

I just want to take a moment of the House's time to remember the people who died that day, the people who were injured that day, and to think for a moment as to what a wonderful country we have the good fortune to live in.

God bless the United States of America.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would ask everyone to rise to share a moment of silence with me.

TAX DAY AND IRS ACCOUNTABILITY

(Mr. ROTHFUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, Americans strongly dislike tax day, and Uncle Sam is set to take in record levels of Americans' tax dollars again this year. These are dollars that the hard-working taxpayers take out of their wallets, and they are too often used to grow Washington's bureaucracy at the expense of growth elsewhere in the country.

Western Pennsylvanians are rightfully frustrated with the Federal Government's overreach into their daily lives. Back in Pennsylvania's 12th District, I regularly talk with folks who are appalled by the IRS' hypocrisy, corruption, and abuse of power.

From IRS' attempts to shut down people who disagree with the administration's political agenda to Federal employees owing thousands in back taxes, the IRS needs to be held accountable to the people. Washington bureaucrats are not above the law. Americans spend countless hours and precious financial resources in filing their tax returns by April 15. They are following the law. It is only fair for the American people to expect that the IRS does the same.

I was proud to support several bills today that are designed to protect taxpayers, to restore the public's faith in our system of laws, and to prevent the IRS from abusing its power.

□ 1730

BRING BACK OUR GIRLS

(Ms. FRANKEL of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Madam Speaker, I stand here today 1 year since Boko Haram kidnapped 270 young girls attending school in Chibok, Nigeria. This kidnapping received international attention for a short time; then, like the girls, the spotlight disappeared, and yet our children remain hidden and subjected to unimaginable crimes.

Innocent girls who cry out to be liberated cannot be forgotten. They are as Maya Angelou's caged birds who sing with a fearful trill of things unknown but longed for still, and their tune is

heard on the distant hill, for the caged birds sing of freedom.

Madam Speaker, I join my colleagues today in saying, "Bring Back Our Girls."

UNITED STATES SET TO BE A NET EXPORTER OF NATURAL GAS IN 2017

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, earlier this week the Energy Information Administration released its annual forecast of U.S. energy trends and predicted that the United States will become a net exporter of natural gas by 2017.

As cochair of the bipartisan Congressional Natural Gas Caucus, I understand the magnitude of this geopolitical transition and the implications for ensuring American energy security through continued natural gas development and investment. By becoming a net exporter of natural gas by 2017, the United States will be able to build and strengthen its economy, help to improve the environment, and remain globally competitive.

As one of the Nation's top producers of natural gas, Pennsylvania continues to help drive record-breaking oil and natural gas production domestically. The Energy Information Administration's recent projections place the United States closer than ever to obtaining energy independence, while signaling longer term market stability that will make energy prices more affordable for businesses and families throughout Pennsylvania and all across the country.

FISHER HOUSE ANNIVERSARY

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

Ms. TITUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Fisher House Foundation on their 25th anniversary and to thank them for their services to our military and veteran families.

The Fisher House Foundation is the result of the vision and efforts by Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher. They wanted to provide a home away from home for the families of servicemen and -women while their loved ones received treatment, and their vision has come to fruition.

Since the first Fisher House opened in 1990, over 250,000 families have saved \$282 million in lodging and transportation costs. The 64 locations throughout the United States and Germany have provided families 5.8 million days of lodging.

Just a few weeks ago, I was fortunate and proud to participate in the groundbreaking of Nevada's first Fisher House, located across the street from our new VA hospital. What a wonderful day it was.

Congratulations, Fisher House Foundation, and thank you and your volunteers for all you do to make a difficult time just a little easier for our Nation's heroes.

HONORING DR. DONNA E. SHALALA

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to recognize one of the most profound educational leaders of her generation, Dr. Donna Shalala.

As the head of my alma mater, the University of Miami, Donna made it her goal to see UM become the next great American research university. Never one to leave a promise unfulfilled, under her unparalleled guidance, the university has consistently ranked in the top 50 research institutions.

Through leadership, service, and selflessness, Donna has positively impacted our south Florida area as a school administrator and a community leader. It is with great pride, admiration, and affection that I join our community and University of Miami students, professors, and grads in thanking Dr. Shalala for her hard work and dedication.

Donna, you are an outstanding member of our south Florida community, and we will certainly miss you. I wish you good fortune and all the best in this new, exciting, next chapter of your life.

Oh, yes. Go Canes.

Thank you, Donna.

SUPPORTING THE DAY OF SILENCE

(Mr. ENGEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, every year three-quarters of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender kids in this country are verbally harassed at school. Nearly a fifth will be physically assaulted. It is time for the bullying and abuse to stop.

Every year GLSEN organizes the National Day of Silence. This Friday, kids across the country will take a daylong vow of silence to draw attention to the abuse their LGBT friends and classmates have to deal with every day.

Counseling and outreach have done a lot to help these kids, but change is not coming fast enough, so I am once again introducing a resolution supporting the Day of Silence. LGBT kids deserve to be able to go to school and feel safe. I invite my colleagues to join me and cosponsor the resolution.

On another matter, yesterday is the 1-year anniversary that the Nigerian schoolgirls were kidnapped by the terror group Boko Haram. I am wearing these ribbons today to say "Bring Back Our Girls," and I thank our colleague