

for their basic rights. He has changed presidential term limits, dismantled democratic institutions, and committed electoral fraud.

Madam Speaker, this is a country that has endured two dictatorships and a civil war. We must demonstrate our solidarity with the people of Nicaragua. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to pass my NICA Act to cut funding to Ortega, and I urge the administration to sanction more Ortega officials who are committing human rights abuses. We must not allow Ortega's actions to go unpunished.

A BETTER DEAL

(Mr. KILDEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, it is wrong that Republicans continue to pursue policies that clearly benefit only the wealthiest Americans and large corporations, in particular, leaving middle class Americans behind. They have undermined our healthcare system, raising premiums on Americans and increasing the cost of prescription drugs. That is the impact of what this Republican majority has done.

At a time when we see more Americans concerned about rising healthcare costs, we really ought to be figuring out ways to work together. I know Democrats and Republicans can do that. But instead, the Republican majority is focused on tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans and the biggest corporations, essentially passing huge benefits—\$250 billion—to CEOs and wealthy shareholders, mostly through stock buybacks, which is money that does not go to America's workers.

Now, Republicans are using their deficit-exploding tax plan to justify huge cuts that could impact Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. That is a raw deal.

Democrats are offering a better deal. We want to grow our economy and create high-wage jobs that support a family, not just so they can just get by, but so they can actually succeed. We have a plan for opportunities.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 3:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 9 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1537

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAMALFA) at 3 o'clock and 37 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

JUSTICE FOR UNCOMPENSATED SURVIVORS TODAY (JUST) ACT OF 2017

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 447) to require reporting on acts of certain foreign countries on Holocaust era assets and related issues.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 447

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Justice for Uncompensated Survivors Today (JUST) Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. REPORT ON HOLOCAUST ERA ASSETS AND RELATED ISSUES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate;

(C) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives; and

(D) the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(2) COVERED COUNTRIES.—The term "covered countries" means participants in the 2009 Holocaust Era Assets Conference that are determined by the Secretary of State, or the Secretary's designee, in consultation with expert nongovernmental organizations, to be countries of particular concern relative to the issues listed in subsection (b).

(3) WRONGFULLY SEIZED OR TRANSFERRED.—The term "wrongfully seized or transferred" includes confiscations, expropriations, nationalizations, forced sales or transfers, and sales or transfers under duress during the Holocaust era or the period of Communist rule of a covered country.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees that assesses and describes the nature and extent of national laws and enforceable policies of covered countries regarding the identification and the return of or restitution for wrongfully seized or transferred Holocaust era assets consistent with, and evaluated with respect to, the goals and objectives of the 2009 Holocaust Era Assets Conference, including—

(1) the return to the rightful owner of any property, including religious or communal property, that was wrongfully seized or transferred;

(2) if return of any property described in paragraph (1) is no longer possible, the provision of comparable substitute property or the payment of equitable compensation to the rightful owner in accordance with principles of justice and through an expeditious

claims-driven administrative process that is just, transparent, and fair;

(3) in the case of heirless property, the provision of property or compensation to assist needy Holocaust survivors, to support Holocaust education, and for other purposes;

(4) the extent to which such laws and policies are implemented and enforced in practice, including through any applicable administrative or judicial processes; and

(5) to the extent practicable, the mechanism for and an overview of progress toward the resolution of claims for United States citizen Holocaust survivors and United States citizen family members of Holocaust victims.

(c) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that after the submission of the report described in subsection (b), the Secretary of State should continue to report to Congress on Holocaust era assets and related issues in a manner that is consistent with the manner in which the Department of State reported on such matters before the date of the enactment of the Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I claim the time in opposition to this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from New York favor the motion?

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I do.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. On that basis, pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) will control the 20 minutes in opposition.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 10 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL), and I ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as the Nazis ravaged Europe, confiscation of property was just one of the many injustices Holocaust victims endured.

In the almost 75 years since World War II ended, helping to repair the wrongs inflicted by the Nazis by restoring the property of millions of people who had their lives torn apart has proven a difficult and challenging problem.

The 2009 Holocaust Era Assets Conference addressed the ongoing injustices created by the Holocaust, including guidance related to restitution of

property wrongfully seized. However, among the 46 signers to this declaration, including the United States, there are vast disparities in the degree to which the laws and policies of each country fulfill these principles to compensate survivors.

This act will help hold governments accountable that have fallen short of their commitment to these important principles.

