

hurdles that you need to overcome in order to be able to enact legislation.

I have learned that the language contained in H.R. 1365, while technical in nature, is incredibly significant with respect to what it means for the Members of this House to consider.

In our process, Mr. Speaker, legislation that has certain language triggers certain events. H.R. 1365 is intended to allow for money that has been set aside to actually be paid out to the Chamorros, who suffered under the brutality of Imperial Japan during World War II.

This was a process that was initiated over many decades and has finally come to a place where we now just await the ability to cut the checks. But it is in the ability to cut those checks that language actually gets very, very complicated, and it causes certain things to be reconsidered.

The language in H.R. 1365 would, in effect, create what we know as a scoring here in this Congress, meaning that there may be an expenditure that the body would need to consider. The actual funding source of H.R. 1365 was a set-aside of moneys that was already due to Guam and has been set aside over the past several years, with the money accumulating and being ready to be paid out to these war survivors.

The reason why the United States is assuming this obligation, Mr. Speaker, is because, at the end of World War II, the United States absolved Japan of their obligations in order to be able to move the entire world forward after the conclusion of the war. In so doing, they also just so happened to absolve them of their obligation to make whole the war crimes that were endured by the Chamorro people who suffered because they were inhabiting the United States territory of Guam at the time. The people suffered beheadings, forced marches, rapes, and the loss of their infants in their arms.

It has taken us now going on 76 years to finally come to this point. I say that this is historic, Mr. Speaker, because it, in a large respect, represents almost an original sin, in terms of the inability for us to reconcile our territorial relationships in a manner that really makes for plain and simple justice.

I am deeply moved, Mr. Speaker, to be able to handle these proceedings today and to be able to see H.R. 1365 come before this House once more because, as we all know, in this current political environment, almost any hurdle that legislation faces is a hurdle too much.

As we have gone through this process and have gotten to this point, there were many times when I was deeply concerned about whether or not something technical was going to actually be dead on arrival. But by the grace of God, Mr. Speaker, the small territory of Guam has been able to garner the unanimous support of this House, the unanimous support of the Senate. We are here again today addressing a matter that really triggers certain con-

cerns but has gotten us to a point where we are able to see that there are some things that are bigger than the nuances of language, the semantics of procedure.

So it is with a deep sense of pride that I stand here, as a Member of this House, nonvoting Delegate that I am, because I can stand here in witness to the fact that, at some point in time, justice really does find its way in the United States of America.

I urge my colleagues to please support this measure. We are this close; we are just a hairline away. And in passing this House, this measure will then go before the President for signature, and we can finally make whole a generation that suffered because they were loyal to America.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This is a problem that has been vexing representatives from our territory of Guam for many years now. I appreciate the gentleman from Guam, who has adequately explained what he is attempting to do and what this bill actually does. I congratulate him on this bill, which is finally going to recognize and compensate a very small group but a significant group of people who literally sacrificed for this country.

This is the right thing to do. This House has done this before. This passed out of our committee on a voice vote. It has passed on the floor on a voice vote. It then went to the Senate, where the Senate felt compelled to make changes, as is their wont to do. And in lightning speed, the Senate, in only 8 months, was able to strike the 22 lines and return this bill to us.

So, lest we vex them even further and ask them to do something else, I would urge everyone in here to give this another "yes" vote and send this on to the President's desk immediately from this floor.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Guam (Mr. SAN NICOLAS) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 1365.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE OF NICARAGUA IN THEIR PEACEFUL EFFORTS TO PROMOTE DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 754) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that

the United States should continue to support the people of Nicaragua in their peaceful efforts to promote democracy and human rights, and use the tools under United States law to increase political and financial pressure on the government of Daniel Ortega, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 754

Whereas the government of Daniel Ortega has concentrated power and brought about the progressive deterioration of democratic conditions in Nicaragua;

Whereas recent elections in Nicaragua, including the 2016 Presidential elections, have been marred by irregularities and characterized by significant restrictions on the participation of opposition parties and the absence of credible international and local electoral observers;

