



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, MAY 22, 2017

No. 88

House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GALLAGHER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 22, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE GALLAGHER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

FREE RAIF BADAWI AND ALL PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE IN SAUDI ARABIA

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, June 17 will mark the fifth anniversary of the arrest of Raif Badawi, a human activist and writer who created the website "Free Saudi Liberals." He is a prisoner of conscience sentenced to 1,000 lashes, 10 years in prison, and a 10-year travel ban for exercising his fundamental right to freedom of expression.

He was convicted of violating Saudi Arabia's draconian information technology law and "insulting Islam."

Since his imprisonment in 2012, Raif's case has garnered international attention and outrage. For the courage he displayed as a free-speech advocate, he has won many awards, including the Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Prize in 2014, the PEN Pinter International Writer of Courage Prize, and the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2015.

His writings were a breath of fresh air in a country that ranks 168 out of 180 in Reporters Without Borders 2017 World Press Freedom Index.

In January 2015, Raif received the first 50 of the 1,000 lashes ordered by the so-called court that sentenced him. Try to imagine what that means, what it would feel like to have someone whip you 50 times in a row, what it would do to your body, and how it would cut you up and make you bleed. The lashing was carried out in public in front of a mosque as men stood around and cheered. It was barbaric.

A week after the first session of flogging, a doctor advised prison authorities that Raif's wounds had not healed enough for him to undergo the second round of this brutal punishing. To date, the lashings have not continued, but they could resume at any time.

Last year, Raif had to resort to a hunger strike to get access to healthcare. It has been 5 years since he has seen his wife, Ensaf, and his three children. They are growing up, and he is missing it because he dared to write what he thought.

I am sorry to say that Raif is not an isolated case. Reporters Without Borders has identified another 10 journalists and citizen journalists detained in Saudi Arabia.

Waleed Abu al-Khair, a prominent human rights defender and Raif's lawyer, was sentenced to 15 years in prison for "harming the reputation of the

state by communicating with international organizations" and other supposed crimes, like "insulting the judiciary and questioning the integrity of judges" and "disobeying the ruler and seeking to remove his legitimacy."

Many other human rights defenders are in prison for doing things like setting up human rights organizations without permission and calling for protests. All of the founders of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association have been wrongfully put on trial or imprisoned.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that Saudi Arabia is an ally of the United States, but we also know that Saudi Arabia's human rights record is terrible. According to our own State Department, "The most important human rights problems include citizens' lack of ability and legal means to choose their government, restrictions on universal rights such as freedom of expression, including on the internet, association, movement, and religion, and pervasive gender discrimination and lack of equal rights that affect most aspects of women's lives."

That is not exactly a short list, Mr. Speaker. Yet the President of the United States just traveled to Saudi Arabia without saying a single word in public about human rights, without speaking up even once on behalf of all the people who are wasting away in jails because they chose to defend a client, advocate for minorities, or call for reform.

The President wants to buy cooperation in the fight against extremism with a \$110 billion arms deal, but Saudi Arabia will not achieve security or stability by repressing peaceful dissent. On the contrary, repression creates the conditions for extremism.

Haven't we learned that lesson by now?

Senator JOHN MCCAIN, a former prisoner of war, understands what the President does not. We in the United

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H4393

States have long believed moral concerns must be an essential part of our foreign policy, not a departure from it. Our values are our great strength and greatest treasure. We have been the country that saw the world as it was and made it better.

Mr. Speaker, I am here today in the best tradition of the United States to call for the immediate and unconditional release of Raif Badawi, who must be allowed to be reunited with his wife and children in Canada. And I call also for all of the other prisoners of conscience in Saudi Arabia to be released.

The United States must not be silent while people sit in prison for exercising their most basic human rights.

RECOGNITION OF FALLEN OFFICERS JASON GARNER AND RASCHEL JOHNSON

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

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, today I sadly rise to honor two fallen officers from my community, Stanislaus County Sheriff's Deputy Jason Garner, and Community Service Officer Raschel Johnson.

Deputy Garner and Officer Johnson tragically left this Earth on Saturday, May 13, 2017, as a result of a vehicular collision while en route to a reported residential burglary in Modesto. Both were committed public servants whose watches ended all too soon.

Deputy Garner served with the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department for 9½ years in the operations division and 1 year 3 months in the adult detention division. He was well-liked on both sides of the department. During his time in service to our community, he was recognized for a wide range of accomplishments, including assisting a mother in locating her daughter at Oakdale Reservoir, working with junior high students from Big Valley Christian School to conduct a successful graffiti wipeout for our community, and assisting the probation department and their firearms instructors with radio training to improve their communication skills with the dispatch center.

