

By returning to the same conservative principles on which Reagan relied, I am optimistic that we can restore the honor, individual liberties, and economic prosperity that once defined our great Nation.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 514, EXTENDING COUNTER-TERRORISM AUTHORITIES

Mr. DREIER (during the Special Order of Mr. GALLEGLY), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 112-8) on the resolution (H. Res. 79) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 514) to extend expiring provisions of the USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005 and Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 relating to access to business records, individual terrorists as agents of foreign powers, and roving wiretaps until December 8, 2011, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

D.C. VOTING RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DESJARLAIS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to claim a half hour this afternoon to speak about the citizens of the Nation's Capital, who are full and equal citizens of the United States of America; that Nation's Capital that was born with the Nation itself, was born with the Constitution. Among the Nation's oldest citizens are the citizens of this very city where the Congress does its work.

□ 1600

Now, there is a complicated relationship between the Federal Government and the Nation's capital, but one thing has never been complicated: The Founders and every American ever since have understood that the citizens of the Nation's capital are entitled to the same constitutional rights and democratic rights as every other American citizen.

I have come to the floor because I think many Members who are incumbents may have forgotten, and the largest class of new Members may be surprised by what they may be about to experience on this floor with respect to a local jurisdiction that they know nothing of and that they have nothing to do with.

The new Members have come with a special distaste for Federal intervention, even into Federal affairs, and I respect that. I think that they, perhaps, would be among the first Members to recognize that the powerful Federal Government should never snatch local control from a local jurisdiction. Indeed, you may be about to experience

something that is so much of a surprise that it will be a kind of an out-of-body experience when you're asked to actually consider a budget that this Congress had nothing do with, a budget for which every living cent was raised by the people I represent. You may be asked to overturn local laws simply because they are different from the laws you would have passed in your own local jurisdictions and where there is no Federal imprimatur on these local laws at all.

Now, gradually, Congress has come to understand that the United States loses its own credibility as the leader of democracy around the world when it does not treat the citizens of a nation's capital as full and equal citizens. Congressional jurisdiction over the District of Columbia appears in the Constitution; but in 1973, Congress recognized that it was wrong—wrong—to rule the local jurisdiction from the Congress, so it delegated what we call home rule, or the right to self-government, to the District of Columbia. That marked a historic realization that local residents must govern themselves locally, that it was wrong that the Nation's capital was the only place—this place where Congress meets—with no local democracy, where hundreds of thousands of its citizens had no say on their own local affairs.

I know it's hard to believe that this could have ever occurred anywhere in the United States. Local control is among the very first principles of the founding of our country; but only in 1973 did your Nation's capital get an elected government, an elected Mayor, and an elected city council. A lot of that had to do with, to be fair, southern Democrats. Although the District for 150 years was a majority white district, the old-time southern Democrats saw the large African American population here as a reason to keep the District from having any local self-government. Republicans weren't much a part of that, and I hope they won't be much a part of it today.

The promise to delegate the same kind of local control to the residents of the Nation's capital, as we assume, even without thinking, is the case for every other local jurisdiction, has been mostly kept. Mayor Vincent Gray runs the city. The City Council passes the laws—except when Congress decides or, rather, when some Members of Congress decide to break the promise of democracy and intervene into the affairs of a local jurisdiction for one reason and one reason only: that they simply disagree with the decisions the local jurisdiction has made. Imagine if in your own districts, from this Congress, I disagreed with some of your decisions, and I could then overturn those decisions.

My colleagues, I am asking you not to do to us what you would not have done to you. We ask only that you apply the same standard of democracy here in the Nation's capital that you insist on in your own districts. You

cannot be for one standard of democracy for the Egyptian people, who are now rising up to demand democracy, without being for the same standard in your own Nation's capital. You wouldn't intervene and tell the Egyptians what to do even when you disagreed with it.

We ask you in the name of the Founders, in the name of American democracy: Do not do that to the residents of the District of Columbia. It is impossible to justify a standard for democracy that makes an exception when you disagree with the decisions that have been made.

I respect that new Members abhor Federal intervention even in areas of legitimate Federal concern. The new Members, some of them tea party members, would like to withdraw Federal intervention from areas long understood to be of some concern to the Federal Government. Their view is that, even in these Federal matters, there is too much Federal Government.

What about Federal intervention where there is no Federal concern whatsoever? What about Federal intervention where there is no Federal money whatsoever but only billions of dollars raised by the local taxpayers? What about Federal intervention where there is no Federal law involved but only the law of the local jurisdiction?

