

Mr. ROYCE. I rise in support of this resolution.

Several of our colleagues—SAM JOHNSON, HOWARD COBLE, JOHN CONYERS, and its author CHARLIE RANGEL—bravely fought in this war and deserve our recognition tonight. Even if he hasn't had a bad day since, they deserve our recognition.

Mr. Speaker, the Korean War as we often know is called the Forgotten War, but those who fought it and our South Korean allies haven't forgotten this war. And by moving this legislation forward tonight, we're signaling that the House has not forgotten this war. And as much as anything, I believe this resolution demonstrates the shared commitment, the shared sacrifice that serves as the foundation of that U.S.-South Korea alliance.

We've all seen lots change in those six decades since our colleagues fought in that war; but with U.S. support, South Korea has transformed into a modern leading economy in the world today, but you still go north of that 38th Parallel—I've been north of that 38th Parallel—and they still live literally in darkness.

It's been more than 60 years since the start of the Korean war; and after all of that time, our Department of Defense lists more than 8,000 American servicemen as POWs who are missing in action. The number of South Koreans is estimated to be many times that because as many as 100,000 South Koreans were forcibly conscripted into the North Korean Army.

For our veterans and for their families, it is well past time for a full accounting which is what this resolution calls for.

Indeed, as this resolution states, there are still South Korean prisoners of war and civilian abductees from the Korean war who are still alive in North Korea and want to be repatriated back to the South.

For the sake of those impacted, I urge passage of this resolution.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 376. H. Res. 376 was authored, introduced and sponsored by a true American hero—my good friend, the Honorable CHARLES RANGEL—and I am proud to be an original cosponsor.

H. Res. 376 calls for the repatriation of POW/MIAs and abductees from the Korean War, and I know this legislation is near and dear to Congressman RANGEL's heart, as was the Resolution he introduced last year to recognize the 60th anniversary of the Korean War. Last year's Resolution, which was passed by Congress and signed by the President, should have born CHARLIE RANGEL's name, but due to back and forth between the House and Senate he did not receive the credit he deserved. I stand to credit him now.

In a black unit led mostly by white officers, acting Sergeant CHARLES RANGEL was awarded a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star for his heroic service in the Korean War, having led his comrades from behind enemy lines in circumstances few of us have ever known. I commend the Honorable CHARLES RANGEL for his valor, sacrifice and courage.

I also thank the Korean American community in Los Angeles and New York, and especially Mr. Dongsuk Kim, founder and former President of the Korean American Voters' Council; Mr. Mi-il Lee, President of the Korean War Abductees' Family Union (KWAFU); and Dr. Hong-Sik Shin for their tireless efforts in support of this Resolution. Their leadership in pushing this forward is the reason why I believe this historic Resolution will pass the House today.

On behalf of all those who served and sacrificed, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H. Res. 376.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, and I thank the gentleman from New York, Representative RANGEL, for offering it.

Every year for decades, the Congress has appropriated millions of dollars for the Pentagon to go around the world and recover the remains of our fallen. Those involved in the effort know that theirs is a solemn and vital mission, one that everyone who serves in this House strongly supports. It makes one proud to be an American knowing that we will go to great lengths to leave no soldier behind.

Unfortunately, this laudable effort to recover the remains of those long deceased has not been matched by the same level of care and concern at the Dover Port Mortuary in recent years. I know the truth of this through a courageous constituent of mine, Lynn Smith of Frenchtown, New Jersey. Lynn's late husband, Sergeant First Class Scott Smith, was killed by an improvised explosive device in Iraq in 2006.

More than a year after Scott's body was returned home to her and his parents, Lynn discovered that additional remains were subsequently recovered—then incinerated, mixed with medical waste, and dumped in a landfill in King George County, Virginia. As Lynn suspected, and as we now know, that practice was performed on the unclaimed additional remains of at least 273 other servicemembers. There were a number of other incidents of desecration or mishandling of remains that took place at Dover that were subsequently exposed by three Dover employees, who took the dangerous step of becoming whistleblowers and reporting their allegations to the Office of Special Counsel. Make no mistake—those whistleblowers are true public servants, and I thank them.

