time, especially the importance of understanding Afghan tribal and political structures and the Pakistani military and intelligence services actively cooperating with two of the most deadly terror networks in the region.

Given this stark assessment from our own intelligence community, the need to create the Af/Pak Study Group is clear. The Af/Pak Study Group's analysis and recommendations could bring needed clarity to current and future U.S. military and diplomatic operations. You supported the Iraq Study Group and lent your considerable expertise to that effort, so I am perplexed as to why you do not similarly support the Af/Pak Study Group.

Your November 3, 2011, letter to me stated that coalition troops are making progress against the Taliban and other militants and that progress is being made on our relationship with the Pakistani government and military. I have enormous respect for the men and women serving our country in South Asia and acknowledge that our troops are performing their mission with bravery and resolve, however, the NIE appears to contradict your assessment.

Also enclosed is an article by the Hudson Institute's Nina Shea that discusses how Hussain Haqqani, the former Pakistani Ambassador to the United States is facing possible charges of treason for his alleged involvement in ''Memogate.'' Shea asserts, ''There is every reason to believe that the real reason Haqqani is being targeted is that he is a prominent moderate Muslim, one of the few remaining in Pakistan's government.'' Shea goes on to point out that Haqqani was personal friends with two men, Punjab governor Salman Taseer and Pakistan's Federal Minister of Minority Affairs Shabbaz Bhatti, whose lives were cut tragically short last year as a result of their outspoken critique of Pakistan's draconian blasphemy laws.

Increasingly we see a trend in Pakistan of moderating voices being marginalized and altogether silenced. While I appreciate that you are ''working hard with Pakistan to improve the level of cooperation'' so that terrorist and militant groups no longer find safe haven in the country—I am afraid the complexity of the evolving situation in Pakistan necessitates more.

The NIE's assessment could lead to support for the war in Afghanistan eroding among the American people and I feel the same sentiment will soon permeate the halls of Congress. If the president has simply decided that U.S. involvement will end in 2014 and that no further U.S. strategy is needed, he should clearly state that this is his policy and be forthcoming with the American people. If President Obama has not made a final determination on U.S. strategy going forward, I ask again, what harm can come from a group of independent experts using their experience to offer solutions for long-term success?

Following 9/11, I have supported U.S. military actions in the War on Terror. I want to see our soldiers, diplomats and Foreign Service personnel return home with their heads held high, knowing they all played a crucial role in establishing stability in South Asia where countries no longer pose a threat to our national security. I firmly believe that you can help ensure this happens by using the money made available to you to create the Af/Pak Study Group. Establishing this panel quickly will show the American people that the Obama Administration is willing to consider all possible options to achieve success in this volatile region.

I urge you to take these steps immediately before support for our mission in Afghanistan further erodes.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Member of Congress.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
February 10, 2012.

Hon. LEON PANETTA,
Secretary of Defense, The Pentagon, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY PANETTA: I am sure you are aware of the enclosed article by Army Lt. Col. Daniel Davis that recently appeared in the Armed Forces Journal regarding the status of our mission in Afghanistan and the capabilities of Afghan National Army (ANA) forces. I am deeply troubled by the conclusions reached in Col. Davis' assessment and believe that it further underscores the importance of immediately creating the Afghanistan/Pakistan Study Group.

Col. Davis' piece tracks closely with the latest National Intelligence Estimate's assessment of current and future conditions in the region which I referenced in my January 17 letter to you (enclosed). These two assessments, coupled with the February 4 United Nations report showing that Afghan civilian casualties are increasing and the 2011 Red Team study by NATO on fratricide by ANA forces on coalition troops, lend credibility to the growing belief that U.S. strategy in South Asia is not going well.

In the interest of the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines serving—and in many cases dying—in Afghanistan, I implore you to immediately establish the Afghanistan/Pakistan Study Group. As I have referenced in previous letters to you, Congress has provided the funding for this panel and under the law, you can select its members.