If you think there is too much Federal Government in what we do now, surely you would not tolerate any Federal Government in the local matters of a local jurisdiction, especially in your own Nation's capital. We raise our own funds, \$3 billion, which is more than that of several States. We want to spend it as we see fit, just as my colleagues do in their jurisdictions. Without any Federal intervention, they spend their own local funds as they see fit.

Yet, yesterday, there was a shameful, shameful experience here. There was a hearing on a Federal bill. The Federal bill had to do with restrictions on Federal funding for abortions, restrictions that some of us thought were airtight as it was. I happen to be for the right of a woman to choose, but I have always respected my colleagues who have another point of view. That matter is being decided, as it should be because it involves Federal funding, in several committees of the Congress.

What in the world was the District of Columbia doing in a bill having to do with Federal funding for abortions?

□ 1610

What was this language doing in that bill? And I am quoting: The term "Federal Government" includes the government of the District of Columbia.

It does not, my colleagues. We are a local government. We are not your colony. Declaring that the District of Columbia is part of the Federal Government for purposes of intervening into our local affairs, to tell us how to spend our local money, is an unprecedented violation of the District's right to self-government.

The District of Columbia provision was entirely unrelated to the Federal abortion funding purposes of the bill. If there is to be abortion funding in a local jurisdiction—and there is today local funding throughout the United States, using local money, in local jurisdictions—if it can be done anywhere in the United States with local funds, how could anyone justify keeping the people of the District of Columbia from using their own local funds in precisely the same way?

My Republican colleagues have come and taken control of the Congress on the wings of a promise of jobs—well, where's your jobs bill? That's what the people in my city want to know, some of them from poor wards which have 20 and 30 percent unemployment. Why are we looking at the District of Columbia, not for the jobs you said you would provide, but for how we spend our local funds on abortion for low-income women? What business is it of yours how we spend our local money?

Get out of our affairs. You've got enough to tend to here. Why focus on one local jurisdiction? If you want to deal with Federal funding of abortion, fight fair. Deal with it here, man to man, woman to woman. Don't cross the line between democracy and autocracy and dictate; because that's what you're trying to do, dictate to a local jurisdiction how it's to spend its own local funds which you had nothing to do with raising.

Shame on the Judiciary Subcommittee, because I asked for the right to testify simply to indicate why the District of Columbia should be taken out of this bill, and I was denied the right to testify. I have been in this body for two decades. I recall no circumstance in which a Member was denied the right to make a few remarks before the hearing, and certainly no circumstance of denial of a Member to make remarks when her district and her district alone was in the bill. What are you afraid of? Would not elementary fairness and say, All right, Congresswoman NORTON, we don't have a lot of time for you, but you're in the bill, so here's 2 minutes? I was entitled to that in the name of fairness.

But you have, many of you in this Congress have given disproportionate time to the District of Columbia. There's been introduced a bill to impose private school vouchers on the District and the District alone. What's wrong with you? What are you afraid of? If you're for vouchers, put a national vouchers bill on the floor.

I know why there is no national vouchers bill on the floor; because there have been referendums in many of the States on vouchers, and every last referendum has been defeated because the people of the United States say over and over again that if you have one red cent, you better spend it on our public schools.

There's already been a compromise on this issue. The District of Columbia was singled out for vouchers, even

though we have the largest alternative public charter school system in the country. Would that the Members of this body, on either side of the aisle, had almost half of their children in alternative schools, public charter schools, that residents themselves have come forward to establish as an alternative to their public schools.

Why pick on us? If vouchers are so good, I challenge you, put a bill on the floor. Let those who want it come forward. You are afraid. You don't have the guts. You pick on us because you can. It's wrong. A compromise was reached. The compromise allowed those who are now attending voucher schools to remain in those schools until they graduate. No compromise is enough for those who believe in a zero sum game.

The District's home rule public charter school alternative is a model for the Nation. Moreover, charter schools enjoy the strongest kind of bipartisan support in this Congress. What's wrong with what we're doing? Why aren't we being complimented and commended for having a public charter school system where almost half our kids attend?

In your district, you will find that your local school boards, your States keep charter schools from coming forward. That's not happened here, in part because during the last Republican Congress, under Speaker Gingrich, when he came and also discussed vouchers with me, I asked that we do a bill for charter schools instead, and out of respect for home rule, he did. Where is that respect for local control in this body today?

