From a national perspective, the Coast Guard is responsible for protecting our coastal borders and keeping those in our waterways safe through port, waterway, and coastal security, drug and migrant interdiction, maintaining maritime aids to navigation, search and rescue missions, living marine resources and maritime safety, environmental protection, marine environment protection, ice operations, and other law enforcement operations. Through these important missions, the Service saves thousands of American lives every year.

I was glad to speak with Coast Guard leadership recently about the great work performed already this year, even during the political division in Washington, D.C. Every man and woman in the service is a testament to the spirit and drive that makes America so great and I want to assure all of our Coast Guard men and women that I am working to support and represent their interests in Congress just as I have done my whole career. I would like to thank everyone in the Coast Guard for the outstanding work they do, day in and day out to protect Alaska and our country. America is truly better off thanks to the Coast Guard.

RECOGNIZING THE VANDALIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS
OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2019

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the Vandalia Historical Society for being awarded the Historic Preservation Award. This is a rare and prestigious award made possible through the hard work and dedication of the members of the Vandalia Historical Society. This society sponsors a variety of fundraisers to help maintain the historic Vandalia Old National Capitol, the second capitol for the state of Illinois. The major project underway is the raising of funds for the replacement of all windows in the building. All upgrades and construction are historically accurate. Due to the efforts of this group, the building has been maintained for the public to enjoy, for school and tour groups to learn the history of this grand old building and to learn its importance to our state and national history.

Madam Speaker, due to their efforts, the Old State Capitol will be standing open to welcome future generations. It is my pleasure and honor to recognize the Vandalia Historical Society upon receiving the prestigious Historic Preservation Recognition Award, and I wish the society the best in all of its future endeavors.

Bahrain Must Change Direction

HON. JAMES P. MCGOVERN
OF MASSACHUSETTS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2019

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, today marks the 8th anniversary of the beginning of the Pearl Uprising in Bahrain.

On this day eight years ago, thousands of Bahrainis gathered in peaceful protests to demand greater political freedom, and political and constitutional reform. Their demands were not new—the roots went back to the 1970s. They were not radical: Bahrainis wanted greater popular participation in governance, equal access to economic opportunities and development, action against corruption and an end to the practice of political naturalization.

And they were not sectarian—even though Bahrain is a majority Shi'a country ruled by a minority Sunni monarchy. But by the end of March 2011, what started as a moment of hope had been met with mass repression by the Bahraini government and security forces sent by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. As protests grew and spread, at least 35 people died, some 3,000 people were injured, thousands were detained or lost their jobs, and many were brutally tortured, including medical doctors.

King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa of Bahrain did take some steps to address the people's demands. His appointment of the 5-member Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) to examine the government’s response to the protests was an important gesture. And the 26 recommendations contained in the BICI report, which the monarch promised to implement, did inspire some new hope that change was possible.

Many of us in Congress urged the government to fully implement the BICI recommendations and to cease the repression of human rights defenders and peaceful opposition leaders.

But in the years since, hope has been completely dashed. Some initial important reforms have been rolled back, opposition political societies are banned, peaceful human rights defenders and popular opposition leaders are spending their lives in jail, sectarian divisions have hardened, hundreds have been stripped of their citizenship, no independent press remains, the most recent elections were a sham—and to top it all off, the Bahraini government has hardened, hundreds have been stripped of their citizenship, no independent press remains, the most recent elections were a sham—and to top it all off, the Bahraini government has maintained the most recent elections were a sham—and to top it all off, the Bahraini government has maintained control over the-filed elections were a sham—and to top it all off, the Bahraini government has maintained control over the-filed elections were a sham—and to top it all off, the Bahraini government has maintained control over the-filed elections were a sham—and to top it all off, the Bahraini government has maintained control over the-filed elections were a sham—and to top it all off, the Bahraini government has maintained control over the-filed elections were a sham—and to top it all off, the Bahraini government has maintained control over the-filed elections were a sham—and to top it all off, the Bahraini government has maintained control over the-filed elections were a sham—and to top it all off, the Bahraini government has maintained control over the-filed elections were a sham—and to top it all off, the Bahraini government has maintained control over the-filed elections were a sham—and to top it all off, the Bahraini government has maintained control over the filed elections were a sham—and to top it all off, the Bahraini government has maintained control over the...