This bill requires the State Department to assess the laws and policies regarding the return or restitution for wrongfully seized Holocaust era assets by countries that participated in the 2009 Holocaust Era Assets Conference.

This bill states that it is the sense of Congress that the Secretary should continue to report to Congress on Holocaust era assets.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to do something that I never would have thought that I would do in my time in Congress. I am here to stand in opposition to a bill that purports to seek justice for Holocaust survivors.

Anyone who knows just the slightest bit about my tenure in Congress knows how hard I have worked over the years in support of Holocaust survivors. I have held hearings on the plight of survivors. I have introduced bills to seek justice for survivors. I have pressed Germany to honor its obligation and its commitment to survivors to ensure that Germany takes care of the health and home care needs of all survivors so that they may live out their remaining days in the dignity and comfort that they deserve.

I have fought against those who denied the Holocaust, and I have spent countless hours speaking with and visiting with the many survivors that I have now come to know as dear friends; listening to their stories; hearing them recall the atrocities that they somehow managed to live through; and then hearing how, even today, more than 70 years later, they still face the injustices of humanity's darkest period.

In fact, it was Speaker RYAN who named me as one of the congressional members on the Holocaust Museum Board just last year, and I am truly honored and humbled to have been named to this position.

So I think my history of support for Holocaust survivors and their families is well established and well known, which is why I cannot, in good conscience, stand here before you, Mr. Speaker, before my colleagues, before the American people, and before the Holocaust survivors who are listening to offer my support for this bill.

And with all due respect for my colleagues, and they are good friends, because I know that their hearts are in the right place, this bill is not what it purports to be. That is the problem.

Let's start with the name, Mr. Speaker. Justice for Uncompensated Survivors Today Act.

Where is the justice, Mr. Speaker?

This bill is nothing more than a mere reporting requirement. It has got a fancy name. It is going to give us the feel-good that you are doing something for survivors, but it is just a reporting requirement.

What do survivors gain from that?

There is no actionable item in this bill. There is nothing to compel any government to do anything in this bill. There is simply no real action here.

This is a Claims Conference justice, and by that I mean the Claims Conference wants to appear to be doing all that it can for survivors, but it is nothing more than that. It is a smoke screen.

We should not be fooled, Mr. Speaker. This bill has the full support of the Claims Conference precisely because it does the bare minimum. It keeps the tension away from the sad truth.

What is the truth?

That the Claims Conference has utterly failed our Holocaust survivors. There is no denying that the Claims Conference has a particularly checkered history: its flawed process, its failure to support fully the Holocaust survivors' needs, its opposition to allowing survivors real justice, and, of course, the embezzlement and fraud issues.

□ 1545

There is no denying that this bill moves the needle not 1 inch closer to justice. It has a fancy name, but there is no justice.

Just look at the timeframe here, Mr. Speaker. The report is due in 18 months, and then what? And how many of the survivors will pass away before this report even gets issued?

So I am sorry to say, but the JUST Act just falls so far short of what survivors need today that I cannot stand before my friends and colleagues and I cannot stand before my Holocaust survivors and offer a voice of support for this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, first, let me thank Senator BALDWIN and Senator RUBIO for their tireless efforts on behalf of Holocaust survivors and their heirs. I would also like to acknowledge the important work of my New York colleague, Congressman JOE CROWLEY, and CHRIS SMITH, who introduced the House version of this legislation.

The Justice for Uncompensated Survivors Today, or JUST, Act would shine a light on any country in Europe stalling on the return of or restitution for wrongfully confiscated or transferred Holocaust era assets.

Nearly 75 years after the end of World War II, we are still debating property rights for Holocaust victims. That is truly astonishing. According to the Holocaust Immovable Property Restitution Study, a substantial

amount of property confiscated from European Jews hasn't been returned to its rightful owners or its owners haven't been compensated at all.

We must ensure that the United States is holding governments to their obligations and ensuring their property is properly returned. Holocaust survivors have waited too long for justice. We cannot let them wait any longer.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I previously discussed how passing just a reporting requirement is not justice for survivors, never mind the title. It may be vigilance, but there will be no justice served for a single survivor when this body passes this bill and sends it to the President for his signature. Mr. Speaker, there is something even worse than not providing justice for survivors, and that is depriving them of justice.

I want to talk about one of the principles in this bill that, while on the face of it, might read like it is a simple principle—perhaps it sounds like good, common sense—and this is what it does:

This bill directs the Secretary of State to submit a report to Congress that assesses and describes the nature and extent that certain countries have gone to in order to meet the goals and objectives of the 2009 Holocaust Era Assets Conference.