While reasonable people can disagree on specific policy options, I find it difficult to understand why the Obama Administration would not embrace a panel of five Democrats and five Republicans (modeled on the Iraq Study Group on which you and former Secretary Gates served), who love their country more than their party, putting their expertise to work and offering constructive recommendations to achieve our mission.

We owe it to the men and women serving in uniform—and the families supporting them—to have the best possible long-term strategy for success.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Member of Congress.

P.S. I know you care deeply about our service members serving overseas and that you and your team are doing what you think is best for our country. But I believe any objective observer would agree we need fresh eyes on the target.

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

THE ADMINISTRATION IS NEGOTIATING WITH MURDERERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, there's so much going on in this country. There are so many great folks and some that are not so much. There are stories out indicating that this administration is considering releasing the Blind Sheikh. He's credited with helping mastermind the first attempt to bring down our World Trade Centers. He is credited as the Islamic fanatic who issued the fatwa that was considered by the radical extremist jihadists to justify killing thousands and thousands of Americans—what they hoped would be tens of thousands of Americans—at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. One report indicated that with regard to the Pentagon, if the plane had not just brushed across a berm outside the parking lot before it hit, it probably would have gone all the way into the interior, doing a massive amount of more damage than it actually did. Because of the valiant work of so many first responders, there weren't tens of thousands killed at the World Trade Center. But we suffered the loss of 3,000 murdered because of some religious fanatics, the Blind Sheikh being one of them.

The story is out yesterday and today that the administration is considering the release of the Blind Sheikh and other American murderers so that we can obtain the complete release from Egypt of people that went there to try to help the Egyptians have free and fair elections. And in return for going there and providing the billions of dollars this country gives to Egypt and continues to give, in return, the people in charge—that this administration welcomed in charge of the Egyptian Government, as they stabbed an ally name Mubarak with whom they had written agreements—I'm not saying he's a great man; I'm saying this country, this administration, had agreements with that man, and this administration broke those agreements and stabbed him in the back. As a result, now we have Americans in harm's way, some of them in the Embassy in Egypt.

Now, the reports are that the administration is considering releasing murderers, people who planned and were complicit in murders and attempted murders of Americans, and this administration is considering releasing them and may be negotiating that.

Now, I'm hoping that this report is what this administration has done many times, and that is release a trial balloon to see how people react. And if people react violently enough—verbally, that is—against it, then they will say, hey, no, we never planned to do that. And I'm hopeful that that will be the case here. People who have been responsible for murdering and attempting to murder Americans have no business being used as bargaining chips. If the rule of law and of justice is going to mean anything in this country going forward, we cannot be bargaining with American liberty.

Now, some of us recall very well in 1979 when an act of war occurred by the people, by the Government of Iran in Tehran, against the American Embassy. Everyone's idea of international law indicates that the soil on which an Embassy exists is the soil of that country. If you attack the Embassy, then you have attacked that country. And it

was my recollection, and those of us that were stationed at Fort Benning at the time, we knew it meant that many of the people, many of us at Fort Benning, may have been sent to Iran if a war broke out. Everyone was watching to see if, as the term was used, the flag were to go up, who was going to go. Nobody was dying to go, but everyone was willing to go and die in defense of our country.

The Carter administration, instead, began pleading with the Iranian Government to let our hostages go. It was my recollection back during the time as we watched from Fort Benning, I'm not sure what the fate of those of us at Fort Benning would be, but the spokesman for the Iranian Government kept saying, the students have the hostages, the students attacked the Embassy. And it just seemed to me, as a captain in the Army at the time, do you know what it sounds like? The Iranian Government is trying to give themselves a backdoor so that if President Carter stands up and finally becomes a great leader and shows great leadership and stands up and says:

All right, you're saying that students have the American hostages? Well, then, here is the deal: An act of war has been committed, and either you release, you deal with those students and you get those American hostages released, or we're bringing the full weight of the American military against Tehran for the release of those people. And if those hostages are harmed before we get there, then we will overthrow your government and we'll leave. We're not going to nation-build. You can pick whatever government you want, it's your business, unless you attack the United States of America. Because when you attack the United States of America, it is our business. We won't nation-build, but we will take down any government of any nation anywhere that commits an act of war against us.

