

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 codeveloped 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.