Our charter schools have long waiting lists. We could use any money that the Congress has to help these children find places in our own charter schools. This is the last district you want to impose vouchers on, precisely because we've heard the call that when there are children who are not being well educated in at least some of your public schools—and I am a strong supporter of our public schools. I'm a graduate of the D.C. public schools, but I do concede that there are some children who don't have access to the best education. Well, we've done something for them. Don't punish us for it by imposing a voucher system on us that we do not want.

Last year, I had asked that there be placed in the omnibus bill \$5 million for voucher parents to go to public charter schools, because when I met with my voucher parents, they said—or many of them said—they had tried to get into our public charter schools and could not because of long waiting lists. That's where the demand is. That's where the need is.

We want our choices to be respected. Sure, we respect that there may be jurisdictions who would, in fact, wish vouchers. Give them the opportunity. Don't impose vouchers on people who have chosen another alternative.

I'm not sure why one local jurisdiction would command so much atten-

tion from a new majority who convinced the American people that they would put jobs first. I'm not sure why, but I am sure of this, that if you want to direct your attention someplace else, there must be a lot of places you can go besides the District of Columbia. I am going to be on this floor often making sure that Members understand who the District of Columbia is, what it expects, and how it expects to be treated.

Now, I see on the floor the gentleman from New York (Mr. SERRANO), and I appreciate that he's come down, because it's one thing for me to try to get all of the riders, the anti-home rule riders, unfair home rule riders off of the District of Columbia, but I certainly could not do that by myself.

□ 1620

I'm not even a member of the Appropriations Committee, but we sure had a true patriot on that committee who did not rest until he saw to it that all the riders, riders which violated the self-government rights of the District of Columbia in the worst way, were removed.

So citizens of the District of Columbia will be forever grateful for the work of Representative SERRANO, the then chairman, now ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services which has jurisdiction over the District of Columbia as well. We will be forever grateful for the extraordinary way that he kept at it year by year until he had removed each and every one of those attachments.

And I am pleased to relinquish some time to the gentleman, but I do need to know how much time I have.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 9 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SERRANO).

Mr. SERRANO. I thank you for the time, and I congratulate you for continuing to be the Representative that you are for the District of Columbia.

Let me, in the short time that I have, be very brief and to the point. This may be one of the least-known issues in the United States, the whole issue of how Congress treats the District of Columbia. It is understood that there are constitutional provisions, but constitutional provisions for Congress to oversee the District of Columbia do not mean that you should mistreat the District of Columbia.

And I think it's important to note something that happened when I became chairman of the subcommittee that oversees the District of Columbia, and that is that I took it very personal. For you see, like so many New Yorkers, I was not born in New York. I was born in Puerto Rico and I was raised in New York, and I represent the Bronx in Congress. Puerto Rico, as everyone should know, is a territory of the United States; some would say a colony of the United States. So the one

thing I didn't want to do was be chairman of this committee and treat Washington, D.C., the way the Federal Government sometimes has treated my birthplace.

Where I found myself, as so many other folks, was with the United States as this country you love and then Puerto Rico as your loving birthplace, knowing they are attached, but somehow Puerto Rico doesn't get treated equally. So I said publicly, to the amazement of some and to the laughter of others, that I was going to be the first Member of Congress to ever relinquish power. I didn't want more power. I wanted to give up power. I wanted less and less to do with the District of Columbia. Let them govern themselves.

And so the first thing we did is we found out that we were not allowing the District of Columbia to have a sensible approach to the HIV/AIDS issue epidemic by not allowing a syringe exchange program. Now, it's important to note what we're talking about here. You have moneys that are raised locally by Washington, D.C., and then you have Federal dollars. And what happened was that Congress, for years, was saying that you can't use Federal dollars for certain programs, and you can't use local dollars either for certain programs. Now, this is the part that gets a little political, and I am going to try to be as fair and as balanced as possible, to quote somebody else.

I believe that some Members of Congress who did not wish to discuss these issues back home or could not fight these issues back home used the District of Columbia as the experiment by which they could say, "Abortion, I'm against abortion."

"Where?"

"In the District of Columbia."

"Needle exchange."

"Oh, I don't accept that."

"Where?"

"In the District of Columbia."

"Same-sex marriage?"

"Oh, I'm totally against that."

"Where?"

"In the District of Columbia."

