

Vilonia, and Paron communities were struck by a monster of a tornado.

That tornado was classified as an EF4 with reported winds approaching 200 miles per hour. The half-mile wide twister left a swath of destruction that stretched for over forty miles. In fifty-six minutes, more than 400 homes were destroyed and sixteen people lost their lives. The National Weather Service stated that this was the single deadliest tornado to hit the state of Arkansas since 1968—nearly fifty years earlier.

This past Monday, April 27, marked the one-year anniversary of the devastation wrecked during this horrific storm. The theme of this year's anniversary is, "Remember our loss; celebrate our recovery."

Over the past few weeks, I have had the opportunity to visit with folks from Mayflower and Vilonia and to hear their stories of courage and resilience.

While I mourn those lost in the April 2014 tornados, I am thankful for the health and safety of Martin and Kristin Patton and the miraculous survival of their family. Their home literally completely disintegrated around them and I certainly join them in counting their blessings of moving into their new home last weekend, 364 days after that frightening evening.

I am thankful of the leadership of Vilonia Mayor James Firestone on the job for six and one half years; four of them in a "recovery mode." I am grateful for his leadership with that of the city council in carefully charting a course toward the future.

I am thankful for Mayflower Mayor Randy Holland, who, with county and local leaders, is crafting new economic development directions for this growing community.

In the face of tragedy, they, along with all those who selflessly provided financial support and thousands of volunteer hours, furnish us with an inspirational model of solidarity and hope.

As these brave communities continue to recover and rebuild, I applaud them for their dedication to their neighbors, economy, and community.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE UNDERLYING OBJECTIVES OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MILITARY COMPENSATION AND RETIREMENT MODERNIZATION COMMISSION—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 114-30)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and referred to the Committee on Armed Services and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

My Administration fully supports the underlying objectives of the recommendations that the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (the "Commission") offered in January. These recommendations represent an important step forward in protecting the long-term viability of the All-Volunteer Force, improving quality-of-life for service members and their families, and ensuring the fiscal sustainability of the military compensation and retirement systems.

As I directed in my letter of March 30, my team has worked with the Commission to further analyze the recommendations and identify areas of agreement. At this time I am prepared to support specific proposals for 10 of the Commission's 15 recommendations, either as proposed or with modifications that have been discussed among the Department of Defense, other agencies, and the Commission. These include the following:

Survivor Benefit Plan
Financial Education
Medical Personnel Readiness
Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs Collaboration
Child Care
Service Member Education
Transition Assistance
Nutritional Financial Assistance
Dependent Space-Available Travel
Report on Military Connected Dependents

In some instances, the Department of Defense is already taking actions to implement these recommendations, and I will direct the Department to develop plans to complete this implementation. In those areas where legislation is required, I expect the Secretary of Defense to transmit to the Congress on my behalf the relevant legislative proposals, which I recommend be enacted without delay.

With respect to the remaining recommendations, given their complexity and our solemn responsibility to ensure that any changes further the objectives above, we will continue working with the Commission to understand how the following proposals would affect the All-Volunteer Force:

Blended Retirement System
Reserve Component Duty Statuses
Exceptional Family Member's Support
Commissary and Exchange Consolidation

I believe there is merit in all of these recommendations and that they deserve careful consideration and study. I will ensure that the Congress is kept apprised of this ongoing work.

Finally, I agree with the Commission that we need to continue to improve the military health care system. The health care reforms proposed in my Fiscal Year 2016 Budget are a good first step and offer service members, retirees, and their families more control and choice over their health care decisions. This remains a critical issue, and my Administration will work with the Commission and interested Members of Congress in the coming months to develop additional reform proposals for consideration as part of my Fiscal Year 2017 Budget.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, April 30, 2015.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mrs. WAGNER (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today after 4 p.m. and

May 1 on account of attending the promotion ceremony of her son Raymond Wagner, III to Captain in the United States Army.

Mr. LEWIS (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 48 minutes a.m.) the House adjourned until today, Friday, May 1, 2015, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1318. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Azoxystrobin; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0248; FRL-9926-24] received April 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1319. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Phenol, 2-(2H-benzotriazol-2-yl)-6-dodecyl-4-methyl-; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0418; FRL-9925-78] received April 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1320. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; State of Arkansas; Revisions to the State Implementation Plan; Fee Regulations [EPA-R06-OAR-2015-0054; FRL-9926-91-Region 6] received April 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1321. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Indiana; Infrastructure SIP Requirements for the 2008 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) [EPA-R05-OAR-2011-0969; FRL-9926-81-Region 5] received April 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1322. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of State Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants; Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, New Mexico, and the City of Albuquerque, New Mexico; Control of Emissions from Existing Sewage Sludge Incinerator Units [EPA-R06-OAR-2013-0763; FRL-9927-00-Region 6] received April 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1323. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Texas; Revisions to the State Implementation Plan; Stage I Regulations [EPA-R06-OAR-2014-0846; FRL-9927-10-Region 6] received April 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.