

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, this resolution purports to protect the symbols of Christmas, but what really needs to be protected are not the symbols of Christmas, but rather the spirit of Christmas. The spirit of Christmas demands generosity and goodwill towards others.

Instead of legislation that respects the spirit of Christmas, Congress in just these past few weeks has passed a budget that includes mean-spirited attacks on the least of us. For those who are hungry, we are cutting food stamps. For those who are sick, we are cutting Medicaid. For those who are in prison, we are imposing senseless mandatory minimums. For others we are ignoring increases in heating costs and cutting student loans. At the same time we are cutting those programs to help the least of us, we are cutting taxes for the wealthiest in society.

Madam Speaker, we ought to express our passion for Christmas through deeds, not words; and we should not be distracted from our responsibility to uphold the spirit of Christmas as we consider the effects our actions on the Federal budget will have on the least of us during this holiday season.

For these reasons I oppose this resolution.

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. WEINER).

Mr. WEINER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I thank the gentleman from Nevada and the gentlewoman from Virginia.

The bottom line is there was a good-faith effort made by the gentleman from New York to change "recognizes the importance of the symbols and traditions of Christmas" to "the symbols of Christmas and Chanukah," and you said no.

It was an attempt to change "strongly disapproves of attempts to ban references to Christmas" to "ban references to Christmas and Kwanzaa," and you said no.

It was a chance to take this and put it into the words that the gentleman from Virginia, the gentlewoman from Florida earlier articulated, and the gentlewoman who is the sponsor says that she intends. The question must be, why? For someone who does not celebrate Christmas, the question looms: Why? Why not say to someone who wants to make this inclusive that, indeed, we are going to make it inclusive? The symbols of Chanukah are not valuable? Sure, they are, I think. The symbols of Kwanzaa are not valuable to some? Sure, they are. I cannot imagine why the gentlewoman who is the sponsor of this, who says that she speaks from a sense of inclusion, would not want to include those. Are those not worthy of being protected? What is the message that is being sent?

The gentleman from Nevada articulated his support. He perhaps should persuade his colleague to offer that UC.

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

Again, I appreciate the comments from our friends across the aisle, and I would be happy to cosponsor those bills that were just mentioned. They certainly have merit and should be considered by this House of Representatives.

This evening we are here to discuss H. Res. 579, as amended, and I believe that it should pass. But I also would suggest we do the same for those other religions that were mentioned, from Kwanzaa to Chanukah, and there are many others that should be considered at some point in time.

This evening I respect the fact that my colleague has presented this resolution and would encourage that Members support it.

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

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

I am really very saddened by the fact that when given the opportunity to expand this resolution that the sponsor demurred. I am not sure why.

If you do not know and you are saying that you want this to be what this is because yours is the religion that has its symbols under attack, when was the last time you walked into Wal-Mart and saw it saying "Happy Chanukah"? When did you walk into Toys 'R Us and see it saying "Happy Kwanzaa"? Does that give me the right to say that my religion is under attack, the symbols of my faith or the holiday I wish to celebrate are under attack. It is not, and I am not going to be a crybaby and say that it is.

To tell the truth, it is slightly offensive to see people trying to create a war and claiming they are attacked just so that they go on the offense instead of the defense.

This is a prefabricated issue that has no merit. Nobody is attacking the symbols of Christmas. Are you objecting to our wanting to be included because the symbols of your religion are more important than the symbols of anybody else's religion in America? Or is it because you think that the symbols of your religion are more official? And that is the danger in what we are doing.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

We have had a tremendous discussion. The United States of America is a seriously diverse country. I did a bit of research about Christmas and found 32 pages about how we sort of evolved to the point of Christmas in this country.

□ 2015

I think the season is a season to spread goodwill. I would hope that there would not be a political debate necessarily around the yuletide, a political debate, because I was taught, and maybe some of what I was taught

is different, that Christ was born, and out of that evolved Christmastime, and we spread good cheer, and we give hope, and we say, happy holidays, we say merry Christmas, happy Ramadan, happy, productive Kwanzaa.

I just could not imagine, though, what it would be like if I could not hear Mahalia Jackson sing "Silent night, holy night; all is calm, all is bright; round young virgin, mother and child; holy infant, so tender and mild," from which I got the impression that the origin of this period came.

So, I would hope that all of us would have a happy Kwanzaa, a happy Chanukah, a happy Ramadan, a merry Christmas and happy holidays to everybody.

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

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I urge all Members to support the passage of H. Res. 579, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Miss McMORRIS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 579, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Speaker, how many Members arose?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The count by the Chair is not liable to question, but the chair will affirm that she counted more than one-fifth of those present.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

URGING OBSERVANCE OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY MONTH

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 315) urging the President to issue a proclamation for the observance of an American Jewish History Month.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 315

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring). That Congress urges the President to issue each year a proclamation calling on State and local governments and the people of the United States to observe an American Jewish History Month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 315.

Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Nevada?

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I stand in support of H. Con. Res. 315, which would urge the President to issue a proclamation for the observance of American Jewish History Month.

