

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

SALUTING THE SERVICE OF
MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM
STREETER, U.S. ARMY, RETIRED

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker. I am honored to present Major General William Streeter, U.S. Army, Retired, with a Congressional Veteran Commendation. His lifetime of dedication to his beloved Army and Nation speaks to his patriotism, moral character, and devotion to others.

His superb service to the Army and his nation exemplifies what it means to commit his life to his country. Former commander of Fort Cavazos' legendary 1st Cavalry Division—one of the most decorated combat divisions in the U.S. Army—MG Streeter ensured First Team maintained its storied reputation as one of the world's elite fighting forces. He was honored with numerous high-ranking awards like the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, and two Bronze Stars, along with the admiration of his peers and those he led during his decades in the service.

Since his retirement from active duty in 1993, MG Streeter has continued his dedication to the betterment of our country and community through service, active involvement, and support of civic organizations. He devotes his energies toward several charities including the Kiwanis Club, Veterans and Homeowners' Associations, and his local church, never forgetting the importance of living a full life for others.

MG Streeter's life tells the story of a man unafraid to contribute both his time and energies to the defense of our nation as well as a multitude of organizations that rely on volunteerism and social engagement to make good communities great. He is a most deserving recipient of a Congressional Veterans Commendation.

TRILLIAN HOLT

HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Trillian Holt for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Trillian has achieved great things, all while overcoming adversity and challenges along the way. Students like Trillian, who strive to make the most of their education, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Trillian's hard work, determination, and perseverance at Arvada K-8 School and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Trillian Holt on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF THE
TRENTON BRANCH OF GIRL
FRIENDS INCORPORATED

HON. BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Trenton Branch of Girl Friends Incorporated on their 60th Year of serving the Capital City.

Girl Friends Incorporated is one of the oldest social organizations of African American women in the United States.

For nearly 100 years, the Girl Friends have exemplified Dignity, Service, Graciousness and Conviviality, performing civic services in 48 locations throughout the country.

Through their charitable giving, Girl Friends Inc. has supported the United Negro College Fund, the Children's Defense Fund, the Flint Water Crisis, and student scholarships.

I thank Girl Friends for serving the people of the Greater Trenton area with dignity and selflessness for over 60 years.

CONCERNS ABOUT H.R. 5378, THE
LOWER COSTS, MORE TRANSPARENCY ACT

HON. VAL T. HOYLE

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Mr. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I voted in favor of H.R. 5378, the Lower Costs, More Transparency Act, which passed the House with a bipartisan vote of 320-71.

I strongly support several provisions in H.R. 5378, which would take important steps to create a more transparent and affordable healthcare system. For example, this legislation requires hospitals to make public all their standard charges for items and services, and it requires insurers to make public their negotiated in-network provider rates for all items and services.

H.R. 5378 also requires pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) to provide detailed information on prescription drug costs and increases access to affordable generic drugs. The legislation also extends funding for critical public health programs, including community health centers and the National Health Service Corps (NHSC).

However, H.R. 5378 isn't perfect. It includes site-neutral provisions that raise concerns about potential harm to essential hospitals and hospital outpatient departments (HOPDs), particularly in rural and underserved areas like those in Oregon's Fourth Congressional Dis-

trict. Safety-net hospitals already face increased financial pressure due to inflation and the COVID-19 pandemic, and divesting funding or cutting payments at this time could negatively impact these entities and the crucial services they provide.

There were also procedural issues with this bill. By fast-tracking this legislation without regular order, including not allowing for amendments to improve the bill, H.R. 5378 didn't receive the congressional debate nor input that it should have. These aspects of the legislative process are not mere procedural formalities but are essential components of responsible governance and good-faith policymaking.

Transparency, a central theme of this legislation, should extend beyond policy goals to the legislative process itself. As Congress continues efforts to improve our healthcare system, I urge my colleagues in the Senate and in congressional leadership to improve this legislation to ensure there are no unintended consequences, including ensuring the legislation does not impede access to healthcare where it is needed most.

