

OPIOID AND HEROIN ABUSE

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, on December 22, 2015, Zachary Paul-Allen Greenough, a veteran of the U.S. Army, lost his life to an accidental overdose of heroin in the city of West Haven, Connecticut.

The press accounts after his death, unfortunately, tell a story that is far too common in this country. During the time that he served in the Army, he suffered an injury, which caused great pain and resulted in the prescription of painkillers. That pathway started, which led to an opioid addiction and, unfortunately, him losing his life on December 22 to an overdose of heroin.

The Centers for Disease Control tells us that, in 2014, 27,000 Americans suffered accidental overdose deaths across the country, a drastic increase from 2013. This trend is happening again all across the country.

In the State of Connecticut, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner reported its statistics for 2015, which showed that 723 individuals lost their life, including Mr. Greenough, to overdoses of heroin and opioids. Again, this is a trend line which shows that it was a 20 percent increase from the year before.

We are in the midst right now of a problem that is sweeping across the country, that is affecting States that are Republican and Democrat, blue and red, and we as a Nation need to get all hands on deck and come to grips with it.

President Obama, in his budget that he submitted a few weeks ago, made a promising start. He proposed \$1.1 billion in new funding to law enforcement, to folks who are involved in treatment, whether it is detox centers or treatment programs, or whether it is programs for education and prevention; because we know, from talking to people in the field, you need to get early and quickly to young people to make sure that they understand that this pathway, which has exploded across the country, is something that people need to know about and to avoid.

In New London, Connecticut, over the course of 2 days in February, we had a summit involving law enforcement, healthcare providers, and others. We had the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy from the White House, Michael Botticelli, come in. Again, the good news is that there is a lot of good work that is being done at the local level—not just in New London County, Connecticut, but all across the country—where people understand that this is a problem that requires everyone working together in all those factions and all those sectors.

But the fact of the matter is that President Obama's proposal is not until 2017. We need help now. We need to get

an emergency appropriation, just as we would if there were a hurricane or an earthquake or a wildfire that was sweeping across different regions of this country.

We need to understand that emergency appropriations for our military, which the Speaker and I will be voting on together in the Committee on Armed Services, that this problem which is affecting thousands of families and resulting in fatalities for people, again, who follow a pathway that, through legally prescribed medications, needs to be addressed, and we need to get those resources out to people as soon as possible.

I have a bill in the House that tracks a bill sponsored by Senator SHAHEEN in New Hampshire, another State that has been hit hard by the problem. The bill provides \$600 million of emergency assistance—again allocated to police, providers, education, and prevention—and this week they will begin consideration in the U.S. Senate. It has been endorsed by law enforcement groups. It has been endorsed by people who are in the field dealing with this problem, who are dealing with families who can't get beds in detox centers, who can't get beds in treatment facilities, with police departments that are trying to get Narcan, a miracle drug, so that they can save lives. But the fact of the matter is we need everybody involved, particularly the Congress, to help communities solve this problem.

Last week the National Governors Association—Republicans and Democrats—convened in Washington, D.C., to talk about their priorities. This emergency funding was their number one request to Congress because they are the ones on the front lines who are being confronted and forced to deal with this issue.

We have an opportunity to listen to the people who know what they are talking about, to just drain away the politics and the partisanship and understand that veterans, people living in rural communities, people living in suburban communities, people living in urban areas of our country are getting hit with this problem. Just like any other disaster, we as a Nation need to come together to address it now and not wait for 2017—now—to pass this measure.

We can do more in terms of reforming the protocols, as the VA and DOD and the civilian healthcare sector, frankly, have gone too far in terms of overprescribing. We can do more about the disposal of drugs. Walgreens, to their credit, has set up disposal sites all across the country where people can come in with excess opioids to get rid of them safely.

The fact of the matter is that the willingness is there but the resources are not to deal with a problem of this magnitude. Let's pass the Shaheen-Courtney measure. Let's get emergency funding to the folks who need that help and who are ready. They are on standby. They are there to help

those families and those individuals who need the help that we, as Americans, should come together and support.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 11 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Nebraska) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Merciful Lord, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

At the beginning of a new workweek, we use this moment to be reminded of Your presence and to tap the resources needed by the Members of this people's House to do their work as well as it can be done. May they be led by Your Holy spirit in the decisions they make.

May their faith in You deliver them from tensions that might tear the House apart and from worries that might wear them out.

All this day and through the week, may they do their best to find solutions to pressing issues facing our Nation. Please hasten the day when justice and love shall dwell in the hearts of all peoples and rule the affairs of the nations of Earth.

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 South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina 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.

SOUTH CAROLINA RECOGNIZED AS A TOP EXPORTER

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