

care of for so many years in order to take care of the bills for him, his family, and his family farm, but now, that right has been lost because government action has taken that right away from Mr. Vitale.

There is Bob Brace in Pennsylvania, who was ordered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the EPA to stop farming 30 acres of his land as they were determining it to be a wetland.

Mr. Brace has been farming that land for years. He had to go through court. He went to the U.S. district court, and they said he is okay. He can keep farming the land.

That wasn't enough for Big Government. They took it up to the court of appeals, and ultimately, the court ordered that Mr. Brace had to stop farming that 30 acres and pay a \$10,000 fine and also hundreds of thousands of dollars in order to restore that property to the property that he has been using in his family for generations. When Mr. Brace tried to go to court to seek compensation for that right that was taken away, the court said: No, you don't have a right here.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is against my fundamental belief in this country of private property rights and freedom. In the Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution, it says that the government can act and it can take action, but it must provide just compensation when it impacts people's private property.

That is why here in Washington, D.C., I have taken two concrete actions to address this issue, Mr. Speaker. Recently, I started the Private Property Rights Caucus with my colleagues in Congress. This is a caucus that has been made up of 14 original members, spanning from Maine to California, to highlight this issue and to say to Big Government, enough is enough.

I choose to stand with the individuals and the fundamental property rights that they have paid for, they have earned, that they take care of in maintaining their property, paying taxes on their property, and living the American Dream.

I also introduced the Defense of Property Rights Act. The Defense of Property Rights Act is based on just a simple reading of the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution. It says just that, if you take action as Big Government has done, Big Government will have to take into consideration the impact on private property rights.

If private property rights are taken, we clarify the ability of individuals to go and follow the Constitution and at least get compensation from the government for taking those private property rights away from these individuals.

Mr. Speaker, these are commonsense, simple principles that I think my colleagues on both sides of the aisle can join with me and say that is only fair because, if you really care about our fellow Americans, when their property

rights are taken away because of Big Government action, we should at least say to them: we will stand with you as individuals and as Americans who believe in the fundamental principles of freedom and of private property rights, and we will at least get you some sort of compensation for the injury that you have suffered.

As a result of that, I urge my colleagues to join the caucus, support the Defense of Property Rights Act, and join me in highlighting this issue so that we can say enough is enough.

It is time to stand with our individuals, the constituents that we represent here in Washington, D.C., rather than the interests of Big Government and Big Government on all levels, Federal, State, and local.

RECOGNIZING FRANK E. LEE

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Frank E. Lee who, after 35 years as the familiar afternoon personality at WXRT, Frank welcomed his much-deserved retirement last week.

As the afternoon voice of WXRT, he is a Chicago institution unto himself. Frank's boss, Norm Winer, put it best when he said: "Frank's wide-ranging love and knowledge of music, his remarkable verbal skills, his wry and sardonic sense of humor, impressive sense of professionalism, and generous nature have distinguished him among Chicago's all-time great air personalities."

I invite my colleagues to join me in honoring Frank E. Lee for his career as one of Chicago's finest radio personalities and most recognizable voices. We thank him for his years of service on the air.

I was there in the studio as he closed off his career with the Stones' classic, "Moonlight Mile." We tried to capture the essence of how Chicagoans felt when he left. All I can say is I got silence on my radio.

CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MAHAFFEY THEATER

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

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an institution that, for 50 years, has been the cultural heart of the city of St. Petersburg, Florida.

This month, in May, the Mahaffey Theater celebrates its 50th anniversary. Opening in 1965, the venue was originally called the Bayfront Center Complex, a combination arena and theater along the city's most beautiful downtown waterfront.

It quickly proved to be a gathering place for community and civic groups, and its many shows drew tourists from around the State. The artists that have

performed at the Mahaffey could easily fill an entertainment hall of fame, from Louis Armstrong to Dionne Warwick to Liza Minelli to Johnny Mathis, Kenny Rogers, and even "The President's Own" United States Marine Band, an event that was secured by the invitation of my predecessor, Congressman Bill Young.