DESIGNATE NIGERIA A COUNTRY
OF PARTICULAR CONCERN
UNDER THE IRFA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following letter, drafted by respected experts—including former members of Congress—in the field of religious freedom, and sent to members on Capitol Hill today, underscoring the dire state of religious freedom in Nigeria, and calling for that country to be designated a Country of Particular Concern under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. Their stark appraisal of the situation, and the immediate threat to the lives of thousands of Nigerians, merits immediate action by the Biden Administration.

DECEMBER 12, 2023.

DEAR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS: As religious freedom advocates and proponents, and leaders of grassroots organizations with millions of American members, we appeal to you to urgently respond to the Department of State's failure to adequately address egregious, systematic, and ongoing religious persecution in Nigeria, as required by the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) of 1998.

We specifically urge Nigeria's designation as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) under the IRFA and the appointment of a special envoy for Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region. Additionally, we urge you to support and cosponsor the bi-partisan legislation authored by Rep. Chris Smith and Rep. Henry Cuellar House Resolution 82, which calls for the State Department to carry out these two steps.

A staggering 90 percent of all the Christians killed for their faith worldwide last

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

year were killed in Nigeria, according to Open Doors, an increase from the 80 percent it reported in 2021. Over 5,000 Nigerian Christians are reported to have been killed for their faith in 2022.

Most of this slaughter is now carried out by militants within the Fulani Muslim herder population, who have been allowed to act largely with impunity. While some Muslims have also been killed by the same forces, the Observatory for Religious Freedom in Africa found that, from October 2019 to September 2022, Christians in Nigeria were 7.6 times more likely to be killed and 6 times more likely to be abducted than Muslims by terrorist and militia groups, when taking into account their population's proportions in Nigeria's states.

Catholic priests, evangelical pastors, and Methodist bishops have been special targets of kidnapping by Fulani and unidentified gunmen, typically shouting "Allahu Akbar." The pontifical organization, Aid to the Church in Need, reports that, since early 2022 alone, 100 Nigerian Catholic priests have been kidnapped and not yet freed, 20 of whom were murdered, with many of these attacks occurring on church grounds. Nigerian media also reports the kidnapping of two imams from their mosques in 2022. Since 2009, some 17,000 churches have been burned and attacked, while many of them—such as St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Ondo State that was attacked on Pentecost Sunday last year—were filled with worshippers. We are not aware of a single case that has been prosecuted.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom reports that in "northcentral Nigeria, ethnonationalists fighting to promote Fulani interests target Christian civilians based on ethnoreligious identity." In recommending CPC designation, it concludes that the Nigerian Government has "routinely failed to investigate these attacks and prosecute those responsible, demonstrating a problematic level of apathy on the part of state officials."

In addition, terror groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province have attacked and killed thousands of Christians and Muslims who reject their dictates. Unknown numbers of Christian girls and women have been kidnapped into sexual slavery. Boko Haram kidnapped over 200 schoolgirls in 2014 in Chibok, Borno State, half of whom remain captive and are pressured to convert to Islam, while Leah Sharibu remains enslaved following a terrorist raid of her school in Dapchi, Yobe State, in 2018.

Lawlessness has resulted in millions of internally displaced Nigerians and hundreds of thousands of refugees. Just this year, in Nigeria's north central Benue State, whose population is overwhelmingly Christian, nearly two million farming families were displaced by Fulani militants. Some of them were then hunted down in their places of refuge and brutally hacked to death. Catholic Bishop Wilfred Anagbe of Benue's Makurdi diocese recently shared video documentation of the aftermath of one such attack with numerous Members of Congress.

Authorities also engage directly in religious persecution by enforcing Islamic blasphemy laws that have resulted in recent death sentences for Sufi musician Yahaya Sharif-Aminu and two Muslim clerics, and "religious insult" laws that led to a 24-year sentence for Nigeria's Humanist Association head, Mubarak Bala. Moreover, these laws have been accompanied by a routine grant of impunity for extrajudicial attacks against their perceived violators. Last year, there was the unprosecuted mob killing of student Deborah Emmanuel Yakubu after she was accused of blasphemy and the unprosecuted

serious death threats against the Sultan of Sokoto, Sokoto's Catholic bishop, and Rhoda Jatau, a Christian woman, all three of whom were targeted for expressing disapproval of Yakubu's murder.

