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DEMOCRATIC VALUES

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to everyone's attention, especially my Democratic colleagues, a troubling incident that transpired over the recess.

It is important that people hear about how women and the LGBT community are treated at the highest levels of the current Puerto Rican government and the values and politics that run deeply throughout the politics of statehood for Puerto Rico.

It is fair to say that in the era of Trump, admitting a Spanish-speaking Caribbean country as the 51st State would depend on the strength of democratic votes, so it is important for my Democratic colleagues in particular to understand who the statehooders really are and what they really stand for, beyond their rhetoric in Washington, D.C.

The president of the senate in Puerto Rico, Thomas Rivera Schatz, is a key leader of the Statehood Party. In a recent interview on NotiUno radio, he was asked about the Financial Oversight and Management Board, known as la Junta de Supervisión Fiscal. This is the controversial board created by Congress a year ago to take over financial and fiscal decisions in Puerto Rico and to prioritize the payment of Puerto Rico's debt to Wall Street.

I was one of the chief opponents of the PROMESA legislation that created the junta, and I have spoken out against it on numerous occasions. But it wasn't what the statehood senate president said about the junta that was so offensive; it is how he talked in public about one of its board members—in fact, the only woman on the board and an appointee nominated by NANCY PELOSI and the Democrats in the House.

Ana Matosantos has impeccable, bipartisan qualifications and also happens to be an openly gay woman. So during the interview, the senate president and statehood leader referred to Ms. Matosantos as Mr. Matosantos, using the masculine pronoun "senor." He did it multiple times so that listeners would not miss his disdain for lesbians and for women. It was no accident or slip of the tongue. Given an opportunity to apologize or backtrack, Rivera Schatz has declined to back down.

This is not the first time he has displayed his contempt for women and for the gay and lesbian community. His agenda is clear, and he knows he has many like-minded allies in Puerto Rico's statehood movement.

Every time he has had an opportunity to block civil and human rights protections for LGBT individuals, he does so. He goes out of his way to belittle gay and lesbian citizens even when they are the victims of hate crimes.

To be clear, I don't see Rivera Schatz as one bad apple. He is a bad apple that exemplifies and is a voice for the other leaders in his party.

So as a Puerto Rican and as a supporter of equality, all of this is deeply disturbing to me. Gender and LGBTQ equality issues are deeply engrained values of the Democratic Party, and I think they are core issues that bind Democrats together: issues of justice, opportunity, and fair play.

So when the leaders of the statehood movement in Puerto Rico call upon Democrats in Congress to speak about equality and justice for Puerto Ricans, I want my colleagues to think about the agenda they are pursuing in Puerto Rico and the extent to which they have a very different approach to fairness and equality on the island.

In closing, I would like to offer a few words to the Puerto Rican people in their own language, Spanish, and I will provide a translation to the desk.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

Core values of equality and fair treatment values I know most Puerto Ricans hold deeply in our hearts.

So when the Statehood Party allows divisive and polarizing figures like Senator Rivera Schatz to be their face and their leading advocate in the Senate, it makes me and many others skeptical about the arguments we hear from people who support statehood say the words "equality" and "justice" in Washington, but fight against equality and justice in Puerto Rico.

How can they be taken seriously about equality when their agenda in the legislature is to take away those rights from women, the LGBT community, students, peaceful protesters and others?

That is the fundamental hypocrisy I have pointed out to my Democratic colleagues, right now and in private meetings and correspondences.

If the statehood movement is really committed to equality, they should act accordingly and not just use it as a slogan when it suits them.

Los valores de la igualdad y del trato justo y equitativo son valores fundamentales que la mayoría de los puertorriqueños atesoramos profundamente en nuestros corazones.

Así que cuando el Partido Estadista, el PNP, permite que figuras polarizantes y divisivas como el Senador Rivera Schatz sean su cara y su principal representante en el Senado, eso me hace a mí y a muchos otros sentirnos escépticos en cuanto a los argumentos de los estadistas que usan palabras como "igualdad" y "justicia" en Washington, pero luchan en contra de la igualdad y la justicia en Puerto Rico.