The first significant makeover for the venue occurred in 1987, and the Bayfront Theater became the Mahaffey Theater after a generous gift from St. Petersburg's Mahaffey family. In 2011, Big3 Entertainment took over the management of the Mahaffey, with CEO and chairman Bill Edwards privately funding a number of major enhancements.

Today, the Mahaffey is home to the Florida Orchestra, and it is the annual host site for the Miss Florida Pageant.

The Mahaffey also supports, very importantly, the highly successful Class Acts program, which enables school children to experience the performing arts through in-theater performances, as well as in-school outreach and extension programs.

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The theater also has been the site of very important moments of American history. The theater was the site of the 1996 Vice Presidential debate between Al Gore and Jack Kemp. And in 2007, the Mahaffey hosted the nationally televised Republican Presidential primary debate, known as the very first YouTube debate, having Americans, for the very first time, submit questions via YouTube video clips.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the Mahaffey Theater, celebrating a venue that today anchors a growing and thriving Pinellas County arts community and serves as a stage that celebrates the arts but, most importantly, celebrates the remarkable human spirit, the creativity of so many performers, and the dedication and commitment of the greater St. Petersburg community.

FREE AMERICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS IN IRAN

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor of the House of Representatives again to introduce and talk to this body and to the American people about my constituent, Amir Hekmati. Amir is an American. He is a United States marine. He is a brother. He is a son. He is a Michigander. He grew up in my hometown of Flint, Michigan. He served this country in uniform, as I said, in the United States Marine Corps. He is of Iranian descent, though he was born in the United States.

In 2011, for the first time, he traveled to Iran to visit family he had never met, a grandmother he had never seen. He traveled under his own name, notified the Iranian Government that he

was going to be there; and after just a couple of weeks, he was apprehended, disappeared. His family didn't know where he was for months until it was revealed that he had been tried, convicted, and sentenced to death for espionage, a charge that he is completely innocent of. In fact, the Iranian court of appeals, the appeals process, even set aside that conviction and set aside his death sentence. There was no evidence.

They did convict him and sentence him to 10 years, a conviction that is based on the fact that, under Iranian law, he is considered an Iranian citizen even though he was born in the United States and never had even been there before. But the fact that he had served in the Marine Corps created a set of facts that caused them to convict him of a crime and sentence him to 10 years.

It has been 3½ years. For 1,354 days, Amir Hekmati has sat in Evin prison, a notorious prison in Tehran.

I have introduced, along with a number of other Members, a resolution calling for the immediate release of the Americans that Iran holds. It has 28 Republican cosponsors, 27 Democrats, and we are adding them every day.

This is not even a bipartisan issue; this is a nonpartisan question. It is beyond politics. This is about the rights of a free man being held in Iran. So I am asking my colleagues and the American people to get engaged, to call upon Iran to do what is right and release the Americans that they hold. And it is really important that this Congress speak with one voice and carry the voices of all the people that we represent, asking, telling Iran that if they think they can join the global community and continue to hold innocent Americans as political prisoners, they are wrong.

So, please, for those who want to, use the hashtag #freemirnow to send a message to thank those Members, as I will, to thank those Members of Congress who have joined this resolution. I will be sending out on Twitter a thank-you to each Member who has done so, using #freemirnow. I hope other Members of Congress and those across the country will join us.

Later today we will consider legislation that will define how Congress will review and offer its input on the potential Iran nuclear deal. It is really important that we negotiate with those who make this world more dangerous first before attempting other methods, and it is important that we give this negotiation a chance. But it is also very clear that it will be very difficult for this Congress and the American people to consider any understanding, any agreement, with Iran without considering their other behavior, whether it is this nuclear agreement or other engagement with this country. If they continue to hold Americans as political prisoners, it is impossible for us to ignore that fact.