That's what President Carter should have done. And now these rumors swirl around, these reports from media resources that tell us they are reliable, that this government now is thinking, well, maybe we'll dodge what the Carter administration did that got President Carter defeated for a second term. Maybe if we just release murderers of Americans, maybe if we'll just give them whatever they want, they'll release these people or allow them to leave the Embassy and travel back to America, and we'll be okay.

□ 1220

Wrong. You release people who declared war on America, who declared war on the World Trade Centers, on New York City, on Washington, D.C., you release those people, you have not made America safer. You've endangered far more lives than you got released.

I like Ray LaHood. He's a good man. We haven't agreed on some things, but he's a good man. I know that. It broke my heart when I saw that his wonderful son, who believes in liberty and freedom, was being kept against his will from leaving Egypt. He went over there to help them have a free and fair election. But from what I know—having not met Ray's son—I don't think he would want the lives of tens of thousands or millions of Americans jeopardized because this administration might be trying to avoid losing an election as President Carter did.

The thing to do is the thing that President Carter didn't try. He tried the negotiations. He offered all kinds of things. The thing to do is say: Egypt, we have given you American treasure. We supported your efforts in electing leaders. Here is the deal. We sent you people to have free and fair elections. If you're going to hold them hostage, then that is an act of war on us and we will come to Egypt.

We're not going to go to war with the nation. The whole nation of Egypt is not against America. But if the regime in power is going to take Americans who came over there to help them, who were participating in helping a process so that Egypt could continue to get U.S. funds to stabilize their country, if they're going to declare war on those individuals, then we will take out that group that is presiding and attempting to govern. We won't nation-build, but we will allow you to put whatever government you want in place. If they come against America, we will come against that government; not against the people, but against the government. We will take that government out and then you pick some other government. We don't care who it is. We don't care what kind of government you have, as long as they're not at war with America. But if you commit these kind of criminal acts of war against American citizens, against America, we will take that group out that is governing in that manner and then you find one that won't declare war on America.

That's what needs to be done, not releasing the Blind Sheikh, not releasing American murderers. That is not the thing to do. I hope and pray that tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions of American lives will not be jeopardized by this administration just hoping to avoid a hostage crisis like arose in Tehran.

That arose because of a weak administration refusing to do what it should have in response to an act of war. Because what we saw after those initial periods where they said, ''No, the students had them; we're trying to negotiate; we're trying to work with them,'' eventually they saw the Carter administration was not going to do anything, and so they began saying, ''We had the hostages; we had the hostages,'' and started making demands and threats and things like that.

The thing to do is say, look, we want to live at peace with every nation in the world; but you declare war on Americans, we will take that government out and let the people choose whatever kind of government they want. We should not be nation-building. You pick what government you want and we will live in peace as long as they don't declare war on us. If they do, we're coming. We'll take them out and then you pick your next government. That's what should be done, not the release of murderers, of those complicit in American murders, such as the Blind Sheikh.

I hope that enough people in America will rise up, Mr. Speaker, and make their voices heard. Don't be releasing people who declare war on America, who have American blood on their hands. We do not want to put the future of America in foreign hands that are covered with American blood. That is not the course to take.

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

One other thing I wanted to mention before I get to a tribute, and that is with regard to the Selma march, that is with regard to the civil rights movement.

There are some in America who think people like Martin Luther King, Jr., JOHN LEWIS, others who were such participants in the civil rights movement—people see that and say that was a movement by blacks or African Americans to try to have equal civil rights. But having read a great deal about Martin Luther King, Jr., it's very clear this was a Christian minister, an ordained Christian pastor. I haven't heard anybody in the wonderful tributes that have been paid here today as we commemorate that march in Selma, I haven't heard anybody mention this.