¿Cómo esperan que se les tome en serio al hablar de "igualdad" cuando su agenda en la Legislatura es el quitarles derechos a las mujeres, a la comunidad LGBT, a los estudiantes, y a los que se manifiestan y protestan pacíficamente?

Esta es la fundamental hipocresía que le he señalado a mis colegas Demócratas, aquí, ahora, y en

reuniones privadas, y a través de correspondencia.

Si el movimiento estadista en realidad tuviese un compromiso con la igualdad, actuarían conforme a la igualdad y no meramente usando el término como un lema cuando les conviene.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Illinois will provide a translation of his remarks to the Clerk.

CELEBRATING THE PHILHOWER FAMILY'S 100TH ANNUAL FAMILY REUNION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, on September 7, 2017, the Philhower family will have its 100th annual family reunion. I am proud to join my fellow family members in celebrating this very special occasion. My great-grandmother was Elizabeth Philhower Lance.

The Philhowers were some of the earliest settlers of Hunterdon County, New Jersey. The patriarch of the Philhower family was Philip Wulhauer, who emigrated from Germany on the ship the Patience, landing in the port of Philadelphia on September 16, 1738, at the age of 24. He met his wife, Anna Maria, on their voyage to the Colonies. Together they traveled to Hunterdon County, New Jersey, to start a new life.

Philip went on to lease 14 acres in what is now Tewksbury Township in 1758 and established the Philhower homestead, which was first a log cabin that included one room and a loft. Shortly after, he built the house that still stands on the property. It was constructed of mortar, lime, sand, and clay, and its walls are 18 inches thick.

The Philhower homestead had grown to 100 acres when the house was completed. The Philhowers have occupied the land since then and have spread their roots all over Hunterdon County, all over the State of New Jersey, and, indeed, all over the rest of the country.

Among the family names entwined in the Philhowers are Apgar, Sutton, Fleming, Hoffman, and Lance. Philhowers have represented Hunterdon County in many of the military conflicts that have faced our Nation. They have also been farmers, millers, physicians, ministers, merchants, bankers, and educators.

In 1917, the Philhowers held their first family reunion at their homestead, attended by nearly 400 descendants of Philip and Anna Maria. This fine tradition has continued over the last century, usually marked by a turkey dinner, finance meeting, and exchanging of family mementos at Cokesbury United Methodist Church in Hunterdon County. This year, however, family members will travel back to the

original Philhower homestead to be together.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to be a descendant of the Philhower family. This is but one example of the strong immigrant tradition in this country that continues to be one of our greatest strengths as a nation, as much a strength today as in the middle of the 18th century.

I am honored to share this milestone with colleagues in the United States House of Representatives and with the American people.

TWO-STATE SOLUTION

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, every time I visit Israel, I have such mixed feelings. It is a land of positive opportunities surrounded by intractable controversies.

The big question looming is how to achieve a two-state solution for the Israelis and the Palestinians with appropriate integrity so that they are actually separate countries. This has raised additional questions because of the ambiguity from the Trump administration about whether or not what, for years, has been American policy supporting a two-state solution is any longer a priority of theirs.

For several years, I have been deeply concerned about the looming environmental crisis in Gaza. This is a small strip of land about twice the size of Washington, D.C., but it is home to 1.9 million people, most of whom are leading a wretched existence, even more so since Hamas, the political faction, has seized control. That is Israel's implacable enemy which now controls Gaza.

They have little regard for their own people, using them as pawns, spending scarce resources, digging tunnels to try to kidnap Israeli children and soldiers, and launching rockets to terrorize Israeli communities in the surrounding areas.

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Gaza has reached a crisis point in dealing with water and sanitation. The groundwater is so polluted that virtually all the water is unfit to drink—polluted by sewage, waste runoff, and seawater encroachment. They are pumping four times as much water out of the aquifer than can be replaced naturally, and seawater from the Mediterranean is encroaching.

We are told that, by the end of the year, there will probably be no sources of drinking water that are fit to drink. By 2020, the entire water system will be permanently damaged. Because of problems with drinking water that is not fit and raw sewage that is not treated, there is a real likelihood that we could have an outbreak of something like cholera, threatening not just the people in Gaza, but the Israelis as well.