I have made it clear to Air Force officials that they must never allow this kind of outrage to happen again, and that those who retaliated against the whistleblowers should be dismissed from government service. If we can get our MIA recovery and identification process right, the same high standards must apply at Dover.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York for offering this bill and I urge its swift passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 376, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 2200

URGING TURKEY TO SAFEGUARD ITS CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 306) urging the Republic of Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 306

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the Secretary of State, in all official contacts with Turkish leaders and other Turkish officials, should emphasize that Turkey should—

(1) end all forms of religious discrimination;

(2) allow the rightful church and lay owners of Christian church properties, without hindrance or restriction, to organize and administer prayer services, religious education, clerical training, appointments, and succession, religious community gatherings, social services, including ministry to the needs of the poor and infirm, and other religious activities;

(3) return to their rightful owners all Christian churches and other places of worship, monasteries, schools, hospitals, monuments, relics, holy sites, and other religious properties, including movable properties, such as artwork, manuscripts, vestments, vessels, and other artifacts; and

(4) allow the rightful Christian church and lay owners of Christian church properties, without hindrance or restriction, to preserve, reconstruct, and repair, as they see fit, all Christian churches and other places of worship, monasteries, schools, hospitals, monuments, relics, holy sites, and other religious properties within Turkey.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose the resolution and to claim time in opposition to the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) favor the motion?

Mr. BERMAN. I do.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. On that basis the gentleman from Kentucky will control 20 minutes in opposition.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE).

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield half of my time to the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and ask unanimous consent that he may be able to control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me begin by quoting Thomas Jefferson. He said, "In our early struggles for liberty, religious freedom could not fail to become a primary object."

Jefferson was a very smart man, and he understood that the core foundation of democracy relied on individual differences and opinions without fear of intimidation. This concept is one that we, as Americans, have benefited from since our founding. Religious freedom has played an integral part of our continued success as a country. Very sadly, this is a freedom that so many countries like Turkey still struggle to realize.

Today we are considering House Resolution 306, which I authored with Ranking Member HOWARD BERMAN, urging the Republic of Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties to their rightful owners.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has had to put Turkey on its watch list for 3 straight years now. The commission reports that the Turkish Government's formal, longstanding efforts to control religion by imposing suffocating regulations and by denying full legal status to religious institutions results in serious religious freedom violations. The government has failed to take decisive action to correct the climate of impunity against religious minorities and to make the necessary institutional reforms to reverse these conditions. Now, those are the words of the commission, itself, on this subject.

Religious tolerance has long been a problem for Turkey. Turkey has yet to remedy the desecration of the religious properties of over 2 million Armenians and Greeks and Assyrians and Syrians over the last 100 years. Until these obligations are fulfilled, religious freedom will remain illusive and, frankly, relations with the United States will suffer. Prime Minister Erdogan recently issued a decree to return confiscated church properties that were taken after 1936, but the majority of confiscated religious properties, of course, were taken prior to 1936.

We are sending a signal today that Turkey should reassess the cutoff date, and I would suggest that outside pressure and actions like we are taking here today and reports like that of the religious commission have helped with what progress we have seen to date.

The United States has a vested interest to advance religious freedom. Turkey's claims of being a secular country are not enough in dealing with the day-to-day discriminatory harassment that religious minorities face there, for actions speak louder than words. There are very few religious minorities in Turkey. These are men and women struggling to practice their faiths, and they need added protection.

So this resolution urges Turkey to end all forms of religious discrimina-

tion, to allow rightful churches to organize and train and teach and practice religious activities without hindrance or restriction, and to return church properties and relics to their rightful owners—whether they be places of worship or monasteries or schools or hospitals or holy sites or other artifacts. Lastly, this resolution allows religious minority groups to own religious properties so that they can preserve and reconstruct and repair religious properties as they see fit.

Religious freedom is a fundamental human right, so I urge the passage of House Resolution 306, which urges the Republic of Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I have read H. Res. 306. Certainly, there is nothing in the language of this resolution that very many people would oppose. It basically says that it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the Secretary of State, in all official contacts with Turkish leaders and other Turkish officials, should emphasize that Turkey should end all forms of religious discrimination. It then goes on from there.

Now, this resolution, in a way, reminds me of asking one, Do you still beat your children? Because whatever one answers, one is going to be condemned. So the mere fact that the resolution is being introduced would leave an objective observer with the opinion that religious freedom is being systematically denied in Turkey.

Let's just look at a few of the facts. On September 13, 2011, during a briefing on the release of the U.S. Department of State's International Religious Freedom report, Secretary Clinton praised Turkey's recent steps in enhancing religious freedom. We've also seen Turkey take serious steps in improving the climate for religious tolerance. The Turkish Government issued a decree in August that invited non-Muslims to reclaim churches and synagogues that were confiscated 75 years ago.

