

REDONDO UNION HIGH SCHOOL
PROTEST

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

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, this upcoming Monday, the Westboro Baptist Church plans to hold protests outside of Redondo Union High School in Redondo Beach, California. We have seen these protests before, often at the funerals of our fallen servicemen and -women. They are known, unfortunately, for their hateful message, especially against LGBT Americans.

The members of this church believe that America's generation of high schoolers is "utterly without hope." They say that because these young students are promoting acceptance and inclusion of all people, regardless of whether they are gay or straight.

I couldn't disagree more with their premise of calling these students "without hope." I think because these students are promoting acceptance and inclusion of all people, regardless of whether they are gay or straight, they are building a future full of hope. I have the utmost faith in the next generation as the future leaders of this Nation.

Of course, no matter how much I disagree with this group, these individuals should be allowed to exercise their right to protest, and they do have a right to free speech in this country. The students have those same rights, and an inspiring group of Redondo High students are organizing a peaceful counterprotest on Monday.

Yesterday, I wrote a letter to the members of the school's Gay-Straight Alliance and told them that I wished I could be there on Monday to protest alongside of them. These students deserve to live in a world where they can be who they are and love whom they choose. In standing up against hate and living a life of acceptance, inclusion, and understanding, they are making that world a reality.

I know my colleague here, TED LIEU, who represents Redondo Beach, joins me in saying that we are so proud of these students. We are proud of their courage, their bravery, their intelligence, and skill in standing up for what they know is right, just, and for being brave enough to organize a counterprotest.

□ 1045

I am going to be in Washington, D.C., on Monday. But if I were not here, I would want to be standing alongside each and every student to show my solidarity with them. Instead, let me tell them that I will be there in spirit.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MIAMI-
DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Miami-Dade

County Public Schools, where the graduation rate recently reached an all-time high of 78.1 percent for the 2014–2015 academic year, surpassing the State average of 77.8 percent.

This is a 1.5 percent growth from last year's rate, marking the highest graduation rate MDCPS has achieved since the Florida Department of Education began implementing new standards to track graduation figures in the late 1990s. This is a landmark accomplishment, considering the major challenges Miami schools face, including high poverty rates and a large population of English language learners.

As a former member of the Miami-Dade County School Board, I salute the students, teachers, faculty, and parents for their dedication and for their commitment to excellence. I also want to recognize School Board Chair Perla Tabares-Hantman, my other former colleagues, and Superintendent Alberto Carvalho for their exceptional leadership. I think of them frequently, and I am constantly reminded of how fortunate our community is to have them.

To the entire MDCPS family, congratulations. You are a model for the Nation. I am proud to represent you.

BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP GRANT ACT
OF 2015

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on October 24, 2015, Monroe County Sheriff's Deputy Josh Gordon found himself in a firefight with a robbery suspect on Stock Island in the Florida Keys. Amidst the exchange of gunfire, Deputy Gordon's bulletproof vest stopped a round of ammunition, ultimately saving his life. If a bullet would have strayed a few inches one way or another, the outcome could have been entirely different.

Every day, men and women in law enforcement put their lives on the line to ensure our safety. Incidents such as this shed light on the significance of effective body armor for those who protect us. Officers like Deputy Gordon are never off duty, and we must, in turn, do everything in our power to protect them.

To address this, I stand in strong support of H.R. 228, the Bulletproof Vest Grant Act of 2015, which extends the grant program for armored vests through fiscal year 2018. I strongly encourage Congress to pass this essential legislation and protect the backbone of our Nation's domestic defense.

MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT PASSENGER
RECORDS

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Miami International Airport and their record-breaking year in 2015. Forty-four million passengers passed through this world-renowned airport last year, shattering the previous annual record of 40.9 million passengers in 2014.

MIA has some of the most dedicated employees in the country who ensure passengers have a pleasant experience on their journey, whether visiting relatives, conducting business, or visiting the abundance of attractions south

Florida has to offer. Tens of thousands of passengers pass through MIA on a daily basis, and I am proud to recognize an airport that connects so many people throughout the world.

I offer my continued support to my friend, MIA Director Emilio Gonzalez, as his team works in the new year to attract more domestic and international routes, and I know cafecitos will continue to be available at each terminal so all visiting guests can enjoy the wonderful culture of south Florida.

VIOLENCE AGAINST SIKHS

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support and stand with the Sikh community in the San Joaquin Valley.

In the past 2 weeks, two Sikh men have been brutally attacked and, very sadly, one of them was killed. He lost his life. The Fresno City Police Department has labeled these two crimes as potential hate crimes.

Amrik Singh Bal was attacked in the middle of the street while waiting for a ride so he could go to work, as any average American would do throughout our country. Gurcharan Singh Gill was killed while working at a local convenience store. Both tragic incidents took place in my district. My thoughts and prayers are with Amrik and his family, and my deepest sympathy and condolences go to the Gurcharan family for the loss.

The attacks on these innocent American citizens are really an attack on all American citizens who choose to practice their religion and observe their cultural heritage, as Americans do throughout our land.

Sadly, since September 11, 2001, the Sikh community has endured discrimination because of a lack of understanding of Sikhism, which is based on equality and love. They are not alone.

As a nation of immigrants, we must remember, we have an opportunity to learn and benefit from the thousands of different cultures that are part of the mosaic of what makes America great. After all, we are a nation of immigrants, both past and present, and we must never ever forget that.

Today, in Fresno, in spirit, we are all part of the Sikh community as we mourn these tragic incidents. Every American citizen, regardless of race, creed, or gender has the right to live free of fear and discrimination.