Several times recently, sewage from Gaza has washed up on Israeli beaches and forced the shutdown of water treatment plants from desalination. The Israeli military thinks this is a security threat.

In the course of this visit, I had an opportunity to put the question directly to Prime Minister Netanyahu; Jibril Rajoub, the number three person in the Palestinian Authority; and United States Ambassador Friedman about this pending crisis and the need for urgent action. Sadly, each of those conversations revealed I won't say indifference, but certainly a lack of urgency and no willingness for anybody to take the lead and break the impasse.

This is not a problem that is beyond our ability to solve. There are opportunities to increase electricity for pumping water and treating sewage. There is the capacity to build some smaller reservoirs to be able to mix saltwater with freshwater and extend the supplies.

For Israel, water is a mystery they have solved. They are the most water-rich country on the face of the planet, with very sophisticated technology. They could provide additional resources. Around the edges, the United States does some work with USAID, but it is not a priority for the United States at this point.

Mr. Speaker, I return perplexed. We will continue to push with the Israelis, the United States Government, the Palestinians, and with NGOs whenever we have the opportunity. But it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, if we cannot bring people together to solve a pending crisis with tools that are available to us now, at a relatively modest cost, what hope do we have of being able to work cooperatively to implement the two-state solution and be able to bring peace and security to Israel and the Palestinians?

I would hope my colleagues would lend their voices to this question.

SERBIAN GOVERNMENT MUST STEP UP AND DO THE RIGHT THING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss my resolution, H. Con. Res 30.

In July of 1999, three brothers—Ylli, 25 years old; Agron, 23 years old; and Mehmet Bytyqi, 21 years old—who were born in the United States and resided in Hampton Bays, New York, went overseas towards the end of the Kosovo war to fight mass war crimes aimed to eradicate the civilian Albanian population from Kosovo.

These three men left the comfort and safety of their homes in the U.S. to embark on a civilian humanitarian mission. They were trying to stop abroad those horrific crimes against humanity. During that civilian humanitarian mission, they were arrested after acci-

dentally crossing into Serbian-controlled territory.

Two weeks later, they were given a judicial order of release. Instead, the brutal execution of these men followed shortly after, and it was not until 2001, 2 years later, that their remains were found in a mass grave.

While Serbian authorities have investigated the deaths of the brothers, there have been no charges brought against those responsible for those murders. Moreover, the main suspect remains a prominent member of the governing political party.

Today we remember Ylli, Agron, and Mehmet, who were senselessly and brutally murdered 18 years ago.

Since taking office over 2 years ago, I have been committed to helping the Bytyqi family receive the justice they have long deserved. I have been in contact with the family as we work to resolve this.

In the last Congress, I introduced H. Con. Res. 51, calling for justice to be served in these horrible murders, and imploring the Serbian Government to make it a priority that this must be properly investigated and that those suspects be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. I am proud to have reintroduced this legislation in the 115th Congress as H. Con. Res. 20.

It is absolutely reprehensible that, despite many promises by Serbian officials to resolve this case, no individual has ever been found guilty of this horrible crime, nor of any crimes associated with the deaths of these innocent Americans.

It is the responsibility of the Serbian Government to resolve this case, and my resolution notes that progress into this investigation should remain a significant factor which determines the further development of U.S.-Serbian relations. Their inaction on finding and prosecuting those responsible is an insult not only to the memory of Ylli, Agron, Mehmet, and the Bytyqi family, but to every American.

The Bytyqi brothers gave their lives to fight injustice. It is now upon us to return this favor and deliver justice for their family. Those responsible for these unspeakable acts against our citizens must face the law. It is vital that the Serbian Government steps up and does what is right. Eighteen years later, it is time we put an end to this sad story.

CELEBRATING 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF NEW LIGHT BEULAH BAPTIST CHURCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor New Light Beulah Baptist Church of Hopkins, South Carolina, on the occasion of its 150th anniversary. Many members of the congregation have traveled here to Washington, D.C., from South Carolina to