This was the language of Secretary Clinton: I applaud Prime Minister Erdogan's very important commitment to doing so.

In its 13th annual Report on International Religious Freedom, the U.S. Department of State also underscored Turkey's recent efforts. During the reporting period, the government took steps to improve religious freedom. Notably, the government permitted religious services to be held annually at historic Christian sites that had been turned into State museums after decades of disuse.

These positive statements have shown that Turkey has good intentions in pursuing religious freedom; and I might say that, last year, the Turkish Prime Minister issued a circular that emphasized the rights of all Turkish people, Muslim and non-Muslim, to

enjoy their religious cultures and identities. Prime Minister Erdogan has urged all government institutions to act in accordance with this message.

So I think it's quite clear that, while this resolution has no binding legal effect and while it has no authority over Turkey whatsoever, we can see that Turkey is taking specific steps to ensure religious freedom in its country and that it's doing so without any prodding from the U.S.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 306, and I yield 3 minutes to one who has been a leader in this effort for a very long time, my colleague and neighbor from California (Mr. SCHIFF).

Mr. SCHIFF. I thank the gentleman from California for yielding and for his leadership on this important issue.

From the spring of 1915 and continuing for the next 8 years, the forces of the Ottoman Empire—police and military—engaged in a genocide of the Armenian people living within the borders of their dying empire.

When it was over, more than 1.5 million men, women, and children had been killed in the first genocide of the 20th century. They were beaten, shot, marched to their deaths through scorching deserts or across frigid mountains and were left where they fell. Families and entire communities were destroyed as the Ottomans did everything in their power to make a people disappear.

□ 2210

But the physical near-annihilation of the Armenian people was not enough to satisfy the Turks' desire to wreak vengeance on Armenia, which was the first nation in the world to adopt Christianity as its official religion in AD 301. Their campaign against the Armenians was broader and was aimed at destroying not only the Armenian people but also their history, their culture, and their faith.

When Ottoman forces began to massacre their Armenian neighbors 95 years ago, there were nearly 2,000 Armenian churches in what is now Turkey. Fewer than 100 remain standing and fully functioning today. One of the world's oldest Christian communities has, in significant part, disappeared from its ancestral homeland.

While the Armenian genocide stands as a singular event, the persecution of the Armenians has continued and much of it centers on the Armenians' status as a Christian minority in an overwhelmingly Muslim country, where discriminatory laws are used to confiscate church property and prevent free worship. And other Christian communities, especially the Greek Orthodox, have also been the victims of Turkish intolerance.

In northern Cyprus, which was invaded by the Turkish army in 1974, churches have been left to rot, cemeteries have been desecrated or fallen

into disrepair, and priests are forbidden from accessing the churches they prayed in as children.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom noted in its 2011 report, "The Turkish Government continues to impose serious limitations on freedom of religion or belief, thereby threatening the continued vitality and survival of minority religious communities in Turkey."

Ours is a Nation that has prized freedom of religion. For more than two centuries, we have stood for tolerance of other faiths. And American diplomats, Members of Congress, and Presidents have consistently pressed other governments to respect and protect their minorities. This resolution is in the finest tradition of advocacy for those whose voices have been silenced. And I am proud to be an original co-sponsor and to join my colleagues, especially the gentlemen from California, Mr. ROYCE and Mr. BERMAN, the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, a friend who has been a leader on these issues throughout his years of service in the House. I urge a "yes" vote.

Mr. WHITFIELD. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2½ minutes.

The Christian communities of Turkey, once populous and prosperous, have now for many decades been victims of discrimination. The result has been a drastic decline in the Christian population. Whereas well over 2 million Christians lived in Anatolia a century ago, today there are only a few thousand, less than 1 percent of Turkey's population.

Although Christians clearly constitute no threat to the majority, the various Christian communities remain the victims of unceasing discrimination. Their churches have been desecrated, their properties confiscated, and they are denied the right to practice their religion as they see fit or to train their clergy. Through this resolution, we are asking that Turkey rectify this terrible situation.

Much of the worst damage to—and confiscation of—Christian properties was done in the earlier decades of the Turkish Republic, but it continues to some extent today. Some 3 months after the introduction of this resolution in June, Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan responded with a decree that would return a small percentage of the property confiscated from religious minorities as well as provide compensation for property that was seized and later sold. This is too little and too late. It doesn't even begin to make up for the years of loss and the damaging impact on the minority communities, but it does appear to be a step in the right direction. We will watch its implementation closely.

