

Chavista thugs accessing our legal immigration system.

The people of Venezuela deserve the American people's support and admiration for their continued fight against the brutal Maduro anti-American regime. Honest and hardworking Venezuelans who would be persecuted or imprisoned unjustly should they return to their country should be allowed the opportunity to take refuge here in the United States.

#### FLOOD INSURANCE REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the critical issue of reforming and reauthorizing the National Flood Insurance Program. For my constituents in south Florida and the Florida Keys, and for coastal communities across the country, flood insurance is an absolute necessity to protect against natural disasters. But the program is flawed and saddled with \$23 billion of debt.

We have a unique opportunity in the coming months to address the issues that matter most to our constituents, providing for optimal coverage at rates that are affordable to policyholders and based on accurate flood maps. There are numerous solutions I am studying, such as expanding the use of Write Your Own policies and growing the private insurance market, as long as strict oversight protocols are established and a Federal backstop is in place.

We should also promote stronger building standards for new construction projects that will better withstand flooding and strong winds. In Florida, we are a payee State, a donor State into the NFIP, but have also adopted strong building standards to reduce cleanup costs after the damage of a natural disaster has been done.

As Congress works to reform the NFIP, I will find commonsense solutions with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure our constituents have access to reliable coverage at fair and appropriate rates.

#### MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the seven Miami-Dade County schools that were recently named to the USA Today's top 100 public schools in the country, including Archimedean Upper Conservatory Charter School in my own district.

The rankings are based on graduation rates, reading, and math scores on State standardized tests, including how low-income and minority students fared in comparison to the State average, and the number of students taking college-level advanced placement courses and scoring well on the corresponding tests.

As a former Miami-Dade County Public School Board member, I am incredibly proud to see the tremendous growth and success of these schools in south Florida. MDCPS was in the midst of a financial and moral recovery when I was on the board just a few years ago; and during my time there,

we improved the quality of education and put students and teachers first, resulting in major gains in student performance and graduation rates.

Today, Superintendent Carvalho and the board continue to make great progress. The teachers, staff, administrators, and parents at these schools are working to ensure our students have the best education possible.

Congratulations on this honor. I look forward to visiting the Archimedean Owls back home in the very near future.

#### NEW DETAILS ON IRAN DEAL PRISONER SWAP

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, we recently learned troubling details surrounding the terms of the Obama administration's nuclear deal with Iran from early last year. As I have said before, the more details we learn about this deal, the more apparent it is that it was neither prudent nor transparent.

The safety and security of the American people and our allies around the world should remain a top priority for the United States. But we are learning, according to reports, as part of this prisoner swap with Iran in 2016, the Obama administration released seven prisoners and dropped charges and international arrest warrants of 14 fugitives, many of whom had been directly involved in supplying Iran with U.S.-built equipment or sensitive information that could be used for military systems, primarily Iran's nuclear program.

The administration downplayed the security threat that these men posed. In a variety of ways, these individuals deliberately worked to undermine the United States and smuggle American military technology to Tehran.

In one instance, a man was allegedly part of a conspiracy to steal sensitive software information from a defense contractor in Vermont. Another one of the men was in the middle of serving an 8-year prison sentence on charges related to a separate conspiracy to provide satellite technology and hardware to Iran.

Three of the fugitives were allegedly working to lease an aircraft from Boeing for an Iranian airline that authorities say supported Hezbollah, which the United States, of course, has designated as a terrorist organization.

And the list goes on as these are just a few of the cases. All of this poses a serious threat to our national security as sensitive military information and technology could be used to bolster Iran's weapons programs.

As you may recall, this comes after we learned last fall that, as a part of the deal, the United States paid \$400 million that was contingent on Iran releasing four American hostages. This broke from longstanding United States

policy to not pay ransoms to rogue nations because it encourages bad actors like Iran to take more hostages. Again, this was not made known to Congress or the American public. We only learned about it nearly a year after the deal was finalized.

What makes this most concerning or more disconcerting is the Obama administration's lack of transparency on the backgrounds of these prisoners. These are not merely civilians or businessmen, as the President and his officials referred to them on multiple occasions. The administration left the impression that these individuals were nothing more than violators of sanctions and not as dangerous as they truly were. Each of these men pose very real threats that the administration hid from the American people.

This isn't a partisan talking point, Mr. Speaker. Even President Obama's own Justice Department had accused many of these men of being involved in terrorist activities.

I support diplomatic efforts with Iran, and I am hopeful that we can continue to engage in diplomacy and secure a good deal at some point, but this latest news continues to exemplify why both Republicans and Democrats could not and did not support this deal.

Iran continues to push every boundary, exploit every loophole, and avoid as much oversight as possible, all while it is antagonizing the rest of the world. It continues to reap the benefits of this deal at the expense of our national security and that of our allies, such as Israel.

We continue to learn something new and bad about this deal that wasn't shared with Congress or the public. Our national security is too important to put at risk, and no President's legacy is worth taking that risk. This new information validates many of the concerns that led to the bipartisan opposition to the nuclear deal.

#### RECOGNIZING THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE OF GRETA JOYNES AND CHRIS SARLEY

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to come down to the floor to recognize and thank two of my major staffers in my office who are leaving to pursue other opportunities. The first one is Greta Joynes.

Greta recently left as my legislative director; and as you know, Mr. Speaker, that is your top adviser in the legislative field. So not only running the legislative office, she also had some personal expertise in the telecommunications regions.

But Greta is from northern Illinois, north of I-80, originally from the Chicagoland area, and is a graduate of Northern Illinois University, NIU. She started as a staff assistant in 2003 and worked her way up through the ranks, as I said, becoming legislative director