The United States Jewish population has made many vital contributions in all areas of our society in such ways as helping to develop the cultural, scientific, political and economic life of our country. In fact, 37 percent of all United States Nobel Prize winners in the 20th century have been representatives of the Jewish community.

Jewish immigration in the 20th century was fueled by the Holocaust, which destroyed most of the European Jewish community. The migration made the United States the home of the largest Jewish population in the world. Starting at the beginning of this century, there was a Jewish population of about 1 million. By the end of the century, the population had grown to almost 6 million Jews residing in the United States of America.

Presently, the Commission for Commemorating 350 Years of American Jewish History has been brought about to encourage and sponsor a variety of historical activities that advance our understanding of the American Jewish experience as it marks this milestone anniversary. Through this initiative, the deep-rooted culture of the Jewish community in our society would be recognized and honored.

I urge all Members to come together to support this initiative to educate and pay homage to the contributions and influence that the Jewish community has had on our country.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Ms. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, the sponsor of this legislation, be permitted to control the 20 minutes on our side.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, throughout the past year, the 350th anniversary of Jewish life in America has been marked by ceremonies and celebrations across the United States. As the festivities come to an end, Chairman HYDE and I would like to establish a formal recognition

of American Jewish life by creating American Jewish History Month. This is why I have introduced a resolution calling for a Presidential Proclamation in order to create an executive order to designate the month of January as American Jewish History Month to be observed with appropriate programs, ceremonies and activities.

To date, 252 of our esteemed colleagues have expressed support for American Jewish History Month. I wish to thank Chairman HYDE and Mr. CANTOR for their continued support and assistance.

American Jewish History Month would honor the contributions of American Jews to society. Additionally, creation of this month would celebrate the legacy of the American Jewish experience and the rich cultural heritage of American Jewish communities.

Similar to Black History Month in February and Women's History Month in March, American Jewish History Month would present educators with the opportunity and tools to teach diversity and cultural awareness.

As Congress continuously strives to promote understanding and awareness of the many cultures of American society, we believe education is a necessity to combat ignorance and misunderstanding. Though support for Jewish communities, Holocaust education and efforts to combat anti-Semitism is well-known in Congress, support among the American public is not as prevalent.

Sadly, ignorance about Jews and our history, culture and contributions to American society remains widespread in the United States. This ignorance leads to hatred and bigotry, and one way to stop it is through education. As we all know, education leads to understanding.

American Jewish History Month will educate millions of Americans about the rich cultural traditions of the Jewish people, whose contributions to medicine, the arts, science and technology have shaped the fabric of American society and global history.

The previous debate demonstrates the need for more education and understanding of the traditions, beliefs and history of not just the Jewish communities but all minority religions in America. It is clear to me after listening to the proponents of the previous resolution that an American Jewish History Month would heighten the sensitivity of those who simply do not have enough information, exposure or tolerance for minority faiths.

It is my hope that the next generation of Americans, from all faith traditions, will have their knowledge, tolerance and understanding heightened and enhanced by the creation of American Jewish History Month.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation for the 252 Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle who have supported the efforts to establish a formal month. While the expression of the

House's sentiment is meaningful, it is essential that the President formally create American Jewish History Month via executive order and put the full strength of the White House behind this effort so that we can enhance the education and understanding of Americans about Jewish cultural traditions.

Additionally, I would like to thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), Leader PELOSI, and Speaker HASTERT for their support and steadfast commitment to helping to establish this month. It is my hope that in the future there will be a permanent American Jewish History Month in addition to a Presidential Proclamation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Florida for yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, as a Member of the House Government Reform Committee, I am pleased to join my colleague in consideration of H. Con. Res. 315, a resolution sponsored by Representative WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

H. Con. Res. 315, introduced today, urges the President to issue a proclamation for the observance of an American Jewish History Month. The first Jewish History Month was passed by Congress and was celebrated in September 2004.

Observing American Jewish History Month allows us to commemorate the many contributions made by Jewish Americans in our society at large and in our local neighborhoods and communities. It also allows us the opportunity to better appreciate the journey many Jewish Americans have faced since they first landed at New Amsterdam, now Manhattan Island.

Like many events in Jewish history, the arrival of 23 refugees from Brazil to the United States in 1654 was the result of a fortuitous occurrence. They were blown off course rather than a preplanned migration. Since that time, there has been an organized Jewish community in our country.

Also, Madam Speaker, one could talk about the attributes and the achievements of Jewish people for the rest of the evening on an individualized basis, but I represent a community that has a large Jewish population. I am very proud of the relationships and the work that we have been able to do over the years with groups like the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs, which is headed up by a woman, Jane Ramsey, who is one of the most dedicated and committed people that I have ever met, and the Jewish Federation of Chicago, which provides resources for hospitals, for social service programs, opportunities to help those who are less fortunate.

So I commend the gentlewoman from Florida for her introduction of this legislation and urge its passage.

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In conclusion, I want to thank again Speaker HASTERT and Mr. CANTOR from Virginia for their efforts to help us bring this resolution to the floor. I also want to thank Leader PELOSI and the rest of my colleagues for their assistance.

