

businesses of its community, and the Minnesota National Guard have helped ensure that our military members and their families have a strong support structure at home in their community.

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon is a unique program formed by the Minnesota National Guard to support the thousands of servicemembers who have served Minnesota since 9/11. It provides resources and training to servicemembers and their families before, during, and after their deployment, helping them find jobs and integrate back into their community.

As a Yellow Ribbon city, Maple Grove has gone above and beyond in supporting our troops and delivering a compassionate attitude to the many men and women who serve this great country, ensuring that our military members, when they come home, they come all the way home.

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RELEASE BAHRAINI PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

(Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring attention to the plight of Mahdi Abu Dheeb. Mahdi Abu Dheeb is the founder of the Bahrain Teachers Association and was arrested after taking part in pro-democracy protests in 2011. For this so-called crime, he was tortured and sentenced to 5 years in prison by a military court.

As a member of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, I call for the immediate release of Abu Dheeb and all of the prisoners of conscience. Mahdi Abu Dheeb is a nonviolent activist imprisoned for his beliefs. His release would send a message that the Bahraini government cares about freedom, prosperity, and justice for all of its citizens.

THE ALL-SEEING EYE OF GOVERNMENT TRACKS CITIZEN MOVEMENT THROUGH LICENSE PLATE SURVEILLANCE

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, government agencies have been keeping track of Americans' whereabouts by amassing databases of millions of our license plates by using license plate scanners. The information captures data on movements of innocent American citizens going about their daily lives.

Unbeknown to Americans, government technology records our movement from the time we get in our car in the morning to every place we stop during the day, to the time we drive home. Plus, this data can be stored indefinitely.

This reminds me of the days when I was in the Soviet Union and saw how government spied on its citizens constantly. Do we really want a government to have the authority to record us anywhere we go during the day or during the night?

When you go to work, to lunch, to the barber shop, to the airport, to the movies, to the post office, to the banker, to the shopping center, to the car repair shop, to business meetings, to vacations, the parks, to the pool, to grandma's house, to church, to the grocery, to a friend's house, to the hospital, et cetera?

We know by recent experience, abusive government cannot be trusted with dragnet information data files it collects on Americans.

To me, freedom includes government not keeping personal daily logs on individuals and their activities. None of these activities are the government's business.

The Right of Privacy and the Right to be Left Alone include the right to keep snooping government surveillance out of our lives.

And that's just the way it is.

TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN

(Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, as a veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan, I am very concerned about the so-called "zero option" that was floated by the President.

Hundreds of thousands have fought for a victory for the Afghan people; and on the eve of victory for the Afghan people, the President is floating the option of no troops post-2014. I ask, Is the Taliban cheering that discussion, or are they scared of it? I would say that they are cheering the idea of no U.S. troops.

Sixty percent of the Afghan people are under the age of 20. It is a new society. Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that we are on the verge of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. I would call on the President to announce a smaller post-2014 force and send a message to the Taliban that we will not back down and you will never rule Afghanistan again.

SOLUTIONS FOR OUR COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PERRY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to have the opportunity tonight to be here in this Chamber with so many of our colleagues, either to discuss solutions—solutions for our country, solutions for our economy—and I am just going to invite my colleagues to participation in the conversation as they see fit.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just point out to you that we have reached out to our constituents about this leadership hour tonight on Twitter using #4jobs; and, Mr. Speaker, we are hopeful that tonight during this hour, we will continue that conversation with our constituents at #4jobs.

I have a lot of comments from my constituents back home that I'm eager to share as we go through this hour. I want to point out what many of you may have already read, and that is that the President has stated that he plans to pivot, once again, back to jobs and the economy. I thought, well, that's great news. That's what we have been pushing here. Many of you have seen us carrying around our laminated cards that talk about all of the jobs bills that we've passed in this Congress and, last, trying to promote economic growth in this country, to help get hardworking, taxpaying Americans back to work.

But I lost my enthusiasm when buried in that article was the President's statement: White House officials said three speeches will not offer new proposals or approaches.

So we're going to pivot back to jobs and the economy, but we have no new approaches and we have no new ideas. That to me is a pivoting of message and not a pivoting of policy. We are watching, and all of us have stories of going back home to our constituents and meeting with American families that continue to struggle. The rhetoric that we all feel is not helping the reality of the situation of the people that we were sent here to represent.

We are not losing faith; the American people are not losing faith because the President's message isn't working. They are losing faith because his policies aren't working. I'm the first to say that we've got to quit doing a lot of this pointing fingers, so I'm hopeful that tonight we can have this conversation, and I have some solutions that I'd like to put out there. You can't criticize without coming behind it and offering a solution. We've continuously done that in this House and will continue to do so, Mr. Speaker.

I yield to the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. I thank the gentlelady from Alabama for organizing this. It is great to be joined with you on this very important subject, the idea that over 7.5 percent of our fellow neighbors—and by the way, the President's own State of Illinois, it's higher than 7.5 percent. If you want to see what Big Government is going to eventually do, just look in my home State. You're going to see people that are desperately searching for work, that wake up every day just wondering if they are going to get a paycheck. If they have a job, they're wondering, Is this the last day? Am I going to go into work today and get that pink slip? Am I going to go into work today and have to tell my wife or husband or kids that we're going to have to tighten the belt because dad or mom just lost their job?