As a Christian minister, Martin Luther King, Jr., and those who participated, did more than help African Americans move closer toward having full equality, toward equal rights. It did more than that. For those of us who were young, white Christians, for those who would come behind us as Euro Americans, white Americans, they did something wonderful for us. They created an environment in which all Christians—whites, all Christians—would be able to treat brothers and sisters as being brothers and sisters. They did a great service for all Americans.

So I will lend my voice, such as it is, in tribute for the service that was done for all Americans, and anxiously long for the day—we're getting so close—but long for the day when people are judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin; where there are no quotas, there is no need for a Justice Department to review everything, because people are acting and treating each other in ways of equality, so that we finally achieve the dream.

ANDREW BREITBART

Now I want to turn to a tribute to a great man. This Nation and freedom has lost a great proponent and defender.

Andrew Breitbart, who was reported to have died this early morning in California, was and is an American hero of

mine. This man, in what appeared to be the prime of his life, knew that the key to keeping our endowed freedoms was shining the bright rays of sunlight on whatever issue was stealing away our Nation's prosperity and liberties.

Many came to know Andrew as the brains and the will behind the exposure of a cancer on our system that was exemplified by some of the things going on with ACORN, where they were not bothered by the thought of underage girls being placed in the bondage of sexual prostitution and they were not bothered by the idea of getting people in the country illegally for immoral and illegal purposes. He figured out a way to deal with these issues and to address what was sucking the nutrients and the life from this host country as, really, a cancer.

□ 1230

He figured out how to shine sunlight inside offices of what was happening and gave a good dose of chemotherapy to the cancer.

He also innovated ways to expose the extreme bias within many in the media that were holding themselves out as being objective. We have freedom of speech. We have freedom of the press. But there should be some degree of honesty. If someone is expressing an opinion, it should be reflected as an opinion and not as unbiased journalism.

Andrew had been in the process of exposing that, as well as so many other issues that were weakening our Nation and infringing our liberties, were deceiving rank-and-file Americans of the truth and our factual history. Andrew was serving as a clarion call to action for honorable Americans across the country to seek truth, justice, and the American way.

In visiting numerous times with Andrew, he was so excited. He could see that he was literally, and profoundly, making a difference for truth.

Often, when innovators or impassioned innovative visionary people depart this world, they have not had the benefit of seeing any of the fruits of their labor. God had favored Andrew with a glimpse of the difference that he was making.

In this book that—and I acquired this copy from the Library of Congress, ''Righteous Indignation'' by Andrew Breitbart—this is a new conclusion to Andrew's recent books. He wrote this new conclusion himself.

These are Andrew's words:

> I love my job. I love fighting for what I believe in. I love having fun while doing it. I love reporting stories that the complex refuses to report. I love fighting back. I love finding allies and, famously, I enjoy making enemies.
>
> Three years ago I was mostly a behind-the-scenes guy who linked to stuff on a very popular Web site. I always wondered what it would be like to enter the public realm to fight for what I believe in. I've lost friends, perhaps dozens, but I've gained hundreds, thousands, who knows, of allies. At the end of the day, I can look myself in the mirror and I sleep very well at night.

He now sleeps in the arms of God.

Andrew was being demonized by those who were profiting from their deceptions of people and their cronyism with the government. He was rallying like-minded Americans to seek and take back the liberties with which they were endowed and upon which liberties vast encroachments have been occurring.

I would like to speak straight from the heart, but I typed these lines up just moments ago because of the difficulty. It's easier to read. Let me finish with what I wrote moments ago.

Andrew had two films coming out in the near future, of which he was so proud, as he showed me and my friend, STEVE KING, here the trailers very recently. Those films can and will be quite powerful in furthering the cause of sunlight on darkness, though they may now have to be modified because of his passing.

But Andrew was so kind to be an encourager to my daughter in California, was always complimentary of her when we talked. He knew how to make a father proud.

In considering Andrew's works, the life and death of John Quincy Adams comes to mind. Adams had been elected President in 1824, first son of a former President to be so elected. In 1828, he was defeated by Andrew Jackson.

