

I have no money for essentials like good toilet paper and soap. How does somebody find a job?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to raise these voices. These are real Americans. They are real stories.

Some of the questions we face in this Congress are complicated. This one is simple. Take up H.R. 4415, and we can take away the pain that so many Americans—almost 3 million Americans—are facing.

HONORING THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE OF JONI EARECKSON TADA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. HARPER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary life of Joni Eareckson Tada.

When Joni was 17 years old, she was just like any other high school graduate. She was thrilled to be on the brink of college, and she was excited to spend a summer swimming in the nearby Chesapeake Bay.

With high school behind her, she was ready to really begin her life. She was not prepared, however, to have her fourth cervical vertebrae crushed in a terrible accident, an accident which would render her a paralyzed quadriplegic and shatter her mobility and independence forever.

Unfortunately, that is exactly what happened. On July 30, 1967, while diving with her sister, Joni misjudged the depth of the water and snapped her neck at the bottom of the water. She lost all movement in her hands and legs and was rushed, motionless, to the hospital.

Joni spent many grueling months there and often thought about killing herself. She thought her life was not worth living, and she didn't want to be a burden on her loved ones.

"There were many nights I would wrench my head back and forth on the pillow, hoping to break my neck up at a higher level. I wanted to die," Joni later said.

There were times she even asked her friends to help her commit suicide. She was desperate to end her life; but despite her intense depression, despite her intense physical suffering, it was during this time that Joni turned to her Christian faith and began to search for new purpose in her tragedy.

She studied her Bible, leaned on her friends and family, and prayed for guidance, until she realized, almost overnight, that while she would never be able to walk again, she could choose to live through her disability. The Lord could use her to inspire and encourage others.

So she resolved, "One night, lying there in the hospital, I said, 'God, if I can't die, please show me how to live.'"

I am glad to say, Mr. Speaker, that she has lived well, is one of the most inspirational figures I know, and has touched so many lives with her incred-

ible story. Let me briefly outline some of her many accomplishments and undertakings.

During a 2-year rehabilitation period after she left the hospital, Joni learned how to hold a paintbrush using her teeth. She labored away at this skill and often struggled, until she mastered the technique. Today, her artwork is prized around the world and is just one of the many ways she has provided inspiration.

In 1979, she founded Joni and Friends, a Christian ministry dedicated to serving the disabled community around the world. It partners with local churches to provide resources and support for thousands of families afflicted by disabilities. In fact, her organization has served families in 47 countries and, in 2006, opened a new facility in the United States.

Just a few weeks ago, I had the pleasure to meet and talk with Joni about her ministry and was privileged to introduce her before she spoke at Belhaven University in Jackson, Mississippi.

□ 1030

The ministry does such incredible work. And let me tell you, I don't think she has any plans of slowing down.

In addition to all this, she has somehow found time to publish over 50 books, many of which are critically acclaimed and rank on bestseller lists. Her radio show, "Joni and Friends," is broadcast in over 1,000 outlets and, in 2002, won the Radio Program of the Year award from the National Religious Broadcasters Association.

Joni has even helped us get things done here in Washington. She has represented the disabled on numerous government committees and was instrumental in the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. And she continues to help.

As for awards, her list is very long. She is the recipient of the Victory Award from the National Rehabilitation Hospital, the Golden Word Award from the International Bible Society, and the Courage Award from the Courage Rehabilitation Center. She is a member of the Christian Booksellers Association's Hall of Honor and is a recipient of the William Wilberforce Award.

Joni holds honorary degrees from Westminster Theological Seminary, Biola University, Indiana Wesleyan University, Columbia International University, Lancaster Bible College, Gordon College, and Western Maryland College.

As I said, she is quite the achiever. And how does she really do it? Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, I think something that C.S. Lewis once said helps to answer that. He said:

If you read history, you will find that the people who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since people have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this world.

I think Joni understands this. Her mind is truly set on another place. Her life has been extraordinary.

So, again, on behalf of the House of Representatives, I would like to recognize and celebrate the life of Joni Eareckson Tada, a courageous woman who truly knows how to live.

THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, May is Older Americans Month, and today I rise to call attention to historic legislation that has for decades served as a lifeline to our country's seniors.

The Older Americans Act is responsible for critical services, like housing, nutrition, and employment assistance. For many seniors, the Older Americans Act is responsible for the delivery of their only warm meal of the day and their only social interaction.

The legislation expired in 2011; and today I am speaking in support of H.R. 4122, the bill I introduced with the gentleman from Texas, Congressman RUBÉN HINOJOSA, to reauthorize the Older Americans Act.

Congress first passed the Older Americans Act in 1965 as one of President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs. Its goal is to ensure that our seniors age with dignity, maintain independence for as long as possible, and do not grow old in poverty.

Over the years, the OAA has been reauthorized and improved upon to meet the needs of the changing population. As Americans live longer, our policy needs to keep pace.

Our legislation includes stronger elder abuse protections, modernized senior centers, improved transportation services, and other programs that promote seniors' independence.

