

hope you will think about the 25 percent increase that we have seen in the first quarter of 2016 in citizenship applications, the 8.8 million eligible immigrants who can apply for citizenship today, and the thousands more who will be eligible before November.

Sure, you can chomp on your taco salad, Mr. Speaker, and you can concentrate on the 11 million or so undocumented immigrants who are daily targets of lies and slander on the campaign trail, but come November, the Latinos you will really have to worry about are the more than 27 million Latino citizens, like me, of the U.S.A. who are your constituents, who are eligible to vote, and who are fired up to vote more and more with each passing day.

ATROCITIES IN SYRIA AND AMERICA'S MISSION TO BE AN EXEMPLAR OF SELF-GOVERNANCE

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

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, Bill Clinton once said, when asked what his greatest regret was of his time in office, that his greatest regret was the failure to act on the genocide in Rwanda.

Mr. Speaker, today, over a half million Syrians have been killed by a brutal dictator, Bashar al-Assad. What I think is important to note is that a lot of times when we talk about something happening somewhere that is not here, we think of it as something that doesn't affect us because these people may look different, maybe they speak a different language, maybe they worship a different God, and, frankly, it is oceans away.

Mr. Speaker, right here is just a picture of a number of Syrian children. These are children who are having their lives torn up by war. It is children, in fact, just like these that in past years were gassed by Bashar al-Assad.

I want you to imagine that, gassing. As you drown, knowing that you are taking among your last breaths; as your mom and dad sit there and are affected by the same chemical weapons and are watching their children die. It is tragic. That was done indiscriminately by Bashar al-Assad.

But that is nothing new for him. Bashar al-Assad learned from the greatest man he knew—his father—who leveled cities and killed tens of thousands who dared disobey his will, the will of one man.

So in 2011, these generations of repressed Syrians who do not like to live under dictatorships—humanity does not like to be oppressed and live under dictatorship—these millions of citizens rose up and began to peacefully protest their dictator. How did the dictator respond? Did he talk about reforms that could be done to government? No. He responded with tanks, with armies, and with murder. He responded with chemical weapons.

The United States and other countries were rightfully concerned with what was going on, and a red line was placed by our President. That red line was not adhered to. Bashar al-Assad got away with using chemical weapons at no cost and no penalty. So this brutal civil war continues.

Children and women are among the chief targets, by the way, of the regime because they believe it inflicts more pain per capita on the population than killing a man. So they target them specifically. They continue to die.

The West thought they had negotiated—and the President thought he had negotiated—a cease-fire; but yet, in the end of April, a Doctors Without Borders hospital was bombed. Was it the one we hear so much about in Afghanistan, the mistaken bombing of a Doctors Without Borders hospital that was tragically done by the American military? No, not that one, as tragic as that is. But it was the regime of Bashar al-Assad that killed over 60 people in a Doctors Without Borders hospital, despite a cease-fire that is occurring. Now we are back at the table hoping to make this one cease-fire actually stick.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, in this campaign season people have been seductively lured into the idea that America's responsibility now is just to come home and lick our wounds. I believe that America has a mission that is a God-inspired mission. It is a mission to be an example to billions of people of self-governance and to be an example of human rights and dignity. But it is also in our self-interest to be involved.

What has the brutal dictator Bashar al-Assad done besides tragically kill almost a half million people, as if that is not bad enough? Bashar al-Assad has created an area for ISIS to spawn and breed. ISIS wouldn't be in existence today if Syria was a stable country potentially under democratic rule because the people wouldn't turn to it. Bashar al-Assad created and incubates ISIS—fact. Bashar al-Assad brutalizes his people, and you can not fix the situation in Syria with Bashar al-Assad remaining in existence.

It may not be popular to say. People may say: Do you want to intervene in another Middle Eastern war? No, I don't want to. But I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, America has a mission; and if we forget that mission, if we wake up and if the President some day in an interview says, "My greatest regret was inaction in Syria," that is on all of us, too.

These children want to be teachers, they want to be police officers, and they want to have kids of their own some day. Don't forget their voices.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF DR. PHIL SMITH OF NEBRASKA MEDICINE

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

Mr. ASHFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the retirement of Dr. Phil Smith of Nebraska Medicine at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Over 35 years ago, Dr. Smith established the Nebraska Infection Control Network to educate healthcare professionals regarding infection control in nursing homes and hospitals.