Meanwhile, the Turkish Government must also address the many other forms of discrimination that Christians

in Turkey endure. Every church in Turkey suffers petty harassment, at a minimum, and is forced to apply to central authorities for authorization to do any type of repairs or construction, requests that often linger for months and years without government action. Moreover, Turkey recognizes certain Christian groups as legitimate but not others. If you belong to one of the unauthorized groups, such as Evangelicals, you can't even build a church.

This resolution calls on Turkey to make good on all past transgressions and allow true freedom of religion—to achieve the standards of democratic behavior to which it says, and to which I believe, it aspires. We want Turkey to allow its Christian citizens to worship exactly as they want and to allow them to train their clergy exactly as they want.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 4 minutes.

I might say that Turkey certainly has been a valuable ally of the United States for many years. As we all know, it is the only Muslim nation in NATO. It has been a vital partner to the United States in the war on terror in both Iraq and in Afghanistan. And just recently, Turkey agreed to host a NATO radar defense system directed toward Iran. Turkey also is becoming an increasingly important commercial partner.

But I wanted to also point out, about 3 years ago, without any input from the U.S. Congress, the Secretary of State, or anyone else in the Federal Government, the director of religious affairs in Turkey on his own initiative had one of his religious scholars of the Muslim faith spend a semester at Wesley Theological Seminary here in Washington, D.C. During that semester, there was a dialogue between members of the Christian faith and members of the Muslim faith. And during that time, there was not any finger-pointing. There was no accusing the other side of being mean-spirited or anything else, but it was simply an exchange of ideas. That was at the initiative of the directorate of religious affairs in Turkey.

I might also point out that in October, the archbishop of the Armenian Orthodox Church re-consecrated St. Giragos, an Armenian church near Lake Van in Turkey. That church has recently been renovated.

I would also say that on November 11, 2010, Turkish authorities returned a former orphanage on Princess Island to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate following a decision by the European Court on Human Rights. On this occasion, the attorney representing the Patriarchate declared, "This marks a first in Europe. Turkey became the first country to implement a decision of the ECHR by returning the property. This should be an example for other countries."

So I think it's very clear that Turkey is moving in the right direction. They

do not need to be condemned, in my view. They are a vital ally of the U.S.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to add an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from California from my allotted time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California is recognized for 2½ minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

The adoption of H. Res. 306 would add the powerful voice of the United States Congress to the defense of religious freedom for Christians in present-day Turkey and reinforce the traditional leadership of Congress in defending freedom of faith around the world.

I want to identify myself with the comments of the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) on putting this resolution in context by noting the Armenian genocide and how that sets the stage for everything we're talking about here.

□ 2220

H. Res. 306 is urgently needed to address the destruction of Christian religious heritage as a result of the Turkish Government's theft, desecration and disregard of ancient Christian sites and churches, many of them holding great significance to Christian heritage.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom raises the following alarm in its 2001 report: "The Turkish Government continues to impose serious limitations on freedom of religion or belief, thereby threatening the continued vitality and survival of minority religious communities in Turkey."

Churches in Turkey have been desecrated. The adoption of H. Res. 306 would support the Christian communities within Turkey that remain vulnerable and are forced to endure restrictions on their right to practice their faith in freedom. For example, and this is just one example, of the over 2,000 Armenian churches that existed in the early 1900s, less than 100 remain standing and fully functioning today.

This resolution is supported by the co-chairs of the Armenian, Hellenic, and Human Rights Caucuses. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has for 3 years straight placed Turkey on its watch list.

In 2009, Bartholomew I, the Ecumenical Christian Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople, appeared on CBS's "60 Minutes" and reported that Turkey's Christians were second-class citizens and that he personally felt "crucified" by a state that wanted his church to die out.

Church property is routinely confiscated through discriminatory laws. The United States Commission on Religious Freedom reported that over the

previous 5 decades, the Turkish state has, using convoluted regulations and undemocratic laws, confiscated hundreds of religious minority properties, primarily those belonging to the Greek Orthodox community, as well as the Armenian Orthodox, Catholics, and Jews.

It is time to add the voice of the American Congress in an effort to make sure that Turkey meets its international responsibilities.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time to close.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I may make one other comment about Turkey. We all know that with the Arab Spring and the movement toward more free governments in the Middle East, that Prime Minister Erdogan has been one of the real leaders. He has spoken up against Syria. He has spoken up against Egypt. He has spoken against Tunisia and other countries and has been a real leader in trying to bring about a measure of freedom in that area.

