

GIFT TO AMERICAN PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, today, I remind my colleagues of a President who reminded us of the shining city on a Hill. I remind our colleagues of a President who led us to a kinder and gentler society. So I am stunned to hear the President speak of claiming to be asking for the government to be shut down.

This is a season where many in our Nation draw together with families and worship and celebrate. It is a very honored time. People of the Christian faith are engaged in the recognition and acknowledgment of the birth of baby Jesus. It is a holy time. It is a time when families need resources. Government workers need to ensure that their families are provided for, but also we must ensure that our government is provided for. I thank the Speaker-elect and the Democratic leader in the Senate, the other body, for recognizing that we do not want a shutdown.

To those who speak of the necessity of a wall, let me speak as a Representative of a border State who has been to the border so many times, I cannot count. I count those on the border, among many of the States, as friends, having been to every border State. I will say to the American people: There is no foreign war or attack at the southern border.

We have a northern border as well, and I have been there. There is no wall there.

The only thing that is at the southern border are mothers and children living in desperate, devastating, and disgusting conditions, and unaccompanied children fleeing from the decapitation of their brothers or fathers, fleeing politically because they disagree with the viciousness of cartels and refuse to accept their membership.

That is where America's best angels come in, when we rise to the higher occasion of giving refuge and opportunity to those who are fleeing political persecution. Here is how we do it. We process asylum seekers. We do not undermine their process. They are fleeing for their lives.

To juxtapose a stagnant wall to the lives of those fleeing political persecution is untenable. It is crucial that we design a comprehensive immigration reform policy. It is crucial that the acknowledgment that barriers of certain kinds—technology and personnel—can be a successful formula to ensure the safety and security of the American people. But at the same time, I insist that we regulate or bring into regular order Dreamers, who are firefighters, soldiers, lawyers, doctors, and family members throughout the Nation. Where is the call for that?

It is important that we remain a nation that people flee to because of the wonderful values of democracy, the underpinnings of the dignity of all people. It is sad at this time that we have

not come to that conclusion in a bipartisan manner.

So I extend the olive branch. What are we doing for the Dreamers? Why is it not reasonable to construct a funding process or scheme or formula that ensures that kind of bipartisanship and security?

Let me also encourage my colleagues to join me in working in a bipartisan way to pass the Violence Against Women Act. We are reaching out. It is a crucial initiative. Right now, there are family members dying at the hands of domestic violence.

There are law enforcement officers, including my own chief, who asked me about the funding of the STOP grants that are utilized for organizations that will protect these families subjected to violence, such as Native Americans, with healthcare for VAWA victims and ensuring that the person who has already been convicted of abuse does not have random access to a weapon, which is the weapon of choice that kills a family member.

Finally, let me say I hope that we can bring, Mr. Speaker, conclusion to a sentencing and prison reform bill that I have worked very hard on.

Why not give a gift to the American people—not a shutdown, but a bipartisan step, one by one, to make America an even greater country than it already is?

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE FOR
OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give my final speech in the United States House of Representatives to express my gratitude for the opportunity to serve the people of Arizona's Second Congressional District.

It has been a tremendous honor to deploy here to the people's House over the past 4 years as an advocate and champion for Tucson, Sierra Vista, Douglas, Bisbee, and all the other amazing communities in southeastern Arizona.

I am grateful to my dedicated staff in Arizona, who were omnipresent in our community and fought for constituents who needed help with Federal bureaucracies. They were able to solve nearly 6,000 cases, returning nearly \$2.5 million to seniors, veterans, and others—money that was rightfully theirs in the first place. This is one of the most meaningful and impactful parts of our job.

My D.C. staff tirelessly helped push our legislative initiatives forward. Because of them, we saved the A-10 Warthog, put the Douglas port of entry project on the map, kept the Cherrybell postal processing facility open, fast-tracked our veterans for jobs at the border, opened Arlington again to our World War II female pilot heroes, improved mental health access, stopped a harmful tax increase on sen-

iors and the middle class, led bipartisan efforts to break the gridlock on healthcare, border security, immigration, and so much more.