Again, it sounds reasonable. It is always good to hold countries accountable, especially when we are talking about seeking justice for Holocaust survivors. But one of the big flaws of the 2009 Conference, and what this bill does by asking the Secretary to report on how governments are complying with these goals, is that it enshrines a principle of running out the clock on survivors. The principle, which is specifically highlighted in this bill, the JUST Act, is the notion of allowing governments to use the assets of heirless property claims to provide for other survivors' needs.

Essentially, what this is saying to the governments that have claims against them or that have obligations to survivors whom they must meet is: Go ahead. Stall as long as you can. Wait them out. Then use those assets to pay off your obligations.

How long have survivors had to wait now, Mr. Speaker? Over 70 years. And the longer they wait, the longer those states which have obligations to survivors are allowed to stall, the less that these states will be on the hook for.

Even worse, this rewards states for stalling. It compounds the injustice to survivors. Using property and assets that were denied to survivors for over seven decades to then pay off other survivors is sickening.

Every survivor deserves justice, and that includes all who have lived

through the unthinkable but are no longer with us today. This practice is nothing more than a smokescreen for Germany's and other Claims Conference failures to forthrightly provide for all survivors' needs.

Let's think about it this way, Mr. Speaker: The Claims Conference will support the idea of using heirless claims to provide for other survivors, sure, but will the Claims Conference support the idea that survivors still being denied their justice by the insurance companies should be allowed to sue those insurance companies in Federal court? Nope.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder why that is. If my colleagues want to support this bill and if they think that using heirless property to pay for the needs of other survivors is the best we can get, then fine. But I challenge each and every one of you to believe that we can do more, we must do more, and that we have a moral responsibility to do more for survivors.

Surely, if we can tell governments in Europe that it is okay to benefit from their unwillingness to resolve the outstanding property claims against them for 70 years, then we can tell our survivors that it is okay for them to go to Federal court and fight for their justice.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and I ask unanimous consent that he control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POLIQUIN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), the chairman emeritus of our committee, for her tireless work advocating on behalf of Holocaust survivors. Let me say at the outset here that no one in Congress, no one in this Congress, has done more to advocate on behalf of survivors than ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, and I believe that to be true through her entire tenure in this body.

Let me also explain the thoughts, as explained to us, behind our Senate colleagues that put together the JUST Act.

From their standpoint, from their vantage point, the JUST Act is a simple reporting requirement to assess the progress of signatories to the 2009 Terezin Declaration on Holocaust era assets and related issues. The goal there, of course, was to fulfill the principles in that declaration. A lot of time and effort went into trying to leverage that agreement out of 46 countries that agreed to these principles.

Now, here is the point; here is where we have a difference of opinion: of

those 46 countries, some of them are falling woefully short of their commitments.

Here are the conflict divisions. Some are saying, many are saying: Look, we need to put pressure on them.

The Senate unanimously came to the conclusion that a way to do that is with this bill, because what the legislation does is to ensure that there is an accountability mechanism of checking adherence to the declaration principles and to making sure that it doesn't fall by the wayside by bringing accountability to those countries that don't.

The injustices of the Holocaust, frankly, here today, those injustices are too many to name. Many are unaddressed in that declaration, and I concur from that standpoint. But, at the same time, we need to continue pushing to right the full spectrum of these wrongs.

Before us we have a bill which will bring much leverage. We cannot lose the headway that we have made toward compensating survivors and families for what was rightfully theirs.

Our partners have already agreed to the restitution principles in the declaration. A formal report that shows who has fallen short and how, it is argued by our colleagues in the Senate, would be a powerful instrument for the U.S. Government to push for changes.

From my standpoint, I understand the arguments being made by the Senate. It does not mean that we should not go forward to make other points. But the argument they make to us is let's give the State Department the tools it needs to ensure accountability. This is an argument that, on both sides of the aisle, the preponderance of Members here, I think, concur with.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about survivors being unable to sue the insurance companies in Federal court, how unjust that is. What a travesty.

First, they were forced to suffer the inhumanity of the Nazis during the Holocaust, treated as outsiders. Worse than that, there really are just no words to adequately describe how Jews were treated during the Nazi time. And now, for so many, they continue to face injustices on a daily basis.

