

and as he leaves the military he will continue to be the best.

I thank him for his many years of service, and may the good Lord continue to bless and keep him.

RECOGNIZING AND CONGRATULATING LIEUTENANT COLONEL DENNIS P. SUGRUE FOR HIS SERVICE WITH THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

**HON. JACK BERGMAN**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 26, 2018*

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it's my honor to recognize Lieutenant Colonel Dennis Sugrue for his service as Commander at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District. Through his exceptional leadership and steadfast devotion, LTC Sugrue has become an indispensable part of the state of Michigan.

LTC Sugrue first assumed command at the Detroit District in July of 2016. Under his leadership, the Corps has worked to ensure environmental stability and engineering excellence in the infrastructure of the Great Lakes Region. From dredging waterways and mitigating the threat of natural disasters to preserving and improving the Soo Locks, the work of LTC Sugrue and the Army Corps has been critical to protecting the Great Lakes and promoting the livelihoods of Michiganders and Americans everywhere.

Prior to his work in Michigan, LTC Sugrue served as the Deputy District Commander of the Corps' Los Angeles District. His service also included work in Germany, New York, two tours in Afghanistan, and one in Kosovo. He is a 1999 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering, and holds two Master of Science degrees from Missouri Science and Technology and The Johns Hopkins University. He is a recipient of the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, and several other prestigious awards recognizing his extraordinary service. Lieutenant Colonel Sugrue will be officially relieved by LTC Gregory E. Turner on July 26th at the Grosse Pointe War Memorial.

Mr. Speaker, it's my honor to recognize Lieutenant Colonel Dennis Sugrue for his service to the people of Michigan with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. On behalf of my constituents, I wish LTC Sugrue all the best in his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING CHRISTIAN CARE MINISTRY'S 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

**HON. BILL POSEY**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 26, 2018*

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 25th anniversary of Christian Care Ministry, an outreach of the American Evangelistic Association. Based in Melbourne, Florida, this not-for-profit organization was founded by Dr. E. John Reinhold as a formalized approach to sharing healthcare burdens.

Beginning with a mere 600 households in 1993, membership in Christian Care Ministry's Medi-Share program has skyrocketed over the last 25 years. Through Medi-Share, over \$2.6 billion in medical bills has been shared and discounted by more than 400,000 members across the nation.

"Launched from a kitchen table at our home, Christian Care Ministry has served hundreds of thousands through providing a mechanism for mutual care. I am proud to have founded this ministry and to have been part of what it has meant to so many," Reinhold shared.

After the passage of the Affordable Care Act, Christians recognized an opportunity to be part of something bigger than healthcare—a sharing community that met the requirements of the new healthcare law without compromising their values.

Christian Care Ministry has not only helped many to faithfully handle expensive medical bills, it has also been a boon to the economy of Brevard County.

The mayor of Melbourne, Kathy Meehan, stated, "by providing more than 430 jobs at its Melbourne headquarters and making significant financial investments in its facility, Christian Care Ministry has made a substantial economic impact on our community. We are proud to have the ministry in the City of Melbourne and are grateful for the benefits it has provided to our community for the past 25 years."

Christian Care Ministry has more than 600 faithful and dedicated employees nationwide and are proud of their diligence in providing outstanding customer service.

I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Christian Care Ministry for 25 years of service and for their dedication to assisting those who need medical care.

PROTECT MEDICAL INNOVATION ACT OF 2017

SPEECH OF

**HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 24, 2018*

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2017 (H.R. 184).

The medical device industry serves a vital role in Minnesota by supporting thousands of jobs and providing lifesaving technology.

Nonetheless, repealing the medical device tax without a fiscal offset only intensifies the Republican sabotage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). I represent 700,000 constituents and the majority have made it clear the ongoing attacks on the ACA and our healthcare system are intolerable. Therefore, I cannot support a tax cut on medical devices while the White House and Republicans in Congress continue to cut healthcare for millions of Americans, including stripping protections for individuals with preexisting conditions.

The fiscal shortsightedness of this legislation is deeply troubling. Like most corporations, medical device companies received billions in tax cuts that were completely unpaid for in the recent Republican tax overhaul. Repealing the medical device tax would give another tax break in excess of \$20 billion to

these same medical device companies with devastating fiscal implications.

Unfortunately, it has become clear that Republicans plan to cover the costs of these deficit-exploding tax measures by forcing drastic cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. It is simply unacceptable that these already cash-strapped programs will be forced to foot the bill for corporate tax cuts. Considering that the Republican tax bill eliminated healthcare coverage for 13 million people, we should be investing in earned benefit programs now that the need for them is greater than ever. Passing yet another unpaid tax break simply makes these pending cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security all the more likely.