A heartfelt thanks to all my staff, but especially those who were with me all 4 years: my chief, Justin Roth; district director, C.J. Karamargin; LD, Pace McMullan, and deputy district director, Rosa Ruiz.

As I reflect on my two terms in the House, I will cherish many memories from this time of service. I was honored to have a front row seat to history here in our Nation's Capitol.

I will never forget sitting next to an American hero, SAM JOHNSON, on the day I was sworn in, or being on this floor as two Presidents delivered their State of the Union speeches and when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Pope Francis addressed a joint session of Congress.

I was blessed to pay final respects to American icons like Senator John McCain, Reverend Billy Graham, and President George H.W. Bush in the sacred grounds in the Capitol rotunda.

To my fellow Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, those who have been here awhile and those who will be sworn in soon, I humbly ask that you never forget the privilege it is to serve here and why you are here. Membership in this body is a precious opportunity. Don't take it lightly, and don't squander it.

It is not about us. As soon as we leave here, this institution will move on and, candidly, few will remember us. Use the time wisely. We have been entrusted to solve our Nation's problems and chart its course for a better future. Do the right thing. Do it for the right reasons. And get things done. This is why we are here.

The people of our great country—the people each of us represent—often have very different views on how to solve our challenges, the proper role of our government, and the priorities for our limited resources. Reconciling these differences requires rigorous and robust debate, both in this Chamber and outside of it. Disagreements are inevitable, but we can and should set the example to disagree without being disagreeable.

Our challenge is, then, to find the sometimes very tiny sliver of common ground where we can agree and govern. I am particularly proud of the fact that every one of the five bills I introduced that were signed into law had bipartisan support.

Lastly, and most importantly, to my constituents: In my time as your Representative, I deeply valued meeting with you all over our incredible district—at schools, senior centers, small businesses, nonprofits, military bases, medical facilities, farms, ranches, and other places—to hear about the challenges that you have along with the opportunities to make an impact with your lives that only come in America. You inspired me and fueled my purpose here.

I represent a diverse and amazing district. These are Americans with real issues, real problems, and real dreams who are not concerned with what party we belong to or what ads we run every 2 years. They care that we care and that we are here to serve not only ourselves, but our country and them.

Our democracy requires that our time here be spent in humility, dedication, and pride: pride to fight for those who can't, pride to work for those who are unable, pride to push back against the bureaucracy that frequently stands in the way and hampers their ability to conduct their business and live their lives.

I stand here today proud of the work we did in these 4 short years, but more proud of the people who sent me here: the citizens of Arizona's Second Congressional District. Thank you for the opportunity and the honor to serve you.

To my successor, Ann Kirkpatrick, I wish you all the best as you are sworn in to serve our amazing and inspiring community.

God bless you all and God bless America.

RECOGNIZING 15 YEARS OF PEPFAR

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, on December 1, we commemorated World AIDS Day, celebrating our many accomplishments in the fight against HIV/AIDS around the globe. One important program for which we are also celebrating 15 years of success this year is PEPFAR.

Mr. Speaker, before Congress enacted PEPFAR, the HIV rates were skyrocketing, especially across the developing world. New cases of HIV infection were outstripping AIDS deaths by more than 60 percent.

Serving in the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, we followed this issue closely, hearing from advocates and administration officials on what to do. There was an almost unchallenged notion that we were about to lose a whole generation in sub-Saharan Africa. It just seemed to be an utterly hopeless situation.

In 2003, our tremendous leader, President George W. Bush, called on us in Congress to take action in responding to this global crisis, and I am proud that we swiftly answered the President's call. Today, there are over 14 million people receiving HIV treatment globally, and over 2 million babies born HIV-free to HIV-positive women—simply astounding.

PEPFAR morphed from an emergency plan to a sustainable program, and I am so glad that USAID is at the helm of this lifesaving program. Since his time as Ambassador to Tanzania, USAID Administrator Mark Green has had a clear-eyed strategy to address

the challenges posed by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. What he has done has reinvested this program.

