

Syria. In September, I joined a letter sent by Republicans and Democrats directly to the President of the United States. In that letter, we called on the administration to use every diplomatic tool in our toolbox to secure Austin's safe return home.

□ 2000

Austin's parents have been among his strongest advocates. They have made countless trips to Washington, D.C., and across the Middle East working to secure his release. They have been pillars of strength as they have fought to bring their son home.

I had the opportunity and the honor to meet Marc when he was in Washington, D.C.; and to see the tenacity and strength and devotion to his child was awe inspiring. It also makes me understand how he could be a parent to a young man who would go out and seek adventure and seek truth and seek information as a journalist.

It is my hope that we can come together as a body to bring Austin Tice home. I never met Austin Tice, but I am in awe of his story as an adventurer, as a journalist, as a veteran, as someone who has traveled the world seeking information and stories.

I have been compelled to take part in this event tonight, and I thank my colleagues for their tireless efforts on behalf of Austin Tice, their work to bring him home, their work to bring a voice to his story and knowledge of his continued capture and detainment in Syria. I thank them for their work, and I look forward to continuing, in small part, to work with them where I am able, where I can be of aid to bring information and light to Austin's story and to continue to be an advocate to bring him home.

It is my hope that in some days we will be able, here on the House floor, to celebrate the homecoming of an American, of a veteran, of a journalist, of a man who sought to tell the story of children in Syria.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to thank my good friend, Representative SPANBERGER, for those compelling remarks. Once again, we are hearing from a Member who, as she says, did not know Austin Tice.

I hope that Debra and Marc Tice, when they see Representative SPANBERGER give such eloquent and intelligent and deeply felt remarks, are comforted to know that they are not alone in seeking the release of their son.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of Members, not to mention all of the many Members of the House and Senate, who have signed on letters to the President for help with Austin Tice, but it is worth noting again that, on the very first day of Congress, Rep. AL GREEN introduced H. Res. 17.

That resolution, introduced with Representative AL GREEN, sought, from

the very beginning of the 116th Congress, to draw attention to Austin Tice, and we will not cease drawing just that kind of attention until we have learned where Austin Tice is and when he is coming home.

The resolution that we introduced expressed concern over the detention of Austin Tice and laid out many of the factual matters that the Members have offered here today. In that resolution, we not only expressed our concern regarding the detention of Austin Tice, we asked the State Department and the intelligence community and the interagency Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell to jointly continue investigations and to pursue all information. We have every reason to believe that that is being done by our agencies.

We encouraged, in our resolution, the State Department and the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs to engage directly with Syrian officials to facilitate Austin's safe release. In our resolution, we encourage the State Department to work with foreign governments known to have diplomatic influence with the Government of Syria, and we request the State Department and the intelligence community to continue to work with and to inform Congress and Austin Tice's family regarding his safe release and his condition at this time.

We, I think, in bringing this very young man to the attention of the American people, we have shown our concern and have shown that we remain hopeful.

In this case, no word is good word; it is word, that he is alive, we believe. The best word would be word to the parents, Debra and Marc Tice, that he is on his way home safe and sound.

Let me pledge on behalf of the many Members of the House and Senate who have written the President, let me assure these parents, Marc and Debra Tice: This Special Order devoted to your son, Austin Tice, is not the end of the work we will continue to do until we bring your son, Austin Tice, home. We appreciate the devotion you have shown as parents, and we mean to honor that devotion by continuing to do all we can in the Congress to make sure that Austin Tice is returned to you safe and sound.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlady from the District of Columbia, the Honorable ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, for leading this special order today on the life of Austin Tice.

In November 2016, I had the privilege of meeting for the first time, Austin Tice's mother, Debra. It was at the Newseum, where Reporters Without Borders and the Newseum were launching a campaign that ran a banner on the Newseum's facade featuring Austin.

The banner was showing on the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes

Against Journalists. The banner had a simple message next to a photo of Austin's face, "Held captive for being a journalist since August 2012."

Austin Tice is the only American journalist being held captive in Syria. The banner at the Newseum is supposed to continue to run until he is safely returned home to his family.

Today, November 12, 2019, Austin remains in captivity. I had the privilege of meeting his parents Marc and Debra Tice in September. They brought me up-to-date on Austin's captivity, and the many efforts to press for his freedom.

Austin Tice is a graduate of the Georgetown School of Foreign Service and many of Georgetown's students and faculty have taken up his cause. He served as a Marine officer and returned home to study at the Georgetown School of Law. But when he saw the carnage inside Syria, he felt a calling to report on the Syrian human crisis. Working as a freelance journalist and photographer for McClatchey newspapers, his images, interviews and reports soon appeared in the Washington Post, McClatchey, Agence France-Presse and other news media.

He intended to leave Syria after his 31st birthday, on August 11, 2012, after he filed his last story. On August 14th, he left for Lebanon by car from Damascus. Shortly after, we know that he was stopped and detained at a checkpoint, most likely in rebel control. Five weeks later, a video was posted on a pro-government website by people who appeared to be Islamist militants. There has been no contact with his captors.

Marc and Debra continue their efforts to find and release their son. The State Department believes that he is still alive. Other countries have offered their services as intermediaries. And national and international campaigns have been mounted to support him, his family, and the many other journalists from many nations who are in captivity or held hostage around the world.

Congress has sent several letters, introduced bills, and like today, taken to the floor of the House of Representatives to raise his case and declare our sympathy and solidarity with his family, friends and colleagues.

We will not stop until Austin is free and reunited with his family.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 7 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, November 13, 2019, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.