One of the titles in the Older Americans Act provides important employment support to the country's seniors, something they need now more than ever. The Senior Community Service Employment Program provides job training and job placement for low-income seniors. Many of the people who use this important program were laid off during the recession, only to see their position disappear altogether during the recovery. Now they find that they lack the necessary skills to fill the new jobs that have been created, and they must compete with a younger, inexperienced workforce willing to accept wages lower than their earning potential.

This important program, known as SCSEP, provides specialized training for these mature workers. By partnering with local nonprofits and State agencies, SCSEP helps older Americans develop new skills and then pairs them with employers.

I recently met with several SCSEP participants at the Forest Grove, Oregon, senior center in my district, and I heard firsthand how the program

helps people get back on their feet. Programs like this are exactly what many of the long-term unemployed need. And while we continue to debate extending the emergency unemployment program, SCSEP is addressing the problem head-on for many of our constituents by offering a solution that is good for employees, businesses, and the economy as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, the Older Americans Act was developed so our country's seniors could age with dignity. Today it continues to provide support to older Americans who are eager to work and live independent lives as they age. The Senate has advanced its own bipartisan Older Americans Act bill, and I am hopeful my colleagues will follow suit and support H.R. 4122.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 4192. An act to amend the Act entitled "An Act to regulate the height of buildings in the District of Columbia" to clarify the rules of the District of Columbia regarding human occupancy of penthouses above the top story of the building upon which the penthouse is placed.

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 10 o'clock and 34 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Don Williams, Maine State Police, Augusta, Maine, offered the following prayer:

I thank You, God, for giving me the opportunity to represent You and the Maine State Police and the people of the great State of Maine. I pray that I represent them well, as should be the desire of this great body as they represent their States.

My dearest Heavenly Father, I come to You today on behalf of this body of Representatives from our great and wonderful United States. As they represent their people, I ask that You give them wisdom and understanding from above.

God, we all need Your wisdom. I thank You for these men and women who have given of themselves to represent their people and make decisions that will affect all the people of this great and wonderful Nation.

God, please give them the character and integrity to rule this Nation. Give them strength to stand true to their beliefs and the courage to stand for what is true and right. Help us to be faithful to Your Word. Lord, I ask for Your blessing to return to our great and wonderful Nation.

In thy Holy Name, I pray.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

Mr. WILLIAMS 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.

WELCOMING REVEREND DON WILLIAMS

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome Chaplain Donald Williams as today's guest chaplain.

Chaplain Williams is originally from Springfield, Missouri, but he came to Maine in 1985, where he served as pastor of the Fellowship Baptist Church.

Chaplain Williams was sworn in as deputy sheriff and chaplain for the Kennebec County Sheriff's Office in 1987. In addition to serving as chaplain for the Maine State Police and Augusta Police Department, he is involved with the Maine Law Enforcement Chaplain Corps and the State's Criminal Justice Academy.

Chaplain Williams has gone above and beyond in serving the spiritual needs of Maine's police force for over 20 years. His remarkable service was reflected in his nomination for the 2010 National Sheriff's Association Chaplain of the Year award.

He is a true asset to our State and our country. I am proud to stand with him here today.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

ICANN

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

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, the President recently announced that the U.S. Commerce Department would end its Internet agreement with ICANN, a nonprofit organization who has overseen our databases since 1998.

President Obama's plans could lead to international control and come at a time when nations all over the world are looking for any technological advantage they can gain over the United States.

Both Republicans and Democrats alike agree that the Obama administration's decision to cut ties with ICANN could lead to an uncertain future that hinders free speech and threatens national security.

The United States has always been the most protective country of free speech in the entire world. As other countries and international organizations advocate for a more globalized Web, the trampling of our First Amendment rights and greater censorship will be at an even higher risk.

It is imperative that we closely monitor this situation moving forward to ensure that free speech in any medium is never censored.

In God we trust.

FACES OF THE UNEMPLOYED

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, last week, I unveiled the "Faces of the Unemployed," an effort to help put a human face on the unemployment crisis.

Yesterday, out-of-work Americans from all over the country came to Congress to tell their story, and they were shut out of the Capitol Building. They were not allowed to share their experiences inside the building that belongs to them and in front of the people they sent to Congress.

Mr. Speaker, you may have stopped them from sharing their stories inside the Capitol yesterday, but with the "Faces of the Unemployed," their faces and stories will be in the Halls of Congress every single day until you bring this bill to the floor for a vote.

There are 2.5 million Americans without this safety net today, and that number could reach nearly 5 million if Congress does not act to extend unemployment benefits before the end of this year. These are real Americans, many of whom have worked their whole lives until recently and now can't afford basic necessities. They spent all their savings. Some have become homeless, and others are on the verge of losing everything.

Every one of these people deserves a vote, Mr. Speaker. I urge you to bring the Senate bill to the floor for an immediate vote so that we can extend unemployment benefits and help millions of Americans.