In 1830, John Quincy Adams did the unthinkable. He had been President of the United States; and yet he was driven by a God-placed feeling, a need to stop slavery in America. So after having been President, he lowered himself to run for the House of Representatives and was elected in 1830, sworn in in 1831, and served until 1848 just down the Hall in what we now call Statuary Hall. He was a driven man.

He believed God had called him, as he did William Wilberforce, to bring an end to slavery—Wilberforce in the British Isles, the United Kingdom, and Adams in America. He was concerned, appropriately, that it would be difficult to expect God to keep blessing America if we were putting brothers and sisters in chains and bondage.

He gave powerful speeches over and over down the Hall trying to convince the other Members of the House to pass bills that would end slavery, that would free slaves, and he never got it done. In fact, at one point, he had so alienated the Rules Committee, they passed a rule, he couldn't even bring those types of bills anymore. So then he had to fight the rule so he could go back to filing bills to end slavery and free slaves, and eventually he did. And he preached those powerful sermons down the Hall against slavery.

In 1846, a young man, not particularly handsome, some at Gettysburg that heard him years later said he didn't have all that pleasing a voice to listen to, he didn't have a beard at that time, but a young, skinny, some-would-say homely-looking guy was on the back row, just down the Hall of the House of Representatives.

Adams liked this guy. Adams was not necessarily referred to as being a warm and fuzzy, cozy kind of guy, easy to warm up to, a bit cantankerous at times; but he liked Lincoln.

In 1848, having spent so many years devoted to many great causes, but particularly to the cause of trying to end slavery, sitting at his desk, John Quincy Adams had a massive stroke. He was moved back into the Speaker's suite just off the floor, died 2 days later. 1848.

Thirteen years later, Abraham Lincoln was sworn in as President of the United States. It was reported that someone had asked Lincoln was there anything memorable that happened during your two brief years in the House of Representatives. He was reported to have said, in essence, not other than those powerful speeches of John Quincy Adams on the evils of slavery.

Lincoln knew it was wrong. It tore at his soul that slavery existed in America. After he lost after one term, he went back, tried to make a little money, did, practiced law, represented the railroad some, but the compromise of 1850 allowed new States to come in that would have slavery.

Lincoln had thought perhaps he was done with slavery, but he couldn't stand it. He got back involved in politics, lost, lost again, got elected President, and then helped bring about an end to slavery in the United States.

John Quincy Adams did not bring an end to slavery as he had hoped, but he profoundly affected that young, skinny, less-than-handsome-looking guy named Abraham Lincoln.

□ 1240

Andrew Breitbart is gone. That's the report. I'll be interested to see what the autopsy says.

But I can't help but think his devotion to truth, to preserving liberty will have inspired so many who will pick up that banner and potentially, as was the case with John Quincy Adams and Abraham Lincoln, do far more than Adams himself could have done, and in this day, in the years to come, do more than Andrew could have done by himself.

Though Andrew did great service to himself, his family, and his Nation, it's my prayer that his greatest contribution to this, the greatest Nation with the greatest freedoms in the history of the world, will not be those specific but amazing accomplishments he achieved, but that his greatest accomplishment will be the inspiration he was and is to so many who saw his devotion, saw his commitment, saw his goals, and will, just as did John Quincy Adams, accomplish more through those he inspired than those he could ever have accomplished individually.

At a time like this, there is sometimes a temptation to blame God and ask, why did God take such an individual so soon? Our directed comments to our Creator should instead be,

Thank You, dear God, for the gift of Andrew Breitbart. We wish we could have kept him longer, but thank You for this marvelous gift.

God be with his family, comfort his family. Andrew will be sorely missed by seekers of truth. His departure will be welcomed by those he was exposing, but they shouldn't be too comfortable. He was a patriot. He was a lover of liberty. He was a lover of family. He was a lover of God, a lover of this Nation. He was also a friend and encourager to me.

With that, I would yield to my friend, STEVE KING, from Iowa.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I want to thank the gentleman from Texas.