I commend Chief Dyer and the Fresno City Police Department for working diligently to find the individual or individuals who killed Gurcharan and for continuing to look for the other individuals who are responsible for the attack on Amrik.

I continue to urge the FBI and the U.S. Attorney General's office to work, as they have been, in making this investigation inquiry resolve itself, solving these very sad crimes that we

think were based on hate and is truly an unfair and discriminatory situation that occurred in the last 2 weeks.

CENSURING PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

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

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, time and time again, the President has violated the boundaries of executive power. He has refused to enforce our immigration laws. He has opened the borders to Syrian migrants against the will of the American people. He has even changed the provisions of his own disastrous healthcare bill.

This week, the administration once again thumbed its nose at Congress and the American people by jeopardizing the gun rights of law-abiding citizens.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are fed up. The American people continue to see the executive branch not only deciding which laws they choose to enforce, but changing and interpreting the laws as they see fit. The White House has become judge, jury, and executioner, in clear violation of the principles on which this Nation was founded.

Today I am introducing a resolution to censure President Barack Obama to serve as a clear rebuke and condemnation of the unconstitutional actions of this President. This is a bold measure, but is one that is necessary to preserve the very institution that we are all honored to serve: the United States Congress.

The Constitution requires that the President shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed. This President has failed to do so on numerous occasions.

The Constitution also requires the President to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. The President has failed to do so.

Not only is the President trying to do our job, but he has failed to do his.

His announced actions on gun control are just the latest example of blatant executive overreach by the President. Congress must fight back. I want to make it very clear. This is not about President Obama. This is about the actions of a President who has encroached too far on the powers of Congress.

Under the Constitution, Congress is an equal branch of government and should be treated as such. We cannot roll over on every executive overreach. We cannot wait to fight next time.

We cannot wait for the next President because it is not about this President or the next President. It is not about politics. It is about preserving the power of the legislative branch against this President and any future President who seeks to use egregious executive action at the expense of Congress.

A resolution of censure of the President has been used rarely, but is not without precedent. It is a way for Congress to fight back against executive overreach. Censuring the President will preserve for the historical and legal record that this Congress at this time disapproves of this President's executive overreach. It is time Congress fights back as an institution.

I urge my colleagues to live up to their oath of office, both Republican and Democrat, to support this resolution to censure the President and put the executive branch on notice that violating the separation of powers and using unconstitutional executive overreach will not be tolerated by Members of the United States Congress now or in the future.

WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST OIL AND GAS LEASES

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

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an ongoing environmental review process within my district that I firmly believe represents yet another in a long line of abuses of private property rights by the Federal Government and, more specifically, the land management agencies that oversee the majority of the land in the United States.

The outcome of this process will likely set a disturbing precedent under which the integrity of contracts that the Federal Government enters into with private parties is undermined.

The Bureau of Land Management is currently reviewing 65 existing oil and gas leases issued in White River National Forest beginning in 1993. This retroactive review was prompted by a 2007 decision on three of the leases by the Interior Board of Land Appeals in which the BLM was found to have not formally adopted a Forest Service environmental policy analysis that was utilized to make these leasing decisions—basically, what amounts to an administrative oversight.

It should be emphasized that there are extensive environmental reviews that did, in fact, take place and that the BLM played a significant role in that process. The agency argued as much to the Board of Land Appeals during the review.

The fault was simply that the BLM needed to sign on the dotted line, and the Board expressly made this option available to remedy the problem. However, instead of adopting that common-sense approach, the BLM succumbed to political pressure from the environmental extremists and determined to revisit every one of the leases issued since 1993.

The new proposal from the BLM deals with leases in one of two ways. It either imposes new, significantly restrictive stipulations that were not in place at the time of the original leases when they were acquired or it outright revokes the leases.

The Federal Government is acting as nothing more than a highway robber in this case and in many others, robbing citizens and businesses of property that they have bought and paid for, telling us that we should simply be grateful that there is someone looking out for our greater interests.

I highlight this particular process because, should the BLM follow through with certain of its proposed actions, it will set a precedent not only for oil and gas development, but for any lessee or permittee who, in entering into a contract in good faith with a Federal agency, may see their lease or permit threatened with retroactive revocation or severely restricted based on any flimsy pretext.

Many important industries rely on Federal leases and permits, including livestock grazing, recreation, and renewable energy; and no business can successfully operate if its license to do so no longer enjoys protections against arbitrary cancellations or changes, depending on the ideology of the current occupant of the White House.

Numerous stakeholders and local governments recognize that the BLM's final decision would have impacts far beyond those of the specific leases in question and undertook efforts to draft detailed and substantive feedback to the agency.

□ 1100

This is a very laborious and time-consuming process. Yet the BLM provided only the bare minimum public comment during this period required by law, and the agency's scheduled comment period overlapped with Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the New Year's Day holidays.

It also overlaps another environmental review comment period for the well-known Roan Plateau, which involves many of the same stakeholders and local governments and has been under review in some form since the late 1990s.

As such, several stakeholders and local governments, with the support of several members of Colorado's congressional delegation, requested a modest extension of the comment period. These extension requests are routinely granted by Federal agencies in recognition of the technical nature of these issues: interruptions due to Federal holidays and when there are several similar issues under simultaneous review.

Despite this, the requests in this instance were dismissed out of hand. One can only conclude that the BLM is afraid of the scrutiny that could result from them effectuating a government taking of property rights under the guise of rectifying an administrative error from over 20 years ago.

It is abundantly clear that the BLM intends to ramrod through a decision that will trample on lease owners' rights by canceling or altering leases to the point as to make them economically unviable. This is, unfortunately,