We are so proud as Americans of what PEPFAR has achieved. It is something that we need in order to continue to be a global leader against the HIV pandemic.

I will never forget standing in the Oval Office as President George W. Bush signed this essential program, PEPFAR, into law. I hope that my colleagues continue to protect and strengthen this vital program.

I am also proud of the many organizations like the One Campaign that, day in and day out, are working to get us closer to our goal of an AIDS-free generation.

□ 1030

RECOGNIZING THE SIMON FAMILY

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Simon family of Key Biscayne for their exemplary work on the yet-to-be-named park located in my congressional district at 401 Hampton Lane in Key Biscayne, the first neighborhood park for their community.

I would like to thank Arielle Simon, the horticulture adviser; Brett Simon, the architectural designer; and their father, Steven Simon, the project coordinator, who worked tirelessly as volunteers to see this vision into fruition.

This is not just any park; it is not just any effort. In an editorial, the community, newspaper, *The Islander News*, wrote:

The park, put simply, is beautiful—but the story behind it is even more so.

From the beginning, Steven, who has a history of effective community leadership, saw an opportunity to work with local elected officials to tackle a problem which they inherited.

Steven brought in his daughter, Arielle, who worked at Miami's renowned botanical garden and became a certified horticulturist, and his son, Brett, who has a master's degree in architecture and craftsmanship education in furniture design, and other volunteers and seasoned professionals.

Together, they all worked as a team, drafting proposals and securing the necessary funds to see this project through.

And here is how the Simon family beautifully described and included south Florida limestone in their proposal. They said:

We incorporated that natural material in our park design so that, metaphorically, we bring the bedrock upon which this island community of shifting sands was founded to the surface. Functionally and aesthetically, limestone is an integral part of our creation of a gathering place . . . in our first neighborhood park.

The story, which is well documented in *Key Biscayne's Islander News* over the past 3 years, truly shows what is possible when people come together with a desire and a drive to do something positive for the betterment of their community. I invite all of my

congressional colleagues to come to Key Biscayne and visit that island paradise and especially to see this park for yourself.

THANKING THE PEOPLE OF NEW YORK'S 19TH DISTRICT

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

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give my thanks to the people of the 19th Congressional District for giving me the honor of serving them in the House over these past 2 years.

I ran for Congress focused on how I could make a difference for the people of our district. It is no secret that upstate New York has been in a long, protracted period of economic decline, with many families and businesses choosing to leave due to high taxes and few employment opportunities.

As such, my focus upon taking office was how we can make upstate more economically competitive while, at the same time, making sure that our citizens, businesses, and local governments have an active voice representing their interests before the Federal Government.

I listened to the people across the district—firefighters and emergency responders, law enforcement, educators, business owners, and average working families—who told me of the issues that we face: the opioid crisis, the highest property taxes in the Nation, the exodus of people and jobs from upstate New York.

A primary focus of mine was the opioid crisis. This issue has devastated and destroyed countless lives across our Nation. I was pleased to have become the primary sponsor of legislation in the House. Working with my colleague from Michigan, MIKE BISHOP, we successfully enacted major opioid legislation, which included the STOP Act.

This legislation will crack down on the flow of illegal drugs, such as fentanyl, coming into the U.S. from places like China through the U.S. Postal Service. The STOP Act is now law, and I am proud to have had a role in its passage.

Agriculture is another major concern in the 19th District. Serving on the House Agriculture Committee, we have lowered the cost and increased the flexibility of dairy risk management programs, fought for better documentation to protect the sanctity of organic agriculture, made it easier for veterans to transition into agriculture, and supported increased broadband and cell service, which is critically important in our rural areas.

I have also led on two initiatives which are critical to the economic health of upstate New York. My legislation, offered with other members of the New York delegation, would finally have ended our State's policy of imposing a share of Medicaid costs from Albany onto local property taxpayers.