I might also say that the time period that has been discussed earlier, about the early 1900s, of course during World War I when a lot of these things took place, the Ottoman Empire was fighting for its existence at that time. There were a lot of atrocities that took place on both sides.

But as I said, this resolution, there is certainly not anything in this resolution for anyone to oppose; but I think we should recognize that Turkey is making great strides, that they are returning properties, that they are taking a step, as has been pointed out by Secretary of State Clinton and by the religious watch organizations and others.

Mr. BERMAN had requested that I yield some time, and I would be happy to yield time.

Mr. BERMAN. I would be very grateful if the gentleman would yield 2 minutes to my friend from New York, a distinguished member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. ENGEL.

Mr. WHITFIELD. I would be happy to yield.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York is recognized for 2 minutes.

Mr. ENGEL. I thank the gentleman from California and also the gentleman from Kentucky for yielding to me.

I rise in support of the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I have become increasingly concerned with the direction of Turkey in the past few years. It has elected an Islamist government which has pushed the country toward Iran and into conflict with Israel. While I am relieved that Ankara is now taking a strong stand against the repression in Syria, finally, much needs to change in Turkey. In particular, Turkey, which has such a profound connection with the birth and growth of Christianity, has today expropriated church properties, harassed worshipers, and re-

fused to grant full legal status to some Christian groups.

In fact, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom placed Turkey on its watch list for the third straight year, and concluded that “the Turkish Government continues to impose serious limitations on freedom of religion or belief, thereby threatening the continued vitality and survival of religious communities in Turkey.”

I, therefore, rise in strong support of H. Res. 306, which urges Turkey to return stolen Christian churches to the Armenian, Greek, Assyrian and Syriac communities and to end discrimination against surviving Christians.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. I am pleased to yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), the cochair of the Armenian Caucus.

Mr. PALLONE. Thank you, Mr. BERMAN.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in support of H. Res. 306, urging the Republic of Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties. As an original cosponsor of this resolution, I believe that its adoption is critically important to showing that the U.S. Congress will not remain silent while countries such as Turkey violate basic religious freedoms.

This resolution is needed because the sad reality is that minority religious communities in Turkey daily face oppressive policies propagated by the Turkish Government. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has found that the “Turkish Government’s formal, long-standing efforts to control religion by imposing suffocating regulations and by denying full legal status to religious institutions results in serious religious freedom violations.” The commission has recommended that the U.S. urge Turkey to comply with its international commitments regarding freedom of religion or belief, and that is exactly what this resolution does.

Now, many within Turkey today and many more have fled religious persecution over the past century, knowing the frightening consequences that religious persecution has had on Christians and their churches. Each year the Armenian Issues Caucus, which I co-chair, gathers to commemorate the Armenian genocide. Over a million Armenians were killed in the genocide over 90 years ago, but Armenians in Turkey and their churches and landmarks and cemeteries continue to be targets for Turkish persecution.

I wanted to mention to my colleague, and I respect my colleague from Kentucky a great deal, but the fact of the matter is that Turkey has never admitted that the genocide has occurred. You mentioned that during World War I there were problems on both sides. But the fact of the matter is that over 1 million Armenians were massacred

and their churches and everything continue to be targets today.

The resolution further calls on Turkey to stop its oppressive policies towards the education of Greek priests and its overt attempts to pressure the Ecumenical Patriarchate to leave his home country. Can you imagine, they’re asking the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church to leave Turkey where he and the Patriarchate have been for, I don’t know, 2,000 years.

So I really believe if you believe we should have freedom to practice your religion without interference of oppressive governments, then you should vote “yes” on this resolution. The fact of the matter is that Turkey continues to do all of these things. The suggestion I know my colleague from Kentucky has made that somehow they’re doing a better job, I mean, it is just very token and there are just as many instances where they continue the oppression compared to those few where maybe they’ve tried.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is recognized for 1½ minutes.

Mr. BERMAN. We want Turkey to follow through on its commitment to return confiscated property of Christian communities and to provide compensation for properties that can’t be recovered. We want Christian communities in Turkey to enjoy the same rights and privileges that religious minorities enjoy in this country.

□ 2230

We want Turkey to acknowledge the Armenian genocide. This is not too much to ask. In fact, that is the minimum we must ask if Turkey is ever to join the ranks of the world’s fully free nations.