Dr. Smith is a pioneer in the field of infectious disease, and his perseverance and dedication led to the establishment of the very critical biocontainment unit at Nebraska Medicine in 2005. Commissioned by the Centers for Disease Control, the unit was at ground zero in the fight against Ebola, providing Ebola training to more than 30 of the country's top hospitals while successfully treating several Ebola patients. Dr. Rick Sacra, who contracted the disease in West Africa, credits the Omaha unit with saving his life.

Recently, Dr. Smith codeloped the Center for Preparedness Education, a coalition between the University of Nebraska Medical Center and Creighton University Medical Center.

It is very difficult to sum up this career that he has had. What is critical, though, is that the Ebola problem and crisis is not going away.

The University of Nebraska Medical Center, the community that I come from, Omaha, Nebraska, and the entire State of Nebraska are committed to fighting Ebola. It will continue to do so by developing an even more significant biocontainment center, developing teaching regimens, and developing research regimens at the University of Nebraska Medical Center to fight Ebola and other infectious diseases.

It is difficult to sum up the career that Dr. Smith has had, but I will quote this. He says: "Patient care has been part of my life. It's a noble profession, and nothing beats the gratification of making a diagnosis and helping a patient."

Nothing is more critical than the treatment of the Ebola crisis at the University of Nebraska. Saving lives, creating an atmosphere for further research, and creating a facility for training healthcare professionals from around the world is the mission that the University of Nebraska has taken up.

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Dr. Smith's contributions to Nebraska and our Nation are immeasurable, and we are grateful for his service.

Interestingly enough, the University of Nebraska biocontainment unit is now in the capable hands of Dr. Angie Hewitt, who is the daughter of one of our colleagues, Representative GENE GREEN of Texas. Dr. Hewitt will continue the work that Dr. Smith has begun and will continue to enlarge and engage the world in the fight against infectious disease.

ISRAEL AND U.S. MUST FACE
COMMON THREATS TOGETHER

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Israel has always been surrounded by threats. Since it was established, Israel has survived Arab armies waiting at its borders to destroy the Jewish state. It has persisted in the face of suicide bombers and terrorist onslaughts like no other country in history. Recently the threats to Israel have increased and become even more dangerous.

Iran's Supreme Leader has stated clearly that he wants to destroy Israel. Thanks to the nuclear deal made by the administration, it is only a matter of time before the mullahs in Iran develop a nuclear weapon.

The Iran deal will go down in history as one of the administration's worst foreign policy mistakes. This Neville Chamberlain deal ensured that Iran gets to keep enriching uranium. It does not have to dismantle any of its nuclear infrastructure. So, in 10 years, Tehran just has to flip a switch to get a nuclear bomb, and Israel is the first target. Tehran wants to put the entire Middle East under its thumb.

Iran continues to defy U.N. security resolutions on ballistic missiles. Since the nuclear deal was signed, Iran has conducted three ballistic missile tests. Some of the previously launched missiles were even marked in Hebrew with the words "Israel must be wiped off the Earth."

There is more. Iran has announced that it would give \$7,000 to families of Palestinians who murder Israelis and an additional \$30,000 to every family whose home Israel demolished due to the family's involvement in terrorism.

The Iranian mullahs have hate and murder in their souls, and they want to eliminate Israel. The fact that the administration gave a \$100 billion signing bonus in sanctions relief to a regime that consorts with North Korea and sends terrorist proxies to do its bidding is a really bad foreign policy.

There is more. Iran has sent Hezbollah to go after Israelis around the world. Hezbollah now has an estimated 150,000 rockets and missiles in its stockpile. That is enough to rain down thousands of rockets a day on Israel for months.

In fact, Iran has transferred new game-changing advanced weapons to the terrorist group Hezbollah. This includes antiship cruise missiles, air defense systems, and precision-guided surface-to-surface missiles.

Then there is Hamas in the south. In Gaza, Israeli officials now believe that Hamas has completely replenished all of its rocket supply that Israel destroyed 2 years ago.