And they couldn't go back home and accomplish these things in their districts, but they imposed it on the District of Columbia.

My role, I felt—and I did accomplish it, but unfortunately that may change soon—was that little by little I got bipartisan support from both parties to remove, under your leadership—and I'm being honest about that because you pushed, and you pushed and you pushed under your leadership—to remove these riders, to let them decide what to do with the HIV crisis, to let Washington, D.C.-elected council members and Mayor decide what to do with so many issues. That's all we did. We still kept the constitutional provisions. I don't go around rewriting the Constitution.

Now what I think will happen—and we begin to see—is a desire to once

again use Washington, D.C. as the experiment or the place where you do these things that you can't do back home.

So I would say to my colleagues, if you're strong—and I respect you on the issue of school vouchers. If you are strong on the issue of not letting women make choices in their lives, if you're strong on the issues of what rights or lack of rights gays should have, if you're strong on all of these issues, fight them at the national level, fight them back home. Don't single out the District of Columbia as this experimental ground by which you can say that you accomplished these things when, in fact, you did not.

The last one we had is the one that the public would really understand. The last one, which got lost in this budget that we just did, is the one that simply said that they could approve their own local budget without having Congress say "yes" or "no."

Now, picture throughout this country—there are people watching us right now throughout this country who have local school board budgets, who have local fire department budgets, who have local town and city and county budgets. They get their dollars from Federal funds, from local funds, from State funds, but they don't come at the end of the budget process and say, Members of Congress from all over the world, can you please approve my budget? No. And I don't think they should be treated that way.

So I hope that the changes we made remain in place. But above all, I hope that we respect the citizens, the American citizens who live in the District of Columbia, the residents who live here.

And lastly, we were elected to be Members of Congress. But I was not elected to be the Mayor of Washington, D.C., and I was not elected to be a member of the Washington, D.C. City Council. They have their own government. They can govern themselves well. They have their own finances. Let's give them the respect they deserve. And I hope as time goes on, these victories that we had, not for us—it's not going to get me reelected in my district—but for the people in Washington, D.C., that they stay in place.

And again, to my colleagues, if you want to make these points, make them back home, make them on the national level. Don't pick on the residents of D.C. to make your point.

Ms. NORTON. I very much thank the gentleman not only for his remarks today but for the extraordinary work he did. He's right. I was pushing, but he was the real pusher. He was the man at the steering wheel, and he kept doing it until all those riders got off. And I want to thank the gentleman, yes, from New York, but who has not forgotten his roots, the gentleman's roots in Puerto Rico, because his roots have enabled him to empathize with people who may not have the kind of democracy he holds to be emblematic of this country.

So you don't have to be one of us, it seems to me, to feel what we are feeling. You have to think about your own roots, about what matters to you, and particularly about the issues that have driven you in your life. And I think you will come to the conclusion that you should not expect for others what you would not have wanted for yourself.

And when the gentleman from New York mentioned Puerto Rico, he also reminds me—

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia has expired.

□ 1630

THE UPCOMING CONTINUING RESOLUTION AND REPEAL OF OBAMACARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the privilege of being recognized to address you here on the floor of the House. And there's been some dramatic changes that have taken place in this country and dramatic changes that have taken place in this Congress.

I believe that as we move forward we're going to have some significant debates here on the floor. I look forward to the regular order component of this that's being initiated by Speaker BOEHNER, the process of using the committee process, the hearing process before committees, the markup before subcommittees, the markup before full committees, and bills going up to the Rules Committee after they've been approved by the actual standing committees, and that be the same bills that are passed by the committees that arrive at the Rules Committee where the Rules Committee can work their will and, wherever possible, provide for an open rule so that we can have the maximum amount of debate on the floor, so that Members can have their will debated and require an up-or-down vote, recorded vote on their issues.

That's not something that has been going on in this Congress. It's diminished each of the last 4 years. And the more than two centuries old, not necessarily a rule, not necessarily something written into the rules, but the practice and the tradition of open rules on appropriations has been essential to allow Members to have their voice. And I am thankful that that's the new tone of this Congress. It's been a great frustration to me and many other Members, Democrats and Republicans alike.

So we're here today, Mr. Speaker, on the cusp of a great big decision for this Congress; and as we make this transition from the era of Speaker PELOSI to the era of Speaker BOEHNER, and as he lays out the parameters of let the House work its will and let's go back to a regular order as it was devised and