I do want to recognize Speaker HASTERT in particular, because he has committed to personally contact the President to urge him to take this resolution and to go ahead and create the executive order. So I look forward to working with him towards that end.

Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, again, I think one of the great things about America and the House floor is we are able to talk about our diverse country and the respect we have for the different organizations, different religions and different groups. Certainly this is another example of this House of Representatives recognizing a very, very important part of our culture and our country and our future.

Again, I urge that all Members support the passage of this particular concurrent resolution.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 315.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

CONGRATULATING TONY STEWART ON WINNING THE 2005 NASCAR NEXTEL CUP CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 587) congratulating Tony Stewart on winning the 2005 NASCAR Nextel Cup Championship.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 587

Whereas Tony Stewart won NASCAR's Nextel Cup Championship in 2005, the 57th season of NASCAR's premier series;

Whereas Stewart finished with an amazing 6,533 points, the most for any driver in the 2005 NASCAR series;

Whereas Stewart in the 2005 series won 3 starting pole positions, had 5 wins, 17 top 5 finishes, and 25 top 10 finishes;

Whereas Stewart also won the Gatorade Duel 2, the Dodge/Save Mart 350, the Pepsi 400, the New England 300, and the Sirius Satellite Radio at the Glen;

Whereas Stewart's #20 car started in 22nd position, led the most laps, and also finished first in the Allstate 400 at the Brickyard, continuing Hoosier dominance at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway's only NASCAR Nextel Cup race;

Whereas Stewart is the recipient of Indiana's highest honor, the Sagamore of the Wabash, which was awarded to him by Governor Mitch Daniels on August 29, 2005, after Stewart won the Allstate 400 at the Brickyard;

Whereas Stewart has won 2 NASCAR Nextel Cup Championships in only his 7th year in the NASCAR circuit;

Whereas Stewart has won 8 other auto racing championships in his career including the Indy Racing League;

Whereas Stewart has ranked in the top 10 every season since his 1999 rookie year and has never ranked lower than 7th in the final point standings; and

Whereas Stewart, who began racing in Indiana and excelled at a very young age, was born in Columbus, Indiana, and continues to have close ties with the State of Indiana and the City of Columbus: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives congratulates Tony Stewart for winning the 2005 NASCAR Nextel Cup Championship.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 587.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 587, which congratulates Tony Stewart on winning the 2005 NASCAR Nextel Cup Championship.

Madam Speaker, as a NASCAR fan and frequent patron of the Las Vegas Motor Speedway, home of many NASCAR races, I am glad to be speaking on this resolution this evening.

Tony Stewart has become the 14th driver in NASCAR history with more than one championship, despite a 15th place finish at the Homestead-Miami Speedway on November 20. The finish solidified his reign in the NASCAR points chase.

□ 2030

He finished with a 35-point lead over fellow driver Greg Biffle to win the

Cup. This is Stewart's second title in 4 years, and he joins Jeff Gordon as they claim the honor of being the only active full-time drivers with multiple titles.

For Stewart, it was the perfect finish to a near-perfect season as he consistently stayed on top of the points board for 13 of the final 14 weeks. He was on top at the start of the 10 race chase for the championship and fell off the leader board just once, when he dropped to fifth place after round two. Stewart soon found his way back to the top a week later and never looked back.

I urge all Members to come together to congratulate Tony Stewart on an unforgettable season by adopting H. Res. 587.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H. Res. 587, congratulating Tony Stewart on winning the 2005 NASCAR Nextel Cup Championship.

Mr. Speaker, born in Columbus, Indiana, in 1971, Tony Stewart has been winning races since the age of 16. He grew up racing go-carts and won the world carting championship in 1987. He raced three-quarter midgets for a handful of years and then moved up to the USAC series. Stewart was the USAC rookie of the year in 1991 and the National Midget Series Champion in 1994.

In 1995, Stewart became the first driver to win USAC's version of the triple crown by earning championships in all three USAC major divisions, National Midget, Sprint and Silver Crown. Stewart burst onto the Nextel Cup scene in 1999 with more experience in the big leagues of motor sports than most other rookies. Posting three wins in his rookie season, he laughed off the often-experienced sophomore slump jinx with six more wins in 2000.

Throughout his stellar career, Stewart has never finished a season outside of the top ten in points, including his brilliant 2002 champion-winning season. His 2005 season was magical. In addition to taking his second Nextel Cup title, the 34-year-old realized a lifelong goal by winning the Brickyard 400 as part of an amazing summer that saw Stewart win five races in seven weeks.

Stewart wrapped up his second NASCAR Nextel Cup championship in Sunday's Ford 400 at Homestead-Miami Speedway, the 57th season of NASCAR's premier series. Winning two NASCAR Nextel Cup Championships in only 7 years on the NASCAR circuit is quite an accomplishment. Tony Stewart is deserving of this resolution which recognizes and congratulates him for his accomplishments, and I would urge its passage and support.

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

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SODREL).