

Mr. Speaker, nearly a decade later, the families of those victims who died in these bombings still have not been compensated. In contrast, after the catastrophic events of September 11, Congress acted relatively quickly to set up the September 11 Victim Compensation Fund, which paid out nearly \$6 billion to 2,880 families of those injured on that catastrophic day. We have shown compassion toward those affected by terrorism, and we have shown that we can act with purpose and haste. It is now time to finally act to compensate the families of those who died in East Africa.

In the case of the Kenya bombings, a 2001 bipartisan review panel found no negligence per se, but did find that there was an "institutional failure . . . to recognize threats posed by transnational terrorism and vehicle bombs worldwide." The intelligence community had been monitoring several Al Qaeda associates in Nairobi for 2 years. That information was not shared with the diplomats bidding on assignments in Nairobi. Prior to the attack, then-Ambassador Prudence Bushnell warned the State Department about the vulnerability of the embassy and requested more security. Instead of properly addressing Bushnell's concerns, State replied: "go back to Nairobi, don't send any more cables about this or we are going to place a statement in your personnel file."

After this cavalier treatment of embassy officials in Africa, many of the relatives of those killed were treated dismissively by the State Department upon returning to the United States. Instead of compassion they found bureaucracy, and instead of recompense they found only red tape. Now, 9 years later, those families are still awaiting sufficient compensation. While no amount of money can bring back loved ones or heal the wounds this act of terrorism caused, we must make an effort to ensure that the families receive some degree of comfort.

This legislation would amend the Foreign Service Act to provide a death benefit to all U.S. Government employees abroad in U.S. diplomatic facilities who are killed in an act of international terrorism. It would retroactively require the Secretary of State to compensate those killed since 1998, including the Nairobi families, at ten times the salary of the highest paid employee in the embassy.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation recognizes one of the most tragic and unfortunate incidents in the history of the Department of State. We have waited too long to bring recognition and compensation to the families of those who perished in these tragic bombings. I am pleased to have worked with these brave families to bring this legislation, with a full compensation package, before the Committee today.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. PAYNE. 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 New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2828, as amended.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered. The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

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RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Natural Resources:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 2, 2007.

HON. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI: This letter serves as my intent to resign from the House Natural Resources Committee, effective today. I appreciated the opportunity to serve on this important committee and its jurisdictional prerogatives that affect the resources on Federal lands across our nation.

Sincerely,
KEVIN MCCARTHY,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Agriculture:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 2, 2007.

HON. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI: This letter serves as my intent to resign from the House Agriculture Committee, effective today. I appreciated the opportunity to serve on this important committee and its jurisdictional prerogatives that affect the farmers, ranchers, and consumers of our nation.

Sincerely,
KEVIN MCCARTHY,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

ETHIOPIA DEMOCRACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2007

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2003) to encourage and facilitate the consolidation of peace and security, respect for human rights, democracy, and economic freedom in Ethiopia, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2003

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States to—
(1) support the advancement of human rights, democracy, independence of the judiciary, freedom of the press, peacekeeping capacity building, and economic development in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia;

(2) seek the unconditional release of all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Ethiopia;

(3) foster stability, democracy, and economic development in the region;

(4) support humanitarian assistance efforts, especially in the Ogaden region;

(5) collaborate with Ethiopia in the Global War on Terror; and

(6) strengthen United States-Ethiopian relations based on the policy objectives specified in paragraphs (1) through (5).

SEC. 3. SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN ETHIOPIA.

The Secretary of State shall—

(1) provide financial support to local and national human rights groups and other relevant civil society organizations to help strengthen human rights monitoring and regular reporting on human rights conditions in Ethiopia;

(2) provide legal support, as needed, for political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Ethiopia and assist local, national, and international groups that are active in monitoring the status of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Ethiopia;

(3) seek to promote and bolster the independence of the Ethiopian judiciary through—

(A) facilitation of joint discussions between court personnel, officials from the Ethiopian Ministry of Justice, relevant members of the legislature, and civil society representatives on international human rights standards; and

(B) encouraging exchanges between Ethiopian and United States jurists, law schools, law professors, and law students, especially in legal fields such as constitutional law, role of the judiciary, due process, political and voting rights, criminal law and procedure, and discrimination;

(4) establish a program, in consultation with Ethiopian civil society, to provide for a judicial monitoring process, consisting of indigenous organizations, international organizations, or both, to monitor judicial proceedings throughout Ethiopia, with special focus on unwarranted government intervention on matters that are strictly judicial in nature, and to report on actions needed to strengthen an independent judiciary;

(5) establish a program, in consultation with Ethiopian civil society, and provide support to other programs, to strengthen independent media in Ethiopia, including training, and technical support;

(6) expand the Voice of America's Ethiopia program;

(7) support efforts of the international community to gain full and unfettered access to the Ogaden region for—

(A) humanitarian assistance organizations; and

(B) independent human rights experts; and

(8) work with appropriate departments and agencies of the Government of the United States and appropriate officials of foreign governments—

(A) to identify members of the Mengistu Haile Mariam regime and officials of the current Government of Ethiopia who were engaged in gross human rights violations, including those individuals who may be residing in the United States; and