Whereas Nicaraguan security forces, parapolice, and other actors working under the direction of the Ortega regime committed gross violations of human rights and acts of repression, resulting in more than 325 deaths, over 2,000 injuries, and at least 800 arbitrary detentions during the peaceful protests that took place in 2018, according to the Organization of American States;

Whereas a report by the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts, appointed by the Organization of American States Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, determined that the Ortega regime used deliberate, lethal force against protesters and committed acts of torture that meet the international legal standard of crimes against humanity;

Whereas an estimated 62,000 Nicaraguans fled the country between April 2018 and April 2019, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

Whereas the Ortega government reneged on its commitment in 2019 to release all political prisoners by releasing just 392 people, of which 286 were released to house arrest with charges still pending, while the Blue and White National Unity coalition alleges that there remain at least 56 political prisoners as of February 15, 2020;

Whereas a United States citizen and Navy veteran, 57-year-old Eddy Montes, was shot and killed while in the custody of the Nicaraguan police at La Modelo Prison on May 16, 2019;

Whereas the government of Daniel Ortega has severely restricted freedom of the press by closing five local television stations, attacking independent radio stations, arbitrarily detaining journalists, and illegally restricting print supplies from entering the country;

Whereas the Ortega regime has violated the economic and political rights protections of indigenous communities, rural campesinos, land rights defenders, and those living in the Caribbean Autonomous Regions of Nicaragua;

Whereas, on November 27, 2018, Executive Order 13851 was issued, which blocks the property of certain persons contributing to the situation in Nicaragua, and its application was expanded on September 4, 2019;

Whereas the Departments of State and the Treasury have imposed targeted sanctions on over 20 Nicaraguan individuals and entities, including First Lady and Vice President Rosario Murillo and Daniel Ortega's son, Laureano Ortega, as well as Nicaragua's Banco Corporativo (Bancorp);

Whereas the bipartisan Nicaraguan Investment Conditionality Act (NICA Act), was

signed into law on December 20, 2018, allowing the Department of the Treasury to sanction non-United States persons implicated in egregious human rights abuses and corruption in Nicaragua;

Whereas, in June 2019, Canada imposed sanctions on 12 members of the Nicaraguan Government engaged in gross and systemic human rights violations;

Whereas the Ortega government has not complied with efforts of the commission appointed by the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States seeking a peaceful resolution to the social and political crisis;

Whereas, on September 15, 2019, the Ortega government denied entry into the country to an official Organization of American States delegation mission; and

Whereas, beginning on November 14, 2019, Nicaraguan police conducted attacks on churches throughout the country, cut water to hunger strikers barricaded inside a church in Masaya, and arrested 13 people attempting to bring them water: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) calls on the Nicaraguan Government to immediately release all political prisoners without conditions and cease all acts of violence, repression, and intimidation against dissenting voices in Nicaragua;

(2) condemns the Nicaraguan Government's continued failure to comply with agreements made with the Organization of American States;

(3) urges the Ortega government to respect Nicaraguans' constitutional rights and implement electoral reforms including free, fair, multiparty elections open to international observers, in compliance with the agreement reached through negotiations with the Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy and the Blue and White National Unity (UNAB) in March 2019;

(4) expresses full support for the people of Nicaragua, Nicaraguan independent media, and Nicaraguan civil society organizations that are working for a peaceful return to democratic order in Nicaragua;

(5) recognizes and supports efforts of the United States Government to promote democracy in Nicaragua and hold corrupt actors and human rights abusers in the Nicaraguan Government accountable for their actions;

(6) urges the United States Government to continue to apply pressure on the Ortega government and consider additional sanctions against those Nicaraguan officials who have violated the human rights of their citizens or committed acts of significant corruption; and

(7) urges the international community to hold the Ortega government accountable for human rights abuses, including attacks on religious freedom, and restrict its access to foreign financing unless or until it allows for free, fair, and prompt elections monitored by credible international and local electoral observers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIRES) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 754.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking Chairman ENGEL and Ranking Member MCCAUL for their continued focus on the human rights situation in Nicaragua.

I would also like to thank my colleague, Ranking Member FRANCIS ROONEY from Florida, for working with me to introduce this resolution.

This resolution highlights the severe human rights abuses that have taken place in Nicaragua and conveys bipartisan support for the Nicaraguan people as they seek to reclaim their fundamental rights.