I commend my good friend and colleague, Mr. ROYCE, for introducing this resolution and working with me closely on this critical issue, and I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I might also say that in order to ensure the future viability of the Orthodox Church, the appointment of non-Turkish citizen metropolitans to the Patriarchate’s Holy Synod have been explicitly permitted in Turkey since 2004. Furthermore, in 2010, Turkey offered citizenship to metropolitans of foreign nationality who chose to apply. Additionally, issues regarding the residence permits of foreign clergy have been resolved.

I might also point out that I had mentioned earlier that the directorate of religious affairs in Turkey had made available one of the religious scholars in Turkey to conduct a seminar at Wesley Theological Seminary. I would also mention to the body that the South Korean Methodist Church has been evangelizing in parts of Turkey, and they have a church in Antakya,

which is one of the early Christian church sites that is located in Turkey, one of many, and they have been practicing their religion in Antakya.

And so I would say that I don't want people to leave here with the impression that Turkey is deliberately out there trying to deny religious freedom, because that simply is not the case. Now, maybe they have a way to go; but as I've said, there is certainly nothing in this resolution that refers to anything about a genocide. This is simply talking about religious freedom. And I wanted to simply point out the steps that Turkey has been taking and continues to take.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. In closing, Mr. Speaker, religious freedom is a foundation necessary, I believe, for any democracy. It's a freedom we here in America can enjoy, and, frankly, it is embedded so deeply in our culture that many of us tend to take these freedoms for granted. But, unfortunately, this same scenario does not exist around this globe, and I just have to tell you, Turkey has been identified on the religious freedom watch list for 3 straight years. I wish that weren't the case, but it is.

Frankly, I believe that what progress has come comes at least in part—in part—due to this type of pressure from religious freedom reports or from resolutions. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom allows us to gather nonpartisan information on countries that violate these fundamental human rights. And it's my understanding that in 2008 the Government of Turkey claimed they would return confiscated properties, but out of 1,400 claims, less than 100 were approved.

Now, we have close relations with Turkey. We have common interests. And this is a friendly urging that it do more on this important issue and, frankly, one that Turkey itself has committed to improving on. But, that said, with some of the statements made here today, I have to comment on an issue of which I have some personal knowledge, or memory.

When I was a young boy, I remember very well an Armenian in our community, a very elderly Armenian, who was the sole Armenian in his village to survive the Armenian genocide. And the reason he survived was because one of his neighbors hid him. And he told me the story of the atrocities that occurred there.

Now, for our Ambassador, Henry Morgenthau, who detailed what was going on while he was Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, this was not something that happened in theory. It was a genocide that cost a million and a half human lives. And the fact that even today Turkey does not acknowledge the existence of that Armenian genocide in the Ottoman Empire, I think, should still give us pause. When we're dealing with the remnants of the population of what was once a sizeable percentage of the population of that area, when we're dealing with a question of what remains, 1 percent Greek and Armenian heritage and ethnicity

that remains in Turkey today, I think it is only proper that when we have this kind of report that comes back to us from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, and it details the fact that for 3 years running, rather than make progress, we have seen backsliding, I think it is time for this body to take the position and send the message: Return that confiscated property to its rightful owners; allow that small minority that remains, that wants to practice their faith, allow them to practice their faith and allow them to continue in their schools so that the next generation that wishes to follow in that tradition can do so. That's the request here.

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

Mr. WHITFIELD. In conclusion, I would just say and reiterate once again that, in the 13th Annual Report on International Religious Freedom, the U.S. Department of State also underscored Turkey's recent efforts during the reporting period, the government took steps, important steps, to improve religious freedom. These positive statements have replaced the status of no change in the situation regarding the religious freedom in Turkey.

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, as a co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Turkey and Turkish Americans, I rise to question the necessity for consideration of H. Res. 306, urging the Republic of Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties, especially in light of recent developments undertaken by the Turkish government. The current government of Turkey has taken steps to deal with the issue of religious properties.

By amending its Law on Foundations in August 2011, Turkey's statute has been improved and expanded, providing that the "immovable properties, cemeteries and fountains" of non-Muslim religious entities—referred to as community foundations in Turkey—recorded in Turkey's 1936 Declaration, and "registered in the name of Turkish public institutions," will be returned to the entities upon request. Additionally, provisions are made for the Turkish Treasury or the Directorate General of Foundations to compensate non-Muslim entities for properties that are currently registered in the name of third parties. Accordingly, those communities for whom the law is applicable will be able to have their properties registered in their own names, or be compensated.