Timing of circumstances, Mr. Speaker, brought me to the floor here simultaneous with this wonderful tribute that Mr. GOHMERT has provided to Andrew Breitbart and the life and the things that he stood for and believed in. I don't know how I can add to the completeness of the message that LOUIE GOHMERT has delivered here.

I had the privilege of calling Andrew Breitbart my friend as well. I think of the last time LOUIE GOHMERT, STEVE KING, and Andrew Breitbart were in the same room, and it was over in the place that I affectionately call The Bunker, the house a couple of blocks east of the Supreme Court—very fitting, by the way—just almost within gaze of the east portico of the Supreme Court where Moses sits there looking down upon all of humanity with the tablets on his knees, with the Ten Commandments in his arms, and saying to all the world, We're a Nation of laws, not a Nation of men, and that our laws come from God, and his profound belief in that.

As we were there, I remember I was invited to a dinner over at Breitbart's. Now, some might think that a dinner with Andrew Breitbart could be somebody sitting at the table with cufflinks, for example. It's possible, but it's unlikely that there's actually going to be a table. It's more likely that there's a counter in the middle of the kitchen, and on that counter and on the counter over on the wall were refreshments of all kinds, teetotaling and nonteetotaling refreshments. On the other counter are ribs and chicken. I think the ribs were there for LOUIE GOHMERT, personally. He and I are the only two Members of Congress.

In that room was a constant din. Within that din, you'd always know what was on Andrew Breitbart's mind. Whenever he spoke, there was always an ear tuned to that, but he was very much a person engaged in the moment. He was driven to no end. I know when I walked in the room, he played a trumpet with his hand just to get the attention in that din now that I'd arrived.

But what I remember was that it was an engaging conversation about liberty and freedom and freedom of the press and truth, justice, and the American way, as LOUIE has said. When it was all done, the refreshment bottles were empty and the ribs and chicken were bones, and we'd had one of the most engaging evenings you could ask to have in Washington, DC, and we have some here.

That, I think, does describe Andrew Breitbart's life: engaging.

I don't know who was more engaged than Andrew Breitbart. I look back at it. Just, for example, this morning I got up and I got ready to go, and I changed my pin over here and I put my Constitution in my pocket here and I put my keys in this pocket. Other than that, the only one other constant was I had to look around this morning and I couldn't find it. I went over to my backup storage, and I pulled this out and put it in my pocket this morning.

Let the record show, Mr. Speaker, this is an acorn. I've carried an acorn around in my pocket for about 2 years. I wouldn't be doing this if it weren't for the influence of Andrew Breitbart. In fact, we might not even know about the threat to the underpinnings of our Constitution, the legitimate electoral process we have in this country, if it hadn't been for Andrew Breitbart.

Hannah Giles and James O'Keefe came together and they went out and got some brilliant tape of the unconscionable activities of ACORN that produced over 400,000 false or fraudulent voter registrations. How many other false votes went up, we don't know.

But my belief is, and I believe Andrew's belief was, that the Constitution is the foundation of American liberty. But underneath that foundation that sits on the bedrock of legitimate elections, any entity that threatens those legitimate elections threatens the very Constitution itself and American freedom.

It was Andrew's brilliance that took those tapes of Hannah's and James and said, You roll these out, they will discredit you. They will attack you. You will be under the heat like you've never seen before in your life. We need to give them a little bit, and then they will attack you and say that's the only one. It's an anomaly.

Really, the tapes of the unconscionable acts of ACORN would be discredited immediately. It was Andrew who put together the strategy.

First, you have to know the man to have instant confidence that he knows, and he instantly thinks ahead. He never was, I don't think, a linear thinker. He always was a conceptual thinker. Some might go A, B, C, and maybe can get their way to Z. Andrew could go A, here's Z, and you know he knew every letter in between and how they were rearranged, and he could see the strategy in an instant and he could inspire you to step forward to that. That was part of the brilliance of Andrew Breitbart. That's one of the reasons I will carry this acorn in my pocket until they are gone.

