

for Freedom Albert H. Small Student and Teacher Institute. They will participate in this prominent program alongside 14 other student and teacher teams from across the United States.

After coming up shy in last year's application, Evan doubled down on his commitment to this project. He resigned from the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program after 5 dedicated years and even chose to delay his plans to join the Army National Guard. Thankfully, Evan's perseverance and dedication appealed to this year's judges.

The Normandy Scholar Program allows student to learn about World War II at an in-depth level by researching and telling the story of a fallen soldier from their hometown.

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The program also gives them the chance to pay their respects to this hero at the Normandy American Cemetery in Normandy, France.

Congratulations to both Evan and Mr. Stewart for being chosen to participate, and thank you for telling the story of an American hero from the Greatest Generation who paid the ultimate sacrifice. We look forward to hearing more about your educational journey in the months to come.

STILLWATER'S LAST MAN

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to stand in support of a local veteran who is now the last surviving member of his World War II veterans club.

Jean L. DeCurtins became the last member of his club when his lifelong friend Robert Kunshier passed away. Both were among the 180 men from the Stillwater area in Washington County, Minnesota, who joined the Minnesota National Guard's 34th Infantry right before World War II.

After the attacks on Pearl Harbor shook the Nation, DeCurtins and the rest of his unit deployed to Europe where they helped defend this Nation and the world. Jean was injured twice during the war and bravely returned to fight each time after recovery.

He returned to Stillwater, Minnesota, in 1944. Many of his friends did not return. The survivors in the area formed the A&D Last Man's Club, which was named after both companies the men belonged to during the war.

Mr. Speaker, men like Jean DeCurtins, and those in the Last Man's Club, bravely fought during World War II. They did so unselfishly and without reservation. We will never forget the courage and sacrifice they displayed during our Nation's and the world's darkest hour, and the world will always be thankful for them.

WELCOMING A STRANGER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. CLARKE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, a few days ago, I received a letter from a third grade student at the

Brooklyn Friends School and the Kane Street Synagogue Hebrew School named Elijah.

Elijah wrote: At our synagogue, we learned that welcoming a stranger is an important mitzvah, and I know that my people were immigrants and sometimes refugees trying to find a new home in the USA. So it is important to me that we extend our welcome to refugees from Haiti.

Elijah is right. The people of Haiti have suffered through numerous tragedies over the past few years alone. They have experienced a devastating and catastrophic earthquake, tragic cholera epidemic, ongoing food scarcity crisis, deadly hurricanes, and continued flooding.

For these reasons, the Obama administration designated Haiti for temporary protected status in 2010, and redesignated it four times thereafter. However, Haiti's TPS designation will expire in July if the administration does not act immediately.

That is why I organized with my colleagues of the Congressional Black Caucus and called for DHS Secretary John Kelly to redesignate Haiti for an additional 18 months of TPS.

We also asked DHS to issue a new TPS designation that would include the tens of thousands of Haitians who are in the United States but are not covered by the existing TPS designation.

The continuing humanitarian crisis on the ground in Haiti should make this an easy call. But news reports indicate that the acting head of USCIS, James McCament, is looking for evidence of crimes committed by Haitians to use as a pretext for ending Haiti's TPS designation. Such actions are part of the Trump administration's attempt to depict immigrants as criminals. They are also part of a flagrant effort to obscure the fact that TPS is based on the conditions on the ground in Haiti rather than the actions of some TPS beneficiaries here in the United States.

I call on Director Kelly to ignore these misguided voices and instead listen to people like Elijah. Human decency demands that the Department of Homeland Security extend temporary protected status to all Haitians present in the United States prior to November 4, 2016, as the country continues to rebuild.

CONDEMNING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN CHECHNYA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply concerned by the rapidly deteriorating human rights situation in Chechnya where hundreds of gay or perceived-to-be gay men have been harassed, have been tortured, and have been killed by Chechen authorities.

On April 1, a Russian independent newspaper first reported on this deten-

tion and disappearance of gay men, which the Chechen leader has continuously denied.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the leader Ramzan refuses to acknowledge that gay men exist in Chechnya, but we know from many credible reports that the Chechen Government has allegedly put these men into camps, and it plans to eliminate its entire gay population by Ramadan, which is May 26.

This is disheartening, to say the least, in an era where the world is moving toward tolerance and equality for all people. To hear about these atrocities being committed is very tragic. The United States should not and must not turn a blind eye to this unwarranted persecution. All individuals, no matter their sexual orientation, their gender identity, their religion, their race, or any other basis deserve the full enjoyment of their God-given rights. These are universal and are for all people to enjoy.

In the wake of these events, I joined several of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle in sending a letter to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to take swift action and condemn these atrocities which run counter to American values of promoting human rights and freedom and that should guide strategic decisions that we make on U.S. foreign policy.

I was glad to see that the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor of the Department of State spoke out against the practice of the Chechen authorities and called for the immediate release of the hundreds of detained men being held at these camps.

U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley must be congratulated, also. She condemned these abuses and raised the issue at the first U.N. Security Council meeting. I look forward to the continued collaboration of these agencies and with my colleagues because we must send a united and clear message that we are against all forms of discrimination and all forms of violence.

Mr. Speaker, we must not forget that Putin has significant influence over what goes on in Chechnya, and, to date, Putin has done nothing to help. This is simply outrageous.

From restrictions on political participation, to the suppression of civil society, to the silencing of religious minorities, to the prohibition of freedom of expression, Russia has a deplorable human rights record. Just over the last few years, the Russian Government has adopted laws that restrict free speech, that restrict free association of LGBT individuals, and Russian agencies threaten the removal of children from their rightful loving homes.

Chechnya's crackdown on the LGBT community, directed by government officials, it is very clear to see that these are not haphazard events. These are state-sponsored violent activities. It is time for Putin to talk to his crony Ramzan and put an end to this barbaric gay purge. No government ought to be