In 2018, repression by Nicaraguan security forces resulted in over 325 deaths. According to international human rights groups, Nicaraguan security forces used a deliberate strategy of shooting to kill, committing abuses that rose to the level of crimes against humanity.

While President Ortega has since released hundreds of political prisoners, seemingly in an effort to reduce international pressure, there remain at least 56 political prisoners in Nicaragua. Moreover, many of those who were released are still routinely harassed by the authorities. Political prisoners in Nicaragua are subjected to sexual abuse, suffocation with plastic bags, and electric shocks.

Over 80,000 Nicaraguans have fled the country since April 2018, many of them to escape persecution. I urge the administration not to turn its back to Nicaraguans who come to the United States fleeing violence and persecution.

This resolution makes clear that the United States Congress stands with the Nicaraguan people, who are demanding accountability in the face of such brutal repression. It calls for tangible steps from the Nicaraguan Government, including immediate release of all political prisoners and the implementation of electoral reforms that Nicaraguan civil society organizations have long called for.

I hope that my colleagues will join me in sending this strong bipartisan message in support of the Nicaraguan people.

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

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

I rise today in support of H. Res. 754, expressing the support of the people of Nicaragua in their peaceful effort to promote democracy and human rights, authored by the chairman of the Western Hemisphere, Civilian Security, and Trade Subcommittee, Mr. SIRES.

Daniel Ortega and his socialist Sandinista government continue to hold onto power through corruption, intimidation, and violence against the people of Nicaragua.

Since his return to power in 2007, Ortega, an ally of Venezuelan dictator Nicolas Maduro and the Castro regime in Cuba, has dismantled Nicaragua's democratic institutions and enriched himself and his family at the expense of the people of one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere.

In 2018, Nicaraguan security forces directed by Ortega violently suppressed peaceful protests that led to at least 325 deaths, 2,000 injuries, and the arbitrary detention of more than 800 Nicaraguans.

Since then, Ortega has resisted calls by the international community to restore respect for human rights in the country and pass reforms to allow for free and fair elections.

In response, the United States imposed individual sanctions on Nicaragua's First Lady and two of Ortega's sons. The Treasury Department also sanctioned one of Nicaragua's main banks and, most recently, Nicaragua's National Police for continuing to facilitate corruption and carry out human rights violations on behalf of the Ortega regime.

This resolution condemns the actions of the Ortega regime and expresses full support for the freedom-loving people of Nicaragua in their struggle for democracy and freedom from Ortega's tyranny.

This resolution also recognizes the administration's effort to promote democracy in Nicaragua and the actions it has taken to hold corrupt officials and human rights abusers accountable.

The United States remains committed to democracy and respect for human rights in the Western Hemisphere, and this resolution urges the international community in joining us in these efforts.

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

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

Consideration of this resolution comes at an important moment for Nicaragua. As the 2021 elections approach, it will be key for the international community to speak with one voice in demanding that specific conditions be met in order for those elections to be deemed credible.

As a first step, President Ortega must take immediate action to allow for the creation of a newly comprised and independent electoral council, the development of a reliable voter registry, and the granting of full access to international election observers for the 2021 elections.

Absent immediate and tangible steps to implement these electoral reforms, the United States should increase its pressure on Ortega and his inner circle.

I hope our allies in Europe will also step up their efforts and work with the United States toward a coordinated sanctions strategy.

I thank my colleagues for sending this bipartisan message that we will

continue to stand with the Nicaraguan people in their efforts to restore democracy in their country.