One would think, Mr. Speaker, that those who endured and managed to make it here to America—home of freedom, democracy, respect for human rights, where everyone is meant to have equal rights—would not have to face the harsh truth that they are still being treated no better than second-class citizens.

Imagine how survivors feel when they are told that, in America, almost anyone can have their rightful day in court—unless you are a Holocaust survivor with a claim against one of the big, rich, powerful insurance companies. In that case, you have no right to

your justice. You have no day in court. You are prohibited from bringing justice to the courts.

Countless survivors had valid insurance policies with insurance companies in Europe before the Holocaust, but when so many tried to make a claim on the policies of their loved ones, can you imagine what these companies told them?

The insurance companies have asked Holocaust survivors to show their policies, because, as we all know, Mr. Speaker, the Nazis just let the Jews of Europe take all of their important documentation and their most cherished possessions with them before they were hauled off for extermination—of course that did not happen.

Even worse, these big, rich, powerful insurance companies didn't just reject these claims due to the absence of policy documents. Many claims were rejected due to the absence of a death certificate—another paper that the insurance companies knew were not readily available. They did not pass them out in extermination camps. The relatives did not get a death certificate. But yet that is what insurance companies are asking of survivors.

Of course, we all know that policyholders aren't the only ones with the proper documentation. Allianz or any of those big, rich, powerful insurance companies aren't just going to take my word for it that I have a policy with them. Insurance companies are going to have their own documentation to validate the claim. They have that documentation.

But do insurance companies do this for survivors? Do they show them the claims? Of course not. And, unfortunately, there is nothing to compel these huge, rich, and powerful insurance companies to provide it and to pay off those claims.

These claims, by the way, Mr. Speaker, now run into the billions of dollars, so you can imagine why the insurance companies would fight so hard against allowing survivors to receive their claims.

This is not justice. This is just as immoral and as reprehensible as you can get. These rich and powerful insurance companies should be held liable, and they should be held accountable for these sins against morality and humanity.

That is the bill that we should be debating today, and that is why, for years, I have authored the Holocaust Insurance Accountability Act, H.R. 762, in this Congress and I have worked side by side with so many survivors over the years who feel as if they are continuing to be victimized.

They ask me: Why can everyone else get their day in court like we are all entitled to, but not Holocaust survivors?

My bill is simple, Mr. Speaker. It will finally allow survivors the ability to bring their cases before the U.S. court system, and it allows them to have their day in court.

□ 1600

It does not prejudice the outcome of any case. It simply says survivors can face the insurance companies in court and seek redress. It will make the insurance companies open up their books and let the world know the truth.

If it is decided by the U.S. court system that these insurance companies have in fact been shirking their moral and legal responsibilities, then the appropriate course of action should be taken. But this cannot happen and these survivors cannot have their day in court unless we take steps to ensure that it can.

If we are here today to talk about justice for survivors, as this bill is called, let's talk about real action. Let's talk about doing something more than a simple reporting requirement with a fancy name. Let's talk about ending seven decades of injustice. Let's talk about ending impunity for these big, powerful, rich insurance companies. Let's talk about accountability.

Let's take up the JUST Act with the Holocaust Insurance Accountability Act. Let's not allow ourselves to pass a reporting requirement and then pat ourselves on the back thinking the job is over. Let's get real justice for survivors.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), the chair of the Democratic Caucus. He is also the sponsor of the House version of this bill.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague from the Bronx, New York (Mr. ENGEL). He has been a true friend for many, many, many years. I thank him for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in full support today of S. 447, the Justice for Uncompensated Survivors Today Act. This important measure has already unanimously passed the Senate. Senator TAMMY BALDWIN had worked hard on this issue, on a bipartisan basis, and I am proud to have introduced the House version, as has been mentioned, along with my colleague from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH). I appreciate the efforts of the chairman and the ranking member here in bringing the bill to the floor.

I was first approached about the lack of justice still facing Holocaust survivors by a gentleman from Queens, New York, Jehuda Evron. I am sorry that he cannot be here today to watch this debate, as he has spent a lifetime helping those who endured and escaped horrific atrocities during the Holocaust.

Jehuda has been an incredible campaigner for Holocaust survivors, along with his wife, Leah, who lived in the ghetto under a false identity and joined others in hiding with resistance fighters.

It was Jehuda and the World Jewish Restitution Organization who shared with me an ongoing indignity Holocaust

survivors still face to this very day: the inability to reclaim property unlawfully seized during the Holocaust. This is property that, if restored, could have a significant impact for the far too many Holocaust survivors living in poverty today.