IRFA requires frank assessments in the face of such grave religious freedom violations. The Secretary of State should acknowledge that Nigeria has "engaged in or tolerated" severe religious freedom violations, the statutory criteria warranting CPC designation. This is particularly important since the United States is a major partner of Nigeria, having given it over \$1 billion in foreign aid in 2022, alone.

As Africa's most populous country and its largest economy, Nigeria wields significant influence in Sub-Saharan Africa. By allowing religious persecution to proliferate within its borders, Nigeria is compounding already heightened regional insecurity. Both American interests and the International Religious Freedom Act require a response. We view the passage of the bi-partisan House Resolution 82 as an essential first step.

Sincerely,

David Curry President and CEO, Global Christian Relief; Governor Sam Brownback, Former Ambassador for International Religious Freedom Co-Chair, International Religious Freedom Summit; Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett, President, Lantos Foundation for Human Rights & Justice Co-Chair, International Religious Freedom Summit;

Nina Shea, Senior Fellow and Director, Center for Religious Freedom, Hudson Institute; Kristen Waggoner, President and CEO, Alliance Defending Freedom; Tony Perkins, Chairman, Family Research Council; Leonard Leo, Former Chair, US Commission on International Religious Freedom.

F. Brent Leatherwood, President, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission Southern Baptist Convention; Congressman Frank Wolf, Former Member of Congress 1981–2015, Retired; George Weigel, Distinguished Senior Fellow, Ethics and Public Policy Center; Mary Ann Glendon, Former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See, Learned Hand Professor of Law, emerita Harvard University; Eric Patterson, President, Religious Freedom Institute; Jane Adolphe, Founder & Executive Director, International Catholic Jurists Forum; Jeff King, President, International Christian Concern (ICC).

The Rt. Rev. Julian Dobbs, Diocesan Bishop The Anglican Diocese of the Living Word Anglican Church in North America; Timothy R. Head, Executive Director, Faith and Freedom Coalition; Dr. Randel Everett, President, 21Wilberforce; Stephen S. Enada, Executive President, International Committee on Nigeria; Faith McDonnell, Director, Katartismos Global; John Stonestreet, President, Colson Center for Christian Worldview.

Kelly Monroe Kullberg, Director, American Association of Evangelicals (AAE); Robert Nicholson, President and Founder Philos Project; Amanda Bowman, Chair, The Catholic Herald Institute; Gregory H. Stanton, Founding President, Genocide Watch; Kathryn Jean Lopez, Senior Fellow, National Review Institute; Alejandro Chafuén, Founder, International Freedom Educational Foundation; Mark Tooley, President, Institute on Religion and Democracy; Dede Laugesen, Executive Director, Save the Persecuted Christians; Richard Ghazal, In Defense of Christians.

CELEBRATING THE RETIREMENT OF TEMPLE, TX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESIDENT AND CEO ROD HENRY

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I'm honored to celebrate Temple, TX Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Rod Henry as he embarks on his richly deserved retirement after decades of devoted public service. He leaves behind a rich legacy of accomplishment and will remain an example of excellence for all who follow.

With integrity, honesty, and transparency, Rod has served 10 years as the President and CEO of the Temple Chamber of Commerce. Under his leadership, the Chamber has enhanced the success of members, provided opportunities for business owners, leaders, and their employees to learn and grow, and has served as a thoughtful and effective voice for the business community.

With his infectious "can do" spirit, Rod lives his life in service to others. Over his 46-year career, he has devoted his talents and energies to numerous community and professional organizations that make the world a better place and make cities like Temple great places to call home.

While Rod isn't tired of the privilege of public service, he knows that everything has its season. But stepping away from the Chamber won't give him much idle time as looks forward to watching Temple's continued growth and spending time with his beloved wife Benita and their family.

Retirement marks not the end of a career, but the beginning of a great adventure. As Rod Henry embarks on this new chapter in life, I thank him for his exceptional work, remain grateful for our friendship, and wish him the very best.

MONSERRAT DIAZ GARCIA

HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Monserrat Diaz Garcia for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Monserrat has achieved great things, all while overcoming adversity and challenges along the way. Students like Monserrat, who strive to make the most of their education, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Monserrat's hard work, determination, and perseverance at Jefferson Jr./Sr. High School and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Monserrat Diaz Garcia on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.