

Natural Resources agreed that it was indisputable and clear that the people of Puerto Rico oppose the current territory status.

□ 1100

Finally, in their remarks yesterday, neither Senator acknowledged that in the referendum, statehood received more votes than any other status option, including the current status. In short, the Senators' discussion of the historic referendum was clearly deficient.

In addition, both Senators expressed opposition to the Puerto Rico Status Resolution Act, which I introduced last year in the House and which was introduced earlier this month in the Senate. The two Senators have every right to oppose this legislation, which calls for an up-or-down vote in Puerto Rico on the territory's admission as a State and outlines the steps the Federal Government would take if a majority of voters favor admission. But to argue, as the Senators did, that the bill excludes other options other than statehood makes no sense. A binary vote, by definition, is not exclusive. Those who support statehood can vote "yes," and those who oppose it can vote "no." This was precisely the format of the votes that led to Hawaii and Alaska becoming States.

I ask the Senators: Do you believe those earlier votes were unfair or exclusionary? In any event, there are now 132 Members of the House and Senate who have cosponsored the Puerto Rico Status Resolution Act and, therefore, disagree with these two Senators' characterization of the bill. Both Senators sought to contrast their opposition to the Puerto Rico Status Resolution Act with their apparent support for a Puerto Rico-related appropriation that the President included in his fiscal year 2014 budget request at my urging, and that recently became law. Under this appropriation, funding would be provided for the first federally sponsored vote in Puerto Rico's history, to be held among one or more options that are consistent with U.S. law and policy and that would "resolve" the status issue. Contrary to the suggestion made by both Senators, a vote on Puerto Rico's admission as a State is a perfectly valid and logical way to structure the federally sponsored plebiscite to be held pursuant to this appropriation.

Both Senators also expressed the view that the status debate is a "distraction" from efforts to tackle Puerto Rico's economic and fiscal challenges. This argument is familiar, but it is false. The reality is that Puerto Rico's economic problems are structural in nature and are rooted in the territory's unequal and undemocratic status. No wonder my constituents are relocating to the States in unprecedented numbers.

I look forward to the day when the men, women, and children I represent have the same rights and responsibilities

as their fellow U.S. citizens residing in the States that the two Senators represent. We do not seek special treatment. We seek equality, and we intend to achieve it.

#### WAR ON POVERTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, it was 50 years ago that then-President Lyndon Johnson declared a war on poverty.

I rise today to join my colleagues in recognizing the 50th anniversary of this declaration, this promise that America will be a better place for the generations that come after us. I join them in restating our commitment to fighting for policies that lift all Americans up.

That American Dream that we so often speak of, it only happens if we embrace national initiatives that respect and encourage that dream—guaranteeing a fair wage, promoting educational opportunity, and investing in an economy that works for the 21st century. That is what we should be spending our time on here in Congress, not gutting consumer and safety protections, or political distractions like we see on this week's agenda.

I am not worried that the Republican Party has surrendered in the war on poverty; I am worried that they were never interested in it to begin with. A life in poverty shouldn't be a life sentence with no future, but for too many Americans, that is exactly what it is.

Mr. Speaker, 46.5 million Americans live in poverty today; 16 million of those are children. In my hometown of New York City, that is one in three children. One in three children. These families, these children, find themselves trapped in poverty, and they need a government that is willing to help them out of that morass.

Helping those in need has long been a part of our country's philosophy. That is why we have unemployment insurance for when workers lose a job through no fault of their own. That is why we have Social Security so that seniors no longer have to live out their final days in grinding poverty. That is why we have SNAP benefits so that no child goes hungry in the richest Nation on Earth.

These programs and other lifelines are under threat, putting millions of Americans in danger of slipping further into poverty. We cannot let that happen. We cannot let the threads of our social safety net slip apart. We have to make sure that a hard day's work pays enough to make ends meet.

Today, we have millions of Americans who are the working poor. That means they get up every morning, get dressed, go to work, and they put in 40-plus hours of work—or I would suggest even more—every week, but they are not making enough money to pay the bills or even meet basic needs like food and shelter. To me, that is not how

America should be. If you work a full-time job, you should be able to feed and support your family, but the fact is, someone who works full time on minimum wage only makes about \$14,000 a year—\$14,000 a year. That is just not enough money, no matter how many ways you slice it to make ends meet, and it is definitely not enough to take care of children or families. It shouldn't be this way.

For all of our differences, we should be united in the desire to give our children a better way of life than we had. That is what I know my grandparents were thinking when they immigrated here from Ireland, just like many others.

They passed the Statue of Liberty, the famous signal of hope and opportunity. The words at the base say, "Give me your tired, your poor." The Statue of Liberty doesn't say we should forget about poor children. No, it says give us your tired, give us your poor. Give us.

Imagine what a wonderful message that is, that America is actually about helping the poor. It is because that is who we are as Americans. That is what the war on poverty demands of us, living up to the ideals we have set for our country.

I urge every one of my colleagues to look inside themselves and recommit themselves to fighting the war on poverty, a fight that, as President Johnson said, we cannot afford to lose.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 8 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. YODER) at noon.