Hamas is building a sophisticated network of tunnels under the Gaza Strip for the purpose of securing arms and supplies. This tunnel network has only one purpose: to strike at the heart of the Israeli population centers.

More. Since September, Palestinian lone-wolf terrorists have carried out hundreds of vicious attacks against Israeli citizens. These terrorists will do anything to kill. They ram vehicles into civilians, shoot indiscriminately, and stab anybody in the way.

Immediately following the first attack, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas proclaimed: "We welcome every drop of blood spilled in Jerusalem. This is pure blood, blood on its way to Allah."

This latest wave of attacks has killed 34 people and injured 400. Among those killed were two Americans, and one of them was a citizen of Texas, Taylor Force. These terrorists are only happy when they have destroyed Israeli and American families wherever they find them.

ISIS, which is even more brutal than al Qaeda, controls large parts of Syria. These terrorists no doubt view Israel as a threat and will likely turn to attacking the Jewish state in due time.

Those who threaten Israel, Mr. Speaker, threaten the United States. The same terrorist groups that want to destroy Israel want to destroy the United States. The same Iran that calls Israel the "Little Satan" calls the United States the "Great Satan."

Mr. Speaker, Israel is a bright star, the lone star of liberty, freedom, and democracy in the Middle East. The villains that want Israel destroyed are picking a fight with the wrong folks. They will lose that fight because Israel and the United States will work together, no matter who the enemy is, for liberty, justice, and freedom not only for Israel, but for the United States.

And that is just the way it is.

DR. KENT SCRIBNER

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

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, before I get into my remarks, I want to share a story about a conversation that I had with one of my colleagues here on the House floor. It was a colleague from Arizona.

I asked the colleague: How is the new superintendent that is coming to the Fort Worth Independent School District, Dr. Scribner?

The colleague told me how lucky we were to be getting Dr. Scribner from the Phoenix Independent School District because he has done such a remarkable job there and that the community was really saddened, but happy for him that he was given the opportunity to come and work in one of Texas' largest independent school districts.

I want to rise today to lend my unwavering support for a respected educator that has made a mark very quickly in the Fort Worth community, and that is Dr. Kent Scribner.

Dr. Scribner is a dedicated educator who is leading, again, one of the larg-

est school systems in the entire State of Texas. But recently he has come under attack from centralized forces in Austin that don't believe in local control and, by the way, would like to actually take money out of the Fort Worth ISD and let that money be used for poor-performing schools in the form of school vouchers.

What Dr. Scribner is under attack for from Austin is by trying to protect transgender students. Under the guidelines issued by Dr. Scribner, transgender students are allowed to use the bathroom and locker room of their choice.

Teachers are to address them by the pronoun that reflects the student's gender identity. Staff are to protect a student's privacy about decisions to transition from one gender to another. An employee who does not comply with these rules could face discipline.

It also protects other students. It says that students who do not feel comfortable using a bathroom with a transgender student are provided a reasonable and safe accommodation for them as well.

These guidelines, unlike it was first reported, were not developed in isolation. The Fort Worth School Board has been working on these policies since 2014 and drafted a new set of guidelines last summer.

Instead of condemning Dr. Scribner, we should applaud his leadership because it encourages an environment that protects our children's safety. Dr. Scribner has children, also, I want to make clear, in the Fort Worth Independent School District, and I doubt that he would want to subject his children to an environment that he didn't feel was safe.

Many transgender students simply cannot use the restroom or locker room of the gender they were assigned at birth. Asking transgender students to use a separate restroom, like a faculty restroom, singles them out and increases the risk of bullying. Transgender students should not also have to face bullying from government officials.

Allowing transgender students to use the correct restroom is just telling them that they can use the restroom like anyone else. Doing otherwise would tell them that they are unwelcome at the school they attend. Restricting restroom access for transgender students goes against the consensus of medical professionals and mental health experts.

The guidelines that Dr. Scribner has issued are similar to those adopted by hundreds of school districts around the country. Let me just also tell you that Dr. Scribner has a lot of good backup in what he is doing. These best practices are supported by the Child Welfare League of America, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, and the Texas Council on Family Violence.

Dr. Scribner's leadership is especially commendable at a time when we are