As I sat and thought about the life of Andrew, I wrote these words down to try to describe him, and words do not describe the man that Andrew was.

I used the words ''dynamic,'' ''brilliant,'' ''fearless,'' ''visionary,'' ''altruistic,'' ''passionate,'' ''unconventional,'' ''trailblazer,'' ''patriot,'' ''lost friend.'' All of those things describe Andrew Breitbart, and many, many more.

As LOUIE GOHMERT has said, his influence will be cascaded across this civilization and this culture, I believe, in perpetuity, just like the influence of John Quincy Adams has had that influence.

What I want to say also is that Andrew had a real sense of righteous indignation of when the ObamaCare debate was taking place here and an effort was staged to cast aspersions on the Tea Party as being racist. I remember in the middle of that press gaggle when they said, What do you think? Somebody was hollering the ''N'' word out at the Congressional Black Caucus as they walked across the grounds.

I said, Who has reported that? They named that. Who actually heard it?

They couldn't name me who heard it.

Andrew Breitbart understood that it was a manufactured story created to discredit the Tea Party and put $100,000 on the table for anybody that could produce an audio or a video that would confirm the false allegations of racial epithets being thrown by the Tea Party at anybody. He shot that story down, and he has provided us a tremendous amount of credibility for the Tea Party in the process.

Pigford Farms, another story. The list goes on.

Andrew Breitbart understood the science behind the communications in the world. He understood the Internet before many even knew the Internet existed. He understood its potential. He had opened that up with big everything, with big ideas and global ideas and had them grounded in the full spectrum constitutional conservatism with an effort to provide protection for the rights of everybody, as God gives us those rights.

□ 1250

I am also tremendously saddened by the loss of our good friend. It's a big Breitbart family that grieves today and prays that he will be nestled in the hands of God and that his close family will be well taken care of and energized and nurtured by the profound belief that they've had the wonderful privilege to have Andrew Breitbart as their father, husband, friend, and that his influence moves on. We dedicate ourselves to the renewed effort to follow through on those efforts, and we will seek to do what we can to match and emulate the brilliance of Andrew Breitbart.

I appreciate my friend LOUIE GOHMERT for coming to the floor and starting the beginning of a national conversation about the long reach of Andrew Breitbart, and it reaches into the future. I thank Andrew for his life. I thank God for Andrew's life.

Mr. GOHMERT. In conclusion, we pay tribute to a big man, as Jesus said to the poor man of Nazareth, who has now been carried to the bosom of Abraham by the angels.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

REAPPOINTMENT AS MEMBER OF SOCIAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's reappointment, pursuant to section 703 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 903) and the order of the House of January 5, 2011, and upon the recommendation of the minority leader, of the following member on the part of the House to the Social Security Advisory Board for a term of 6 years:

Ms. Barbara Kennelly, Hartford, CT

HOME RULE IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 come to the floor today to begin a series of half-hour conversations containing information that I believe many Members of our House simply do not have, especially considering how often the Constitution and the Framers are cited. I have no reason to believe that there is any intention on the part of any Member to deny democracy to any American citizen in our great country.

So during these half-hour Special Orders, I will be offering some evidence and information that go back to the Framers and come forward into the era when the District of Columbia was granted home rule in order to try to inform Members of the standing of the District of Columbia, which is often referred to as the ''Federal district.''

It, of course, is not a Federal district. It is a hometown of more than 600,000 residents, which has been granted full and complete authority to govern itself—too late, of course, but finally. It was too late in this era, but not too late in the history of the country because, as the country began, the citizens, indeed, at that time had that right.

The Framers, of course, were confronted with a dilemma. They wanted a capital to be located here in the District of Columbia, and they wanted that capital to have the same rights as any other Americans. They had had an experience in Philadelphia of some concern, when veterans had marched on that capital, about who would defend the capital. They tried to sort out this dilemma and thought they had by creating the District of Columbia—whose residents would have the same rights as every other American citizen, but giving the Congress authority over the District. Let me indicate how that happened.