A bipartisan, responsible bill should be drafted that allows the medical device sector to continue to innovate and invest without this target tax, but any solution needs to be paid for and it should have broad support from Republicans and Democrats.

UNITED STATES-TURKEY RELATIONSHIP

**HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 26, 2018*

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, the United States-Turkey relationship continues to deteriorate. Turkey has long been an important American ally and key NATO member. However, this relationship has frayed in recent years, and I increasingly question whether Turkey's autocratic ruler, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is truly committed to his country's relationship with the United States.

I must first express my profound disappointment in the Turkish court's verdict last week against American Pastor Andrew Brunson. While yesterday's step to move him from a Turkish prison to house arrest is a step in the right direction, it is still not enough. I call on Turkey to release Mr. Brunson, who has committed no crime, and return him to his family. I make the same call in support of NASA scientist Serkan Golge as well as other United States citizens and U.S. Mission local employees who are wrongly held.

Two years ago, this month, a failed military coup took place in Turkey. This was a traumatic experience for the Turkish people, as it would have been for the citizens of any country. There is no doubt that it has been a challenge to effectively deal with this situation. Nevertheless, I remain deeply concerned about the Turkish government's response which has led to curtailing personal liberty and press freedoms and, in many cases, suspending or ignoring the rule of law. While the State of Emergency has expired, President Erdogan continues to crackdown on suspected opponents. Such actions are inconsistent with Turkey's international commitments to organizations such as NATO and with its aspiring European Union membership.

In my experience, America's partnerships are strongest when our friends and allies are fully committed to democratic values. Among the challenges in our relationship with Turkey are the Turkish government's constraints on freedom and democracy. I believe that removing these constraints will substantially benefit both the United States and Turkey.

I've heard the argument that because Turkey lives in a dangerous neighborhood, it must take bold actions to preserve its own security. There is no doubt that Turkey faces threats from an array of terrorist groups, a murderous Syrian regime headed by Bashar al-Assad, and other destabilizing influences across the region. But the best way for Turkey to meet these challenges is in partnership with the United States and other NATO allies.

This is why I am supremely alarmed that Turkey is considering purchasing a Russian air-defense system rather than a NATO air-defense system. The operation of a non-NATO system puts the security of NATO members at serious risk and is inconsistent with the spirit of the alliance, not to mention interoperability among NATO member states. The Alliance understands Turkey's desire for air defense and wants to help, but Ankara's continued stated intention to acquire the S-400 is an obstacle to NATO's ability to assist and sends a signal that Ankara wants to break away on core defense issues.

In the time left before Turkey potentially makes a serious miscalculation, there is a key fact to highlight: the United States has offered Turkey two air and missile defense systems, including the Patriot PAC-3 system, which would fulfill Turkey's defense needs, but ultimate receipt and delivery of the Patriot is contingent on Turkey cancelling the S-400 deal. For these reasons, I, like many of my colleagues, remain willing to work with Turkey in order to support its purchase of a NATO air defense system.

But, I want to be clear: Turkey must demonstrate its commitment to its relationship with the United States and NATO. It can do so by taking the steps I previously noted, including releasing Mr. Brunson, Mr. Golge, and others; enhancing Turkish personal freedoms and promoting the rule of law; and acquiring a NATO, rather than Russian, air-defense system. No doubt, the United States has other important differences with Ankara, including its difficult relations with Israel, its occupation of Cyprus, and its improving ties with Moscow. But, should Turkey pursue the course I've outlined, it would represent an important step toward patching up some of our key differences.

Like many of my colleagues, I wish that our relationship with Turkey were on better footing. Turkey has been a strong NATO partner for decades. For the good of both the United States and Turkey, NATO, and the region, we must work to improve this relationship.

HONORING THE CITY OF SOUTH EL MONTE, CALIFORNIA ON ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 26, 2018*

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the City of South El Monte, California, which I have the privilege of representing in California's 38th Congressional District. On July 30th, 2018, South El Monte will celebrate its 60th Anniversary. Located in the heart of the San Gabriel Valley, South El Monte is a colorful, diverse, and thriving community.

Known to many as the "City of Achievement", South El Monte has come a long way

since it was incorporated as a city with 3,000 residents in 1958. The city is now home to over 20,000 Californians and a robust business community. With easy access to major Southern California freeways, South El Monte hosts more than 2,400 businesses and serves as an important manufacturing base for the Los Angeles region, including in the space and aerospace industries.