It may shock some to hear that, here in the United States, one-third of the Holocaust survivors live at or under the poverty line. That is despicable. Some survivors are so poor, they sometimes have to choose between food and medicine.

Their stories put in stark relief the lifelong impact the Holocaust had on an entire generation of families and survivors. That is why it is so important that in 2009, the United States, Israel, and 45 other countries signed the Terezin Declaration on Holocaust Era Assets and Related Issues.

In that important measure, countries pledged to take steps to return assets looted by the Nazi government and others. Nine years later, there is still work to be done.

The JUST Act urges countries to keep their commitments to reconstitute wrongly taken Holocaust Era Assets, and it will continue to shine a light on the ongoing struggle of survivors to reclaim the property that is rightfully theirs.

If you walk out the front door of this building and head down the street, you will find yourself at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. It is a powerful institution and one that reminds us of not only the heroic role played by the United States in World War II, but the tremendous suffering faced by the Jewish people and all victims of the Holocaust.

For me, it is also a reminder that if we can take steps to right more of the wrongs committed during the Holocaust, we should take the opportunity to do so. I believe that this bill is an opportunity to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I have the utmost respect for the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN). She knows my affection for her. We have been friends for over 20 years. I respect her opposition to this because I know that she does want justice for the victims. That is her goal.

But I just want to say, for the record, that this bill is supported by the World Jewish Restitution Organization, the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, Jewish Federations of North America, B'nai B'rith International, HIAS Refugee Assistance Organization, the National Coalition Supporting Eurasian Jewry, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, and the Orthodox Union.

I think, Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize those organizations that are in full support of this legislation, with all due respect to a woman I have tremendous respect for.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in order to close my part of this debate on the bill, I want

to reiterate that, though I strongly oppose the JUST Act—it is smoke and mirrors and it gives you the feel-good moment and provides no justice for survivors, in spite of its fancy name—I do believe that my colleagues do have good intentions and they want to see Holocaust survivors finally get the justice that has for so long evaded them.

Their words and their remarks are heartfelt. They just don't apply to this bill. They would more rightly apply to the bill that I have and that I hope this body will soon take up. In fact, this body took action last Congress when the Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act of 2016, or the HEAR Act, was passed and signed into law.

This was an important bill. It actually helped. That bill allowed for civil claims or causes of action for the recovery of artwork stolen from Jews by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

In other words, we have acted to ensure that Holocaust victims can bring claims in U.S. courts to recover their looted artwork and other possessions. They can have their day in court, and I am glad for it. If you lost a famous painting and there have been movies and books written about it, you can have your day in court. That is wonderful.

But since HEAR was passed, or the Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act, it has already been cited in several cases and has been applied by the Ninth Circuit Court to revive a previously dismissed Nazi-era art case. That is great. So why not take action to allow the same process to take place for survivors to hold insurance companies accountable?

If you had your artwork looted by the Nazis, you can have your day in court. But if the Nazis have destroyed your life, and you had an insurance company policy, you do not have the right to take that case to court. It doesn't make sense.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are here today to debate justice for uncompensated survivors of the Holocaust. A simple reporting requirement isn't going to do that. We shouldn't have to be taking such action. Unfortunately, because certain governments haven't lived up to their obligations and because these insurance companies and others complicit in Nazi-era crimes still manage to evade accountability, we have a moral obligation to step into action. That is the message that I am giving to my colleagues.

If we want to pass the JUST Act, so be it. But let's also vow here and now to take more concrete action to really get justice for Holocaust survivors. Let's take that next big step. Time is running out. Time is running out for all of these survivors and we need action yesterday—not today, but today will do.

I am asking my colleagues to do the right thing, and I am asking for this body, Mr. Speaker, to bring the Holocaust Insurance Accountability Act to the floor as soon as possible so that we

can take a meaningful step, a concrete step, an action item toward justice for survivors. And then, all of those lofty words that are laid upon the table on this bill that don't really apply, would really apply to this bill, the Holocaust Insurance Accountability Act. We owe it to the survivors. We owe it to their families.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH), who is a very well-respected member of our Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Ranking Member ENGEL, for his hard work on this bill and for yielding. I thank Chairman ROYCE as well.

I want to thank the many Members of Congress who have shown their unyielding commitment to caring for Holocaust survivors and ensuring that their needs are met, including the cosponsors of this bill, and, of course, the House bill's sponsors, Congressman CROWLEY and Congressman SMITH.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my friend and colleague, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for her tireless efforts throughout her career on behalf of Holocaust survivors in our community in south Florida and everywhere they live.