Mr. Speaker, I hope all Members will join me in supporting the passage of this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1630

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIREs) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 754, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ENCOURAGING REUNIONS OF DIVIDED KOREAN-AMERICAN FAMILIES

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 410) encouraging reunions of divided Korean-American families, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 410

Whereas the Korean Peninsula, with the Republic of Korea (in this resolution referred to as "South Korea") in the South and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (in this resolution referred to as "North Korea") in the North, remains divided following the signing of the Korean War Armistice Agreement on July 27, 1953;

Whereas the division of the Korean Peninsula separated more than 10,000,000 Korean family members, including some who are now citizens of the United States;

Whereas there have been 21 rounds of family reunions between South Koreans and North Koreans along the border since 2000;

Whereas Congress signaled its support for family reunions between United States citizens and their relatives in North Korea in section 1265 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law 110-181), signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 28, 2008;

Whereas most of the population of divided family members in the United States, initially estimated at 100,000 in 2001, has significantly dwindled as many of the individuals have passed away;

Whereas the summit between North Korea and South Korea on April 27, 2018, has prioritized family reunions;

Whereas the United States and North Korea have engaged in talks during 2 historic summits in June 2018 in Singapore and February 2019 in Hanoi; and

Whereas many Korean Americans are waiting for a chance to meet their relatives in North Korea for the first time in more than 60 years: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) calls on the United States and North Korea to begin the process of reuniting Korean-American divided family members with their immediate relatives through ways such as—

(A) identifying divided families in the United States and North Korea who are will-

ing and able to participate in a pilot program for family reunions;

(B) finding matches for members of such families through organizations such as the Red Cross; and

(C) working with the Government of South Korea to include American citizens in inter-Korean video reunions;

(2) reconfirms the institution of family as inalienable and, accordingly, urges the restoration of contact between divided families physically, literarily, or virtually; and

(3) calls on the United States and North Korea to pursue reunions as a humanitarian priority of immediate concern.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIREs) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 410.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Representative BASS for sponsoring this resolution, which draws attention to a pressing humanitarian issue affecting the Korean-American community.

This June will mark 70 years since the beginning of the Korean war, which separated 10 million Koreans from their immediate family members. Since 1985, family reunions carried out between the North and the South briefly reunited more than 20,000 family members, but there are still thousands more who have brothers, sisters, or parents who have been separated for decades.

It must be a humanitarian priority for the United States to facilitate reunions for these separated families. Considering the many years that have passed, many of these families are older, and if we don't act soon, they may never see their loved ones again.

The measure before us underscores the long history of U.S. support for family reunification between Korean Americans and their relatives still in North Korea. It outlines different ways that North Korea and the United States can respectively take action, including a pilot program for family reunions, a family registry supported by the Red Cross and other organizations, and the use of technology to allow reunions for those who might not be physically able to travel for in-person reunions.

This is a good, commonsense resolution reiterating our country's commitment to reuniting families split by the Korean war. I support it, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Representative BASS' res-

olution, and I want to congratulate her for doing this.

This resolution reaffirms the House's commitment to support our Korean-American families seeking to reunite with relatives who are trapped in North Korea. This resolution rightly observes that family reunification is a humanitarian priority.

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

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS), the author of this important resolution and the chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to strongly support H. Res. 410. The purpose of this resolution is to encourage reunions of divided Korean-American families.

Last year, I had the opportunity to meet Kyung Joo Lee, a 90-year-old Korean-American man from Virginia. Mr. Lee has not seen his three older brothers and sisters since he fled North Korea more than 70 years ago, but he prays for them daily. He has no idea if they are even still alive. Tears streamed down his face during that meeting as he held my hands and urged me to do what I can to help Korean families to be reunited.

This resolution originated at a town-hall meeting where a group of constituents called this issue to my attention. As I learned more about these aging Korean Americans who just want to be able to see their siblings and parents, I knew that we had to do all that we could do to raise this issue.

The division of the Korean Peninsula into South Korea and North Korea separated thousands of Koreans from family members. Many Korean Americans have not seen or communicated with family members in more than 60 years. Their children have grown up here in America without knowing what their cousins, aunts, or uncles even look like.

Over the years, South Korea and North Korea have arranged for selected groups to visit each other, but these reunions have been dependent on the political situation between the countries. Since 2000, there have been at least 20 rounds of family reunions, but none have included Korean Americans.

Meanwhile, the situation is now growing more urgent as many who have been separated are getting older. Most are in their late eighties or nineties. That is why I introduced this resolution that calls on the United States and North Korea to begin the process of reuniting Korean-American divided family members with their immediate relatives.

Today, I am proud to stand with my colleagues in getting one step closer to reunifying Mr. Lee and so many others with their families.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to support this resolution that calls on the