It is very clear that we should never trade the freedom of innocent Ameri-

cans for concessions at the negotiating table with Iran over their nuclear capabilities. Again, we should not make their freedom a part of this deal. They, meaning the American families who are worrying about their loved ones, don't want this; and I know that Amir Hekmati, himself, does not want to be part of the consideration, does not want to be traded for concessions at the nuclear negotiating table.

The onus is on Iran to do what is right, and it is critical that this body and all the people that we represent speak with a single voice and make it clear, as the Senate did in their resolution calling upon Iran to release these Americans. It is important that the people's body speak for the people of the United States and tell Iran loud and clear that you cannot hold Americans as political prisoners and be accepted into the international community.

IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, as the latest round of the P5+1 Iranian nuclear talks resume this week in Vienna, it is important for us to highlight just how weak and dangerous this deal is.

From the moment that President Obama took office, he has sought the legacy of having achieved a nuclear agreement with Iran, regardless of the cost to our national security. In his first inaugural address, he promised to unclench his fist to dictators and followed that up in Cairo, telling the Iranian regime that he was willing to move forward "without preconditions on the basis of mutual respect."

Mutual respect, Mr. Speaker? This regime has targeted and killed Americans since the Iranian revolution in 1979. This regime was responsible for killing and wounding thousands of our U.S. troops in Iraq. This murderous regime is destabilizing the region and mocking the U.S. by blowing up a mock U.S. aircraft carrier and chanting, continually, "death to America."

Now the President is giving Iran not only access to billions of dollars, but also international legitimacy. Countries and businesses no longer fear doing business with Iran, even though the sanctions are still in place. They no longer fear looking like international pariahs, helping one of the world's worst human rights abusers and the world's largest supporter of global terror because President Obama has telegraphed to the world that he trusts the Iranian regime, giving it the legitimacy that it would have never gotten without this nuclear deal.

So what do we see now? Well, Russia announced that it will resume sales of its surface-to-air missiles to Iran before the ink could even dry on the framework agreement, and Putin has

said that Russia will trade assets like grain and construction equipment in exchange for Iranian oil. Iran has also announced that China is going to help it build five additional nuclear power plants.

According to reports, China and Russia have stated that they will not support snapback sanctions. Now, snapback sanctions are the cornerstone of the deal that the administration has praised as a victory. And U.S. oil executives have reportedly begun talks with Iranian officials in preparation for the opening of Iran's economy—in Iran, no less.

Now we hear reports that the Czechs stopped a potentially illegal nuclear technology purchase by the Iranians earlier this year. So I asked the administration: Did the administration know, and did the P5+1 know about this violation? Did they choose to ignore it in order to forge this framework agreement anyway? All of this in exchange for a deal that allows Iran to continue to enrich uranium and to keep every key element of its nuclear infrastructure intact.

The Iranians are winning concession after concession, giving up nothing but a few cosmetic and easily reversible changes. Since taking office, President Obama has capitulated to Iranian demands to cement his legacy of the President who normalized relations with Iran.

We won't even be able to adequately verify this nuclear agreement, despite what the President promises, because he knows that access to Iranian sites rests with the Iranian regime. Access to military sites—where they would more than likely hide some of their nuclear infrastructure—isn't in the deal either. It is foolhardy and dangerous to believe that Iran will give immediate and unobstructed access anytime, anywhere, to all of its sites.

We are not even forcing the regime to come clean on the possible military dimensions of its nuclear program, nor are we addressing its ballistic missile program, its support for terror, and its expansionist agenda throughout the Middle East. All we are doing is legitimizing one of the world's worst and most dangerous regimes at the expense of regional and U.S. national security.

Iran will use this influx of money to continue spreading terror and fomenting instability and sectarian conflict across the globe. We have seen it in Yemen. We have seen it elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, the Middle East is on the brink of collapsing, yet the President continues on this dangerous quest for his Iran nuclear deal legacy. He has ignored the reality on the ground for political considerations and, in doing so, is putting our national security in jeopardy and that of our ally, the democratic Jewish State of Israel.

HIGHWAY TRUST FUND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.