings have highlighted how nutrition matters and the specific ways that vulnerable populations are well served by a strong, sound, and reliable food program.

SNAP serves a diverse population who share a common need for nutritional support beyond what is available based on personal means, family support, and community resources.

Now, according to a 2015 USDA report, 42.7 percent of SNAP recipients are children, while single parent households are more susceptible to food insecurity, especially those who are single mothers. Two-parent families also struggle, at times, to put food on the table.

Children whose households face food insecurity, face both negative developmental and health consequences.

A child's future success goes beyond what any single government program can or should achieve. SNAP is not the only means of breaking the cycle of poverty, but it certainly plays a key role in increasing food security for children.

Mr. Speaker, for me, SNAP is not merely a food program but a pathway that works to lift people out of poverty. It is a tool for the better health and development of our children who deserve no less.

ALI FAMILY AND EXECUTIVE ORDER

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to a 12-year-old girl Emon Ali, who is stuck in Djibouti. Emon and her father, Ahmed Ali, who is an American citizen, are in Djibouti because of President Trump's flawed executive order to ban travel to the United States.

The Ali family is like many immigrant families throughout our country, including my own, who came to the United States in hopes of achieving the American Dream.

As Americans, we know that the Statute of Liberty is a symbol of freedom and new beginnings for immigrants past and present, and it is a symbol around the entire world for the values that America holds.

Since the founding of our country, immigrants from all over the world have been coming to the United States to make a better life for themselves and their families, or to escape persecution.

Mr. Ali and his wife immigrated to the United States and earned their U.S.

citizenships in hopes of achieving that American Dream.

They had been making a living in my district and are supporting their two daughters in Los Banos, California. But they have also been living in sadness and heartbreak because their 12-year-old daughter, Emon, was born in Yemen before the civil war.

For 6 years, the Ali family has been working through the appropriate channels to get their daughter a visa so she can gain U.S. citizenship and be reunited with her family legally.

On January 26, after years of going through a thorough vetting process, Emon finally received her immigrant visa—after 6 years. You could call that extreme vetting.

One day later, on the 27th, President Trump turned the Ali family's and hundreds of other families' lives upside down by signing an executive order to implement a travel ban to prohibit refugees and others from coming to the United States. That is not the American way.

Hours after this executive order was signed, Emon and her father went to the airport in Djibouti, passed through security, and, when boarding the plane, Emon was told by the airline that she could not board because of the recently signed executive order.

□ 1030

The immigrant visa issued to Emon would have given her status as a lawful permanent resident upon entering the U.S. And since she is 12 years old and both of her parents are U.S. citizens, Emon would have immediately been eligible to file for U.S. citizenship.

President Trump's executive order is preventing this legal process from taking place and is putting Emon and her father in harm's way while they wait in Djibouti.

In the past 48 hours, the Trump administration has been defending this executive order, saying it is not a travel ban or a ban on refugees. So I would like to ask the President: How is this executive order not a ban on refugees or individuals who have been legally approved to enter the United States? It certainly is a ban for Emon. And how is keeping this 12-year-old girl out of the United States from joining her family making America safer? It is not making Americans safer.

Extreme vetting was in place during both the Bush and Obama administrations. We just didn't call it that by name.

This travel ban is flawed, both in its lack of adherence to American values and its technical execution, which is banning Emon from coming here, and it could possibly be ruled unconstitutional.

A bipartisan group of national security experts agree that the executive order does not make Americans safer and could potentially put our country at greater risk for terrorist attacks. I agree with them.

Since September 11, 2001, we have focused a bipartisan effort to improve