Beyond its prosperous business sector, South El Monte is a tight-knit community. Since its inception, the city's mission has been to improve the quality of life of its residents. The Whittier Narrows Recreation Area and Legg Lake on the city's border, as well as the city's commitment to those who serve in our armed forces through its Active Military Banner Program, unite a diverse population with a rich history.

I am honored to represent this city and its residents, and look forward to what the next 60 years have in store.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DEMOCRACY RESTORATION ACT OF 2018

**HON. JERROLD NADLER**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 26, 2018*

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce the Democracy Restoration Act of 2018. This legislation will serve to clarify and, in some cases, expand the voting rights of people with felony convictions, the next logical step in restoring their full participation in civic life.

The United States remains one of the world's strictest nations when it comes to denying the right to vote to citizens convicted of crimes. An estimated 6.1 million citizens are ineligible to vote in federal elections due to their status as ex-offenders. More than four and a half million of these disqualified voters are not in prison, but are on probation, parole, or have completed their sentence. Due to differences in state laws and rates of criminal punishment, states vary widely in the practice of disenfranchisement, demonstrating a critical federal interest for uniform standards.

Clarification of the law on restoration of ex-offender voting rights is a critical next step in criminal justice reform. In 2007, President George W. Bush signed the Second Chance Act into law, signaling a bipartisan awareness of the importance of enacting policies that assist in the reintegration of ex-offenders into their communities. Recent public opinion research has also shown that a significant majority of Americans favor voting rights for people on probation or parole, who are currently supervised in their communities, as well as for individuals who have completed their sentences. This legislation both captures the bipartisan spirit of the Bush administration and is consistent with evolving public opinion on rehabilitation of ex-offenders.

From a constitutional basis, the Democracy Restoration Act is a narrowly crafted effort to expand voting rights for people with felony convictions, while protecting state prerogatives to generally establish voting qualifications. The legislation would only apply to persons who are not in prison, and would only apply to federal elections. As such, our bill is fully consistent with constitutional requirements estab-

lished by the Supreme Court in a series of decisions upholding federal voting rights laws.

Since this legislation was first introduced in 2008, the Sentencing Project reports 27 states have amended felony disenfranchisement policies in an effort to reduce their restrictiveness and expand voter eligibility. These reforms have resulted in an estimated more than 800,000 citizens regaining their voting rights. Yet, despite these reforms, the overall rate of ex-offender disenfranchisement has not abated and continues to have a disproportionate impact on communities of color. Many of the state reforms still rely on lengthy waiting periods or clemency and several feature burdensome procedural hurdles that have proven difficult to navigate for persons seeking to restore their voting rights. As a result, approximately 50 percent of the entire disenfranchised population is clustered in 12 states, with Florida alone accounting for 48 percent of the post-sentence population.

Proponents of ex-offender disenfranchisement have offered few justifications for continuing the practice. In fact, the strongest empirical research suggests that prohibitions on the right to vote undermine both our voting system and the fundamental rights of people with felony convictions. A series of studies make clear that civic engagement is pivotal in the transition from incarceration and discouraging repeat offenses. Disenfranchisement laws only serve to isolate and alienate ex-offenders, creating additional obstacles in their attempt to successfully put the past behind them by fully reintegrating into society. But that is only half the story.

The current patchwork of state laws has created widespread confusion among election officials throughout the country and has served as the justification for flawed voter purges. For example, although people with misdemeanor convictions never lose the right to vote in Ohio, in 2008, 30 percent of election officials in the state responded incorrectly or expressed uncertainty about whether individuals with misdemeanor convictions could vote. A similar survey by the Nebraska ACLU in advance of the 2016 general election determined that about half of state election officials gave out the wrong information about former felons' voting rights. Given the general confusion by election officials on restoration of voting rights, many ex-offenders are hesitant to even attempt registration, depriving eligible voters of their rights. Only federal law can conclusively resolve the ambiguities in this area plaguing our voting system.

For many years, voting restoration legislation has been supported by a broad coalition of groups interested in voting and civil rights, including the NAACP, ACLU, Human Rights Watch, the Brennan Center for Justice, and the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, among many others. This coalition has expanded to include many law enforcement groups including the American Probation and Parole Association, the Association of Paroling Authorities International, and the National Black Police Association, among others, who recognize that allowing people to vote after release from prison helps rebuild ties to the community that motivate law-abiding behavior.

The denial of voting rights by many states to ex-offenders represents a vestige from a time when suffrage was denied to whole classes of our population based on race, gender, religion, national origin and property. I believe that our