In addition to this great step forward, Turkey has eased its citizenship requirements for Orthodox senior clergy, and in compliance with the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights, returned to the Ecumenical Patriarchate its orphanage on the Princes' Islands.

Praising the Turkish government on September 13, 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said, "We have also seen Turkey take serious steps to improve the climate for religious tolerance. The Turkish government issued a

decree in August that invited non-Muslims to reclaim churches and synagogues that were confiscated 75 years ago. I applaud Prime Minister Erdogan's very important commitment in doing so."

H. Res 306 was first introduced on June 15, 2011, and does not recognize the developments on the ground since that time, nor does it take a regional approach to these questions. If Turkey is singled out, it should be for praise regarding progress that has been made.

Mr. GRIMM. Mr. Speaker, I applaud Congressman ROYCE for introducing H. Res. 306, Urging the Republic of Turkey to Safeguard its Christian Heritage and to Return Confiscated Church Properties, and thank him for his leadership in ensuring this important legislation is considered by the full House of Representatives. As a cosponsor of this resolution I strongly support its passage and encourage my fellow members to join me in voting in favor of this bill.

While Turkey considers itself a secular democracy, in reality this is simply not the case. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has classified Turkey one of the world's top violators of religious freedom. Out of a population of roughly 76.8 million people, the country's religious make-up is 99 percent Muslim (mainly Sunni) and 1 percent Christian, Bahai, and Jewish.

Regulations imposed upon minority religious groups, specifically Christians who make up less than 1 percent of the nation's population, serve to deny religious equality within Turkey. For example, national identification cards have a line item that displays one's religion, and while people are allowed to omit their religion on their I.D. card, it clearly marks individuals as non-Muslim.

Despite Turkey's obligations under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, the government has not recognized minority religious communities, such as the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Greek Orthodox Church, as independent entities with full legal status. The Turkish government's policies go so far as to deny non-Muslim communities the rights to train religious clergy, offer religious education, and own and maintain places of worship, leading to the decline, and in some cases the virtual disappearance, of these important religious and historical communities.

Through its expropriation of church properties, continued harassment of worshippers, and refusal to grant full legal status under Turkish law to some Christian groups, the Republic of Turkey has failed to fulfill its obligation as a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which requires "freedom of thought, conscience, and religion."

This resolution "Urging the Republic of Turkey to Safeguard its Christian Heritage and to Return Confiscated Church Properties" calls upon the government of Turkey to end religious discrimination, cease all restrictions on gatherings for religious prayer and education, and return stolen church property. On behalf of my Greek, Cypriot and Armenian American constituents in New York's 13th Congressional district, I strongly support the passage of this important resolution and encourage my colleagues to stand against religious persecution throughout the world.

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 306, urging the Republic of Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties.

Sadly, this resolution is necessary in order to address the tragic destruction of Christian

religious heritage in Turkey. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), which has put Turkey on its “watch list” for three straight years, said earlier this year that “the Turkish government continues to impose serious limitations on freedom of religion or belief, thereby threatening the continued vitality and survival of minority religious communities in Turkey.”

Churches in Turkey have been desecrated and destroyed. Just a century ago, there were over 2,000 Armenian churches in Turkey, but less than 100 remain standing and fully functioning today.

Discriminatory laws in Turkey have led to confiscation of church property. The USCIRF has reported, “Over the previous five decades, the [Turkish] state has, using convoluted regulations and undemocratic laws to confiscate hundreds of religious minority properties, primarily those belonging to the Greek Orthodox community, as well as Armenian Orthodox, Catholics, and Jews. . . . The state also has closed seminaries, denying these communities the right to train clergy.”

In particular, the Turkish government has closed the Halki Theological School for over three decades, despite repeated protests from the United States and Christians from around the world. The school had been a primary training center for educating future Greek priests and Church leaders, and, as a result, its closure is having terrible effects on those of the Greek Orthodox faith.

As a Nation founded on the principles of religious liberty, we must stand up against desecration of churches in Turkey, the closing of seminaries, the intimidation of religious minorities and the confiscation of the Ecumenical Patriarch’s property. I urge support for this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 306, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM WELLS FARGO

(Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, the extraneous material is a letter I’m sending to Wells Fargo Bank about Mrs. Darlene Bowland, a 68-year-old mother fighting cancer and Wells Fargo Bank.

