

rid of the sequester. We're dealing with a noncontroversial helium bill that could pass in 10 minutes in this House.

America, Mr. Speaker, is angry, and I don't blame them. I'm angry, too. America is disgusted with us. I don't blame them. I'm disgusted with us as well. I don't blame Mr. and Mrs. America for saying that Congress is not doing its work. They're right. We're not. We were sent here to serve the American people and our country and make it stronger, and we're not doing that. We're failing to come together and reach compromise and consensus for positive action in our country.

How sad, Mr. Speaker. How sad for our country. How sad for our people. How sad for our families. There are good people on both sides of this aisle, but we're not coming together to do our duty for America. How sad.

ELIZABETH SMART

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, several years ago in Salt Lake City, Utah, there was a happy family—a mom and a dad, six kids—happy as they could be. On the typical summer day of June 5, 2002, the kids and the family had their prayers. Two of the girls went up to their room. The older girl read to the younger girl. They went to sleep.

And then the nightmare began.

In the middle of the night, the older girl, who was a 14-year-old child, was awakened. The man who woke her up had a knife to her throat. The younger girl woke up, too, but was in fear and shock and terror and could not physically even move. So the kidnapper took the 14-year-old girl, climbed out the window with her, and at knifepoint, they left in the middle of the night. Finally, the younger girl was able to get some type of composure and tell her parents what had happened.

The police get involved, and they start looking for Elizabeth Smart, but they didn't find her that night, and they didn't find her the next day because Elizabeth Smart had been kidnapped by an individual who took her to a secluded place. The first thing he wanted to do, of course, was to abuse her—and he did. He sexually assaulted her, and he sexually assaulted her, and he sexually assaulted her. He tied her between two trees, Mr. Speaker, and sexually assaulted her. He did everything he wanted to do to her for 9 months.

That 14-year-old girl was gone, kidnapped—parents scared to death and worried about one of their six children. The police were looking, but they never found her, not for 9 months.

This evil person who kidnapped Elizabeth arranged a fake marriage to try to marry her even though he was married to another individual lawfully. So the wife, the abuser, and Elizabeth Smart stayed in hiding in the Salt

Lake City area. The abuser occasionally would leave and take Elizabeth Smart with him, but he would tell her, "If you ever scream and tell anybody, I will kill your family."

She believed that. A 14-year-old girl obviously would believe that, so she never cried out because she didn't want anything bad to happen to her wonderful family. Meanwhile, Mom and Dad and the brothers and the sisters every day hoped—but no results in finding her.

When she would go out with the evildoer, forcibly, he would even put a wig over her head and a veil. He would disguise her so that, if people in the Salt Lake City area knew Elizabeth Smart, they wouldn't recognize her.

Finally, after 9 months, Elizabeth Smart was with the evildoer who sexually assaulted her—and with his wife—and a police car stopped. The police officer started questioning Elizabeth Smart. She didn't say anything because she remembered that the evildoer said he would kill her family. Unbeknownst to Elizabeth, her sister had given the police a sketch of the person who had kidnapped her. The police took Elizabeth Smart to the police station, and after a few minutes, in comes her father.

She was rescued after 9 months—The criminals went to prison.

Elizabeth Smart is now 27 years of age, and she has used this awful tragedy of being kidnapped and sexually assaulted as a child in order to help other sexual assault victims in this country. She started the Elizabeth Smart Foundation. A couple of weeks ago, she was in Houston. She spoke very forcefully to a group of women—several hundred—about being abused.

So, this Victims' Rights Week, Mr. Speaker, I want to honor Elizabeth Smart and all of those other sexual assault victims—especially children—who have been assaulted by evil people in this country, and let us remember to support them totally in their recovery.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1030

AWARDING THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO THE 65TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, today Congressman BILL POSEY of Florida and I will introduce bipartisan legislation to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment, a famed U.S. Army unit known as the Borinqueneers composed almost entirely of soldiers from the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico that overcame discrimination and earned praise and respect for its comeback performance in the Korean war.

The Congressional Gold Medal is considered the most distinguished form of

recognition that Congress, acting on behalf of a grateful Nation, can bestow upon an individual or group in recognition of outstanding and enduring achievement. As our legislation states:

The highly decorated 65th Infantry Regiment is deserving of this award because of its "pioneering military service, devotion to duty and many acts of valor in the face of diversity."

Between 1950 and 1953, the regiment participated in some of the fiercest battles of the Korean war; and its toughness, courage, and loyalty earned the admiration of those who had previously harbored reservations about Puerto Rican soldiers based on stereotypes.

One individual whose misconceptions were shattered was William Harris, who served as the regiment's commander during the early stages of the war. Harris recounts that he was reluctant to take command of the unit because, like many U.S. military leaders, he assumed that Puerto Rican soldiers were not as capable as other troops. Following the war, Harris recalled that his skeptical attitude did not survive first contact with the enemy and that, in fact, his experience ultimately led him to regard the men of the 65th as the best soldiers he had ever seen.

Another individual who came to hold the 65th in high esteem was General Douglas MacArthur. In March 1951, after months of heavy engagements with the enemy in which the 65th played a critical role, General MacArthur wrote the following:

The Puerto Ricans forming the ranks on the gallant 65th Infantry on the battlefields of Korea by valor, determination and a resolute will to victory give daily testament to their invincible loyalty to the United States. They are writing a brilliant record of achievement in battle, and I'm proud, indeed, to have them in this command. I wish that we might have many more like them.

By the time fighting came to a close in Korea in July 1953, soldiers in the 65th had earned 10 Distinguished Service Crosses, about 250 Silver Stars, over 600 Bronze Stars, and nearly 3,000 Purple Hearts. As a collective, the regiment won numerous awards, including two Presidential Unit Citations, the Nation's highest unit-level recognition for extraordinary heroism. The unit's disproportionately high casualty rate underscored the fact that it had been serving on the front lines, face to face with the enemy at the very tip of the spear.

In a 2010 obituary that appeared in The New York Times for 87-year-old Modesto Cartagena, one of the most decorated soldiers from the regiment, it was observed that in Korea:

Puerto Rican soldiers surmounted not only the Communist enemy, but also prejudicial attitudes.

This same point was made with particular eloquence in 2000 by Secretary Louis Caldera during a ceremony honoring the regiment when he said that the soldiers of the 65th were fighting to protect the people of South Korea, even as they struggled against the injustice