No one who has any knowledge of the history of our country can believe that the Framers fought against taxation without representation for everybody except the people who happened to live in the Nation's Capital. That would be sacrilege to say that of the great Framers of the Constitution, particularly since people from this very area, now known as the District of Columbia, went to war on the slogan of ''no taxation without representation'' and fought and died under that slogan. They didn't go and die under that slogan so that everybody but themselves could be freed from England and have full democracy.

It is also clear from looking at the Constitution that there were two Maryland and two Virginia signers who made clear that in the land they gave to the District of Columbia they weren't giving away their citizens' rights. So their citizens in Maryland and Virginia, during the 10-year transition period, in fact, voted for Members of this body and had the right to vote in Maryland and Virginia.

Some would call what Congress has done in the intervening years an abuse of power. I believe it is a failure to come to grips with what the Framers intended. In Federalist 43, James Madison says from the very beginning that there would be ''a municipal legislature for local purposes, derived from their own suffrages.'' That's, of course, the man and the document we rely on when we need some legislative history about the Constitution.

It is very important to note that the first government in the city of Washington was established in 1802 when the District of Columbia became the Nation's Capital. At that point, contemporaneous with the Constitution, there was a city council elected by the people of the District of Columbia to fully govern this city the way the districts and the jurisdictions of the Members of this body are fully governed. In 1812, the city council was permitted to elect the mayor. Before that, the mayor was appointed. In 1820 and thereafter, the mayor was elected by the people. That continued until 1871.

It should be said that the status of the District of Columbia, until home rule was granted, was constantly a part of the mix, the long, tortured part of our history about racial segregation. Many of the perpetrators who denied home rule were Southern Democrats. It was only when a Southern Democrat who chaired the ''District Committee'' was defeated, after the Voting Rights Act was passed, that the District was granted home rule in 1973.

So this has not been a matter of party. If anything, the Republican Party had much cleaner hands until recently when, for its own purposes, it adopted the posture of deciding that there would be home rule when it wanted and that violates every standard, every principle of the Framers and Founders when members simply step in and try to abolish democratic policy and laws enacted by a local government to which they are not accountable.

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It's important to note that when the Home Rule Act was passed in 1973, the first line said that the purpose was to ''restore'' to the citizens of the District of Columbia, ''restore''. Those words, I think, were chosen with great meaning and understanding of history, ''restore'' because it was clear that the people who lived in this city had every right of every other American citizen before the city was created, that those from Maryland, Virginia, who gave the land, saw to it that these rights were preserved. Only in the political maneuverings of the Congress itself has that right been at risk, but that right has never been at risk except for Members of Congress who did not adhere to the principles of full democracy for every citizen of the United States.

The purpose of the Home Rule Act was to restore, not to create, rights. Congress can not create rights for people born in this country. The rights are given with their citizenship.

Now the District of Columbia, if one looks at the Home Rule Act, and the trends of all of the legislation preceding the Home Rule Act, was never given partial home rule except when Members of Congress from other jurisdictions decide they want to make changes in the District. That is found nowhere in the Home Rule Act, and that flies in the face of every principle of those who created the United States of America and those who died under the slogan of ''no taxation without representation.''

We created a very diverse democracy, and we have held it together through a principle of local deference and local control. We have people in one part of the country who detest some of the laws and policies in another part of the country, but the first thing they will do is honor local control and the right of local citizens to elect people who are accountable to them. When those who are not accountable to them want to get something done they must go to those who are, indeed, accountable to them.

Congress thought about what enacting home rule would mean. It said, there are some specific exceptions. Congress did not leave it to the discretion of Members of this body to decide what those exceptions would be. Congress, in fact, did something very specific with respect to those exceptions because it understood that once home rule is granted, there would be differences between the local legislature and the Congress of the United States. So it said, this is what we mean, and this is what we do not mean.

These limitations on the District and its council need to be rehearsed and need to be understood by anybody who