Darlene lived in a modest home in San Jose for 41 years until she was evicted a week before Thanksgiving. At the time, Darlene was too weak from chemotherapy to pack up her own boxes. We appealed to the bank. They knew about her cancer and her chemotherapy, but they didn’t care. She owned her home free and clear at one time but was a victim of a pay loan, a way to confuse her and basically steal her home.

Mr. Speaker, Wells Fargo earned record profits last quarter, and in 2010 the CEO, John Stumpf, earned more than \$17 million in compensation. This Christmas, Mrs. Bowland will be couch surfing with chemotherapy, while Mr. Stumpf will be enjoying his \$17 million salary and her home in San Jose stays vacant.

Merry Christmas from Wells Fargo.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 13, 2011.

Re Ms. Darlene Bowland

Mr. JOHN G. STUMPF,

Chief Executive Officer, Wells Fargo, Montgomery St, San Francisco, CA.

DEAR MR. STUMPF: Darlene Bowland is a 68-year-old woman fighting cancer and Wells Fargo Bank. She lived alone in a modest home in San Jose, California until she was evicted by Wells Fargo Bank a week before Thanksgiving, even though she had no place else to go. Wells Fargo Bank knew all about Darlene’s tragic circumstances, but apparently did not care.

Darlene lived in her home for 41 years and at one time owned it free and clear. She and her former husband raised their children there. Although Darlene lost her small cleaning business to the recession a few years ago and now struggles to make ends meet, she was proud of her house. She spent what little energy she had after her cancer treatments tending to her garden. That’s where she found some measure of peace.

Not anymore.

Darlene is just one of many victims of a World Savings loan product called a “pick-a-pay” that she was tricked into and could not afford. Make no mistake. Darlene is a victim. Pick-a-pay loans were designed to trap unwary homeowners into owing more than they borrowed, assuring the banks that sold them a captive audience that would need to continually refinance or face foreclosure. These unscrupulous banks and loan brokers used the voluminous, complex and impossible to understand loan documents that make up a pick-a-pay loan to steal Darlene’s house in broad daylight.

Wells Fargo was able to file an unlawful detainer and get a summary judgment that allowed them to evict Darlene, even though Darlene had sued Wells Fargo claiming she was defrauded. She was too weak from chemotherapy to pack up her own boxes.

Wells Fargo earned record profits last quarter. Your 2010 compensation was more than \$17 million. Do you know this woman with cancer is now couch-surfing because you’ve evicted her through foreclosure on her home just before the holidays? Instead of waking up in her house Christmas morning, Darlene’s house will instead sit vacant.

Sincerely,

ZOE LOFGREN,
Member of Congress.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o’clock and 37 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, December 14, 2011, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

BUDGETARY EFFECTS OF PAYGO LEGISLATION

Pursuant to section 6004 of H.R. 3630 (112th Congress), Mr. RYAN (WI) is re-

quired to submit a statement in the record, prior to the vote on passage, on the budgetary and deficit effects of H.R. 3630, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2011, for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Section 6004 of H.R. 3630 provides that the Office of Management and Budget should not take into account the budgetary effects for the purposes of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act (PL 111-139) if the bill would not increase the deficit for the period of fiscal years 2012 through 2021.

Section 6005 of H.R. 3630 provides that the decrease in the deficit is determined on the basis of the change in total outlays and total revenue of the Federal government, including the estimated off-budget effects, the estimated effects of the changes to the discretionary spending limits set forth in section 251 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, and the estimate of the change in net income to the National Flood Insurance Program, resulting from the enactment of H.R. 3630. Based on the estimates provided by the Congressional Budget Office on H.R. 3630, taking those effects into account, the legislation would reduce the deficit by \$5,833 billion for the period of fiscal years 2012 through 2021. As a result, the effects of this legislation should not be taken into account for the purposes of statutory pay-as-you-go.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table and referred as follows:

4276. A letter from the Secretary of the Commission, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting the Commission’s “Major” final rule — Derivatives Clearing Organization General Provisions and Core Principles (RIN: 3038-AC98) received November 29, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

4277. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency’s final rule — Saflufenacil; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2010-1026; FRL-9325-2] received December 2, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

4278. A letter from the Chief Counsel, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department’s final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations [Docket ID: FEMA-2011-0002] received November 21, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

4279. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting the Commission’s “Major” final rule — Testing and Labeling Pertaining to Product Certification [CPSC Docket No.: CPSC-2010-0038] received November 30, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4280. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulations and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department’s “Major” final rule — Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Fluorescent Lamp Ballasts [Docket Number: EE-