Two weeks after we marked Yom HaShoah, it is fitting that Congress would consider this bill. I hope that the world is watching, because every year that we move away from the horrible atrocities of the Holocaust, we lose more and more survivors.

They are the people who survived Auschwitz, Treblinka, Sobibor, and other Nazi death camps. They are the people who survived the attempted genocide against them. Six million Jews perished. We must remember that every single victim, those who perished and those who survived, had a story. They had homes, they had businesses, family heirlooms, and personal possessions. As the Nazis stormed through Europe to wipe out European Jewry, they stole everything they could as they sent Jews to their death.

While no amount of money will ever erase these horrors, these survivors, their families, and their heirs deserve compensation for confiscated property, including Jewish communal, private, and heirless property.

In 2009, the United States joined 46 other countries and agreed to the Terezin Declaration on Holocaust Era Assets. This was a commitment by these countries to provide for the restitution of confiscated property. But 9 years later, many European countries have still failed to meet their commitments in this agreement. Some countries still haven't passed legislation to create for private property restitution, and we should call out their failures.

As we speak, thousands of survivors are in need of immediate and urgent

care and assistance. I am proud to represent a large community of survivors, and I see their critical needs going unmet day after day. This bill can be a tool to help us understand where the gaps lie in restitution programs, but it does not address, nor is it meant to address, the urgent need of survivors now. As they age, their needs grow. It is essential they receive the care they deserve. We must do everything to ensure that those needs are addressed.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This legislation is critical to ensuring that Holocaust survivors and their heirs are compensated. Restitution and return will represent another step moving past this heinous chapter of human history.

I want to thank my colleague and good friend, Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN, for her powerful remarks this afternoon and for her leadership for so many years in fighting for Holocaust survivors. I have met many of her constituents and many of my own who remain engaged in this prolonged battle for justice. I am a cosponsor of Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN's legislation, and I proudly support her in these efforts. I do hope that her bill will come to the floor as well.

□ 1615

I also support Congressmen CROWLEY and SMITH, as well as Senators BALDWIN and RUBIO, in the effort to ensure that property is restituted and returned through the JUST Act. This legislation has already passed the Senate; so when we pass it here, it will go right to the President's desk for signing. With this vote, we can push it across the finish line.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we have been contacted on behalf of the JUST Act by a number of organizations in support of the Senate bill. The major American Jewish organizations supporting this measure are the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish Federations of North America, the B'nai B'rith, the HIAS refugee assistance organization, Union for Reform Judaism, Orthodox Union, World Jewish Restitution Organization, and others; and they have argued that the Justice for Uncompensated Survivors Today Act, or JUST Act, as the Senate calls it, is a measure that will have an outsized impact in encouraging countries to continue working to make amends for the evils of the Holocaust. That is what drove the Senate to pass this bill.

Now, just to go into the details again a little bit: it was in 2009 that rep-

resentatives of this country and 40 other countries agreed to a set of principles to address the welfare of survivors, to address Holocaust education, and to address issues related to restitution for seized property, among other issues.

Now, that is what these 40 nations committed to. So 10 years have passed, approximately, and it is time that we take stock of the work under way because, while a number of these partner countries have made great strides to uphold their commitments under the agreement, you and I know—everybody here knows—that some countries have fallen short.

And this legislation, which charges the State Department with the responsibility for this important report—and let's call it naming and shaming; that is basically what is intended here—gives the United States another tool to seek justice for Holocaust survivors, to seek justice for the families of Holocaust victims. And it is our hope that passing this bill will motivate improvements even before the report is penned. Already we have seen some of these countries overseas renew their engagement on this issue, and that is the leverage that we want to deploy.

It is a devastating issue to even begin a discussion because we can never compensate Holocaust survivors truly for the unbelievable horror and devastation that they suffered. But from the perspective of most of the organizations that have talked to us about the bill, their point would be: We can try. We can try to restore what is rightfully theirs. And part of the trying, from their standpoint, is to shed light on the efforts, or lack thereof, that other countries are making. And this bill does that. It unanimously passed the Senate for that reason.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all the Members here who participated today in the debate over this very difficult issue, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 447.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

IRAN HUMAN RIGHTS AND HOSTAGE-TAKING ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4744) to impose additional sanctions with respect to serious human rights abuses of the Government of Iran, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4744

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,