Officer Johnson was a 15-year veteran of Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department who was known for going above and beyond. During her time with the department, she was recognized for her contributions to her team as well as our community, which included receiving the Sheriff's Award for Excellence for coordinating the model of the Patterson Police Services substation. She also helped to develop a program to more effectively dispatch community service officers and deputies, and she assisted with the 2006 homicide investigation of California Highway Patrol Officer Earl Scott.

Both Deputy Garner and Officer Johnson leave behind an entire community who grieve their loss. Their

bravery and committed service will never be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the lives of Stanislaus County Sheriff's Deputy Jason Garner and Community Service Officer Raschel Johnson. My deepest gratitude and sympathies go out to their families and our law enforcement community as they forge ahead without their loved ones. May God bless and keep them always.

RECOGNIZING MILITARY CAREGIVERS

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

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, during Military Caregiver Month, I would like to recognize a population of heroes who often remain in the shadows: military caregivers.

Currently there are over 5 million military and veteran caregivers in the United States. This number continues to grow as our troops abroad place themselves in harm's way.

I recently sat down with one of my heroes, Senator Elizabeth Dole, who shed a light on this important population. While she spent time with Kansas Senator Bob Dole at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in 2011, she noticed the many caregivers around her and the unique challenges that they face. Following this discovery, she established a foundation to raise awareness and serve as a resource for these hidden heroes.

I am a proud member of the Hidden Heroes Caucus, which raises awareness and develops legislation in support of caregivers. I urge my colleagues to join this wonderful congressional caucus of hidden heroes.

STROKE AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to address Stroke Awareness Month. Stroke is the Nation's number five killer, the second leading cause of dementia, and one of the leading causes of long-term disability.

During this important month of awareness, we in Congress must realize that we have a chance to make a difference. The FAST Act would expand access to telehealth-eligible home stroke services under Medicare.

I have personally witnessed one of Kansas' greatest victories in healthcare, where my alma mater, Kansas University Medical Center, led the Kansas Stroke Collaborative, where, through telemedicine, we have saved thousands of lives and prevented literally hundreds—perhaps thousands—of long-term injuries as well.

The American Stroke Association says that 80 percent of strokes are preventable, and the more strokes we end, the more lives we will save.

Strokes kill more than 133,000 Americans annually. We can bring that number down, and I hope my colleagues will join us in that effort. As a physician, I know how important and, in

many cases, how necessary these services are. I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation and always remain open to innovative solutions in the medical industry, like telemedicine.

ERADICATING POLIO

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about something very near and dear to my heart: the efforts to eradicate polio.

Truly, Mr. Speaker, we are this close to ending polio. Once a widespread global epidemic, it is now only endemic in two countries: Afghanistan and Pakistan.

When I was district governor of Rotary just a few short years ago, we were reporting 17 to 18 cases per year. And I am so excited that we have only had 2 reported cases this year.

There is one organization that has led this charge, though many have helped, but Rotary has led this since 1979, literally vaccinating over 2.5 billion people in 122 countries.

As a former Rotary district governor, I spent some time this past weekend at Fort Hays State University celebrating Rotary and all we have done, including the celebration of international students and the peace awards that they receive through our scholarships.

There is no cure for polio. It is preventable by a very simple vaccine. It is vital that we aid these last handful of countries, get us over the finish line with these resources, and end our fight against polio so we can tell future generations: Like smallpox, polio is no longer in this country.

REMEMBERING PRESIDENT KENNEDY

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

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, today we are one week away from Memorial Day. On May 29, we will celebrate Memorial Day this year. But this also, remarkably, would be the 100th birthday of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

It is hard to believe when we think of President Kennedy, his youthful vigor, the popular appeal that he had not only in this country and around the world, and forever in our hearts and minds, that vision of grace and dignity and wit and humor and public service and dedication.

It was President Kennedy, of course, who said we will put a man on the Moon and do it within 10 years, and we did it in 9.

Amongst his great legacies, of course, is that President Kennedy founded and was the creator of the Peace Corps. President Kennedy felt in those troubling times when there was the threat of nuclear annihilation, that what we needed to do is send forward America's best, let the world see what America is truly about. So he engaged this great Nation in the effort of sending our brightest and best abroad.