EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN RECOGNITION OF THIS UNIQUE HOLIDAY SEASON

HON. HALEY M. STEVENS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 24, 2020

Ms. STEVENS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in acknowledgement of the harrowing trials faced by our nation in light of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. This Christmas holiday, I am holding the countless Americans who have experienced excruciating pain, uncertainty, and loss due to this crisis in my heart and in my thoughts.

I ask my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in paying tribute to all the brave men and women who have advanced our efforts to overcome this pandemic, and to honor all of those who have tragically lost their battles with this terrible disease. May this new year bring with it a renewed hope, strength, and commitment from Congress to deliver for the American people.

SUPPORT FOR $2,000 PAYMENTS FOR AMERICAN PEOPLE

HON. KWANZA HALL

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 24, 2020

Mr. HALL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address this make-or-break moment for the American people. For many months, House Democrats have been urging for a stimulus package that is commensurate to the problem that Americans face.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, 315,000 Americans have died, as a result of the Administration's mismanagement of the federal response to COVID–19. It has especially impacted the African-American community and other communities of color. Millions of jobs have been lost, countless small businesses have closed, and many others hospitalized. For the sake of controlling the virus we have all quarantined, as we eagerly await a vaccine. But this administration, aided by Congressional Republicans, have failed to deliver.

In the closing days of this 116th Congress and in the midst of a once-in-a-century pandemic, leaders from both parties were able to forge a compromise. It was not ideal—but it was something. I was proud to support this legislation. I was proud to support the agreement because it provided another round of $600 in economic stimulus checks and another $300 per-week in unemployment benefits, and it supports small businesses, which are the engines of our economy. It also provided funds to support local school districts and provides much-needed funds for coronavirus testing and vaccine distribution. I was also proud to help secure this legislation because it provides tens of billions in rent relief and an extension of the eviction moratorium.

Which is why the posturing coming from the current occupant of the White House on Tuesday night is so disconcerting.

On Tuesday night, after many months of sitting on the sidelines, and being completely absent from the negotiations that forged this compromise, the White House cast severe doubt on the deal we reached.

Now, the White House is proposing $2,000 payments. But make no mistake and as I said on Sunday night, mere moments after the deal was announced, the $600 payments were not enough and must only be a down-payment. The $1200 stimulus checks in the CARES Act from earlier this year was an important factor in controlling the economic fallout from the initial onset of the coronavirus, and I am disappointed that tonight that this Congress will not now act as we did in the Spring. The situation is more dire now and calls for more—not less—economic stimulus.

I fully support $2000 payments for our people and for Georgia's Fifth Congressional District. I've thought deeply about this and heard from so many resilient Georgians. Our people are so resilient but many of them are on their last leg. We cannot fail them in this critical hour. To delay, or worse, to risk doing nothing would be a grave mistake.

We must ensure that this recent posturing from the White House does not jeopardize the deal we secured on Sunday and which we passed on Monday. I fully support the Unanimous Consent request from the Speaker today and I urge colleagues in the Congress—on both sides of the aisle and on both sides of the Capitol—to support the $2000 payment but ensure that the support does not jeopardize that which we secured on Monday. Under no circumstance should the President exercise his veto power on the funding and prevent many desperate Georgians the relief they so desperately need.

Now is not the time to split hairs. Now is not the time to insist on legislative perfection if there even is a such thing.

We have so much to do to prepare the future but first I we must be able to get to the future.

PROTESTS IN INDIA

HON. ANDY LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 24, 2020

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I rise to condemn violence against Indians who are peacefully protesting laws they believe are unjust and stand with these peaceful protesters as they exercise a right that is fundamental in any functioning democracy.

Since last month, Indian farmers have protested new, hastily-passed agriculture laws that could weaken traditional markets where some agricultural goods are guaranteed a minimum price. As a longtime union organizer, I support these farmers, whose hard work has earned Punjab's moniker as ''India's bread basket.'' I have also been inspired by the solidarity demonstrated by diaspora communities from Cincinnati, to Melbourne, to Silicon Valley, to Canton Township, Michigan, just outside my district. One Michigander with family in India, Amrinder Grewal, told the Detroit News that these new laws were ''ruining their lives.''

I have also been heartened watching democracy in action in India and the popular support this movement is garnering throughout the nation and the global Indian diaspora. While I believe the Indian government should have consulted meaningfully with farmers before passing these laws, I welcome their efforts to engage with the protestors to ensure that legislation that affects these communities reflects their input and interests as well. At the same time, I'm concerned by reports that the Indian government has responded to the protestors with a heavy hand.

The BBC reported this month that protesters arrived in Delhi to find that ''tens of thousands of police and paramilitary troops were deployed to halt their march'' and ''in several places, police fired tear gas shells and used water cannons to try to beat them back.'' As winter sets in, the situation has grown more dire: almost 30 protesters have died, some succumbing to the freezing cold.

On behalf of my constituents who represent the vibrant Indian diaspora community and have rallied in support of these farmers, I call on the Indian government to respect the vital right to peaceful protest and to engage in good-faith talks to ensure farmers' livelihoods are preserved.

SUPPORTING OUR COMMITMENTS TO OUR FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES ALLIES

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 24, 2020

Mr. CASE. Madam Speaker, last year, I was proud to help create the first-ever Congressional Pacific Islands Caucus, which I co-chair along with four of my colleagues.

When we launched the Caucus, I noted that our country's and world's future lie in the Indo-Pacific, and that the island nations of the Pacific are a key yet too-often overlooked part of that region and future.

We have critical strategic interests and long-standing partnerships throughout the Pacific islands. Yet now our allies and friends and all other Pacific jurisdictions are increasingly under severe economic and environmental stress, and China is aggressively seeking to grow its influence. We cannot ignore these critical developments, and our new Caucus is dedicated to assuring that does not happen.

Among these nations are three with which we have an especially close relationship under

● This ''bullet'' symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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