

THE Skanner

Challenging People to Shape
a Better Future Now

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SAVE THE DATE

The Skanner
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MLK
Breakfast
January 15
2018

NEW LOCATION!

Opinion

FROM THE PUBLISHER:

Political Opponents Lack Respect

Bernie Foster
Publisher, *The Skanner*

It took just over a week for Rep Steve Scalise to be released from intensive care after being shot in the hip while practicing for a Congressional baseball game. How ironic that the game is one of the few events that now brings Republicans and Democrats together in friendship.

In Washington they used to call it comity: courtesy and consideration toward others.

The idea is that political leaders should be people of goodwill, who can be political opponents but also friends.

Today you don't hear that word much at all. And comity itself is in short supply. Our politics tree bears bitter fruit.

You can argue about the reason for the steep decline in cross-party respect.

Hate speech — from whatever source — is part of the problem, especially on television where whoever shouts the loudest gets the ratings.

We saw this during the Trump campaign, as our president spoke in the most extreme and violent terms

about his opponents—and his base loved it.

We saw the results then — fights, aggression and violence. You could argue that in the shooting and the recent MAX attack we are still seeing those results now.

Hate speech of every sort

“The idea is that political leaders should be people of goodwill, who can be political opponents but also friends

fuels extreme behavior offering a political excuse for violence.

Right now our country and our Congress is deeply divided. Our Divided States of America is a nation where hate speech has become acceptable.

And unless we take steps

to heal our divisions we can only expect more violence, more mistrust and more hate.

At the same time, courtesy and consideration must come from both sides. Friendly speech must be backed by friendly action.

So let's have some honesty:

- Years of 'gerrymandering' have redrawn congressional districts to favor one party or the other. And the so-called 'swing states' have

- The Koch brothers — who'd like to abolish government support for healthcare altogether, among other plans — plan to spend \$300-\$400 million to advance their agenda in the coming year

This week we are seeing backroom deals that take aim to take healthcare away from millions of the poorest and most vulnerable Americans.

We see our hard-won progress snatched from us — without any consultation with Democrats, never mind compromise.

This is not respectful and it's not the way to heal our country.

Which brings us back to Rep. Steve Scalise. The Louisiana Republican had a narrow escape from death and he still has a long way to go. From the bottom of our hearts we wish him a full recovery.

We also hope that he grows into a champion of comity in word and action, and inspire his colleagues to do the same.

What do you think?

Global Response Needed for South Sudan Famine

International Response Needed to End Famine Now in South Sudan

On February 20, the United Nations declared a state of famine in South Sudan. Man-made crisis and conflict had left 4.9 million in need of urgent food assistance and at least 100,000 in immediate danger of death by starvation.

Since then, our country has made progress in aiding those in need, not only in South Sudan, but in Yemen, Nigeria and Somalia. At the end of April, the House of Representatives passed a resolution I authored urging the Trump Administration to release supplemental funding and call for a ceasefire between the parties engaged in South Sudan's civil conflict.

In addition, the United States responded to the UN's call for



Rep. Karen Bass

Senator (D-Calif.)

nouncing they would match Canadian donations to famine relief efforts.

But as I return from a six-day congressional delegation trip to South Sudan and Uganda, the mission is clear: Although all of this is a good start, there's still more work to be done.

In South Sudan, famine still continues despite relief efforts having had a notable impact. In a meeting with South Sudanese President Salva Kiir

relief for those that have fled. As of May, there were nearly 1 million refugees from South Sudan living in Uganda. Our delegation toured Bidi Bidi, a Ugandan refugee camp with a population around the same as San Francisco. In April, the camp was declared the largest

swift, stern and resolute. Hundreds of thousands and possibly millions of people, some of whom I met in South Sudan and Uganda, depend on us guaranteeing that the region's political landscape is not in the same exact place one year from now. A long-term com-

“It's hard to describe their faces. They had walked for weeks, losing family in front of their eyes, leaving their own lives behind, possibly for good

in the world. While we toured the camp, we met some of those that had arrived at the camp that day. It's hard to describe their faces. They had walked for weeks, losing family in front of their eyes, leaving their own lives behind, possibly for good.

Unfortunately, the overwhelming, though expected, lesson we learned was that more aid is still needed. The men and women of the camp were only given half a month's food to sustain them for an entire month. We saw the need for relief on the faces of the men, women and children of the camp. It was on the lips of the humanitarian workers.

This is a global crisis that will require a global response. The U.S. cannot risk flimsy leadership and we must be

mitment is needed to address the existing civil conflict — the root cause of this famine. The world must continue to press the leaders of South Sudan on this point.

The international community has a choice — either work together to end famine or continue to observe death due to avoidable causes. It is in our control to end this famine now as well as find ways to avoid them in the future.

Congresswoman Karen Bass represents California's 37th Congressional District. She is the 2nd Vice Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and she co-chairs the CBC's Africa Taskforce. She is also Ranking Member on the House Subcommittee on Africa. Follow her on Twitter at @RepKarenBass.

“In South Sudan, famine still continues despite relief efforts having had a notable impact

\$4 billion in relief by pledging more than \$1.2 billion in famine aid, the majority of the funds coming from a \$990 million allocation authored by Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.) and Rep. Tom Rooney (R-Fla.). International aid efforts have also popped up throughout the world, with Germany doubling its aid to fight impending famine in Somalia and the Canadian government an-

Mayardit during the delegation visit, we emphasized that the conflict in the young country must cease. The civil war there has raged since late 2013 and has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives while stranding millions and leaving the nation in the state of hunger it is in today.

And as South Sudan is devastated by famine, its neighbor Uganda struggles to provide