#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Compassionate and merciful God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We pray that You bless this country we love with all our hearts. We thank You for those who founded our Republic upon faith, respect for law, and constitutional rights of individuals, and the common good of the Nation and all its citizens.

Fan the flame of freedom in the hearts of all Americans, and especially those who serve in the Armed Forces. Strengthen the resolve of all the Members of this people's House, that they, attentive to Your commands, may follow their consciences and always do what is right as they wrestle with complex issues.

Grant that what they say with their lips they believe in their hearts, and what they believe in their hearts they may bring to practice in their lives and in our Nation.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.  
Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GALLEGU) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. GALLEGU led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will now entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

#### A COMMONSENSE APPROACH TO REFORMING HEALTH CARE

(Mr. WALBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, last week, I held health care town halls all across my district. Constituents shared their experience with the President's health care law. While parts of the law have helped a few, a majority of people have been hurt.

We heard from a mother with a mentally ill, disabled son who lost his plan, small business owners who had to cut employee hours to avoid the law's penalties, and even a woman battling cancer who is now facing an uncertain future because of the law. They aren't lying.

Many promises made before the law's passage haven't and couldn't be kept. Americans have a right to feel frustrated.

It is time Washington stops imposing a law that is clearly not working. We were promised lower costs. Instead, the President's own analysts reported at least 11 million people who work at small businesses will see their premiums climb while their take-home pay drops.

House Republicans offer a step-by-step, commonsense approach to reforming our health care system that really does lower costs, providing access to quality care that people need.

We remain focused on policies that grow the economy and make life better for all Americans.

#### CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF EL PASO

(Mr. GALLEGU asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GALLEGU. Mr. Speaker, El Paso, Texas, has a rich and vast history spanning back hundreds of years. With the Ysleta Mission established in the 1600s, it has deep roots in Catholicism, but it wasn't until 1914 that the Roman Catholic Diocese of El Paso was established by Pope Pius X.

On March 3, the Roman Catholic Diocese of El Paso will celebrate its 100th anniversary. The diocese provides invaluable and multilingual services to 10 counties covering nearly 27,000 miles of southwest Texas.

From the historic missions Ysleta, Socorro, and San Elizario, through the Davis Mountains, and on to the Big Bend country, the diocese is rich in history.

While these three missions are a focal point of the 100th birthday celebration, all the churches in the diocese play a critical role in their respective communities and, through these historic missions and the far-flung churches where priests and nuns still ride the circuit, the Diocese of El Paso has a profound impact on young and old alike.

As a member of the Diocese of El Paso, I wish them great success over the next 100 years.

Feliz cumpleaños. Happy Birthday.

#### SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

(Mrs. WALORSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to pass additional bipartisan Iran sanctions legislation. While we are all hoping the diplomatic efforts to address Iran's nuclear program are successful, Congress must not neglect its responsibility to be prepared for all outcomes.

Changes to Iran's nuclear programs have been minimal thus far, and Iran continues to assert that it will not dismantle its nuclear facilities. In fact, Iran's Supreme Leader himself has predicted that diplomatic talks "will lead nowhere."

Iranian state television continues to air documentaries showing simulated attacks on Israel and on American forces as well. Passage of additional sanctions will demonstrate to the Iranian regime that the American people will not be swayed by empty rhetoric or a disingenuous commitment to peace.

Congress must stand together and reinforce our diplomatic quest for disarmament with the legislative tools necessary to support this goal.

#### PACE FINANCING PROGRAMS

(Mr. MCNERNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in supporting clean energy initiative financing programs like PACE to help people and businesses invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies.

Thanks, in part, to increased energy efficiency, consumption of energy is down 5 percent nationally from 2007 levels. However, the growth of new renewable energy capacity has slowed down from 18 gigawatts installed in 2012 to 5.4 gigawatts in 2013, in part, due to a lack of access to capital.

PACE financing programs allow property owners to pay back the costs of clean energy technologies over longer periods of time. Property owners can recoup their investments through property assessments.

By encouraging distributed energy production and energy efficiency, property owners quickly increase the value of their properties. PACE programs are voluntary, and property owners across the country are eager to sign up.

#### SMALL BUSINESS JOB PROTECTION ACT

(Mr. MESSER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, the President has unilaterally delayed the employer mandate again. It is hard not to blame him.

Last week, CMS reported that 11 million Americans who work at small businesses will have higher premiums because of the President's health care law. The employer mandate will make this bad situation worse.

That might be why the President decreed that it will only apply to businesses with more than 100 employees, instead of those with 50 employees, as the law requires, at least for now.

This is a needed temporary reprieve, but it should be granted by Congress, not Presidential decree.

The President's behavior is lawless. As The Washington Post described it, the President has shown an "increasingly cavalier approach to picking and choosing how to enforce this law."

I encourage our colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 2577, the Small Business Job Protection Act, which is my bill to permanently codify this relief. Let's not forget that Congress, not the President, makes the laws.

#### TRIBUTE TO REVEREND CRAWFORD W. KIMBLE

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Reverend Crawford W. Kimble, pastor