

Up to this point, because of treatment covered by his insurance plan, he had been able to work to provide for himself and to live independently. As he got his new business off the ground, he went uninsured and, as a result, encountered several crises with his health. He avoided going to the doctor due to high costs and eventually ended up in the emergency room. As we all know, preventable emergency visits are a major contributor to the overall high healthcare costs that harm the entire system.

Thanks to the President and Congress passing the Affordable Care Act, Mary's son was finally able to obtain affordable care when the health insurance marketplace first opened in October 2013.

Mary wrote me to share her son's story. He is one of tens of millions of Americans who have directly benefited from the ACA's improvements to coverage, consumer protections, costs, and quality. Today, Mary is fearful of what the repeal of ACA will mean for her son.

Unfortunately, despite having 7 years to produce an alternative, the majority has failed to offer a true replacement. And what about the parts of the ACA that share bipartisan popularity?

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle and the President-elect insist they will craft a plan that maintains popular parts of the law, while rejecting the less popular components. Of course, that sounds great, but there is one real problem: they have offered absolutely no way to pay for any of it.

In reality, repeal and replace is more simply repeal and go back to before—tearing down a much-needed house before a new one is built, back to a time when 47 million Americans—nearly 18 percent of the population—were uninsured. Mary's son and countless others like him cannot afford to go back in time. Repealing ACA will leave 20 million Americans, including her son, without affordable health insurance, effectively disrupting their care and potentially putting their lives at risk.

To remind us all of the high stakes riding on the ACA repeal, Mary wrote, saying: "As a former Republican and now an Independent voter, I am speaking from my heart. The 2016 election result has me truly frightened for the health of my son and for my husband and me."

Repealing the Affordable Care Act will create a chaotic situation that will put real lives in danger. We all share in the responsibility to protect the health care of all Americans. Empty rhetoric of repealing the ACA is dangerous, but when transformed into real legislative action, it can be catastrophic for the constituents that elected us to serve and represent them in this body.

On behalf of Mary's son and other Americans in districts across the country, I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to abandon their efforts to strip health care from those who need it and, instead, work with us

to make our country a healthier place for all.

FAIRCHILD CHALLENGE PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an innovative educational program in my south Florida community called the Fairchild Challenge.

As a nonprofit founded in 2002, this no-cost, environment-focused annual competition based at the world-renowned Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, located in my district, invites students from around the world to participate from a young age as active and thoughtful members of society.

The Fairchild Challenge focuses attention on conservation of the environment, while introducing students to the importance of STEM: science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

In the 2014-2015 school year, over 153,000 participants were involved in the program. High-performing schools are eligible for cash prizes, while participating students may earn college scholarships.

Through innovative programs like the Fairchild Challenge, students are sure to be conscious of the benefits of conserving our environment and may more readily engage in the STEM fields that will better prepare them for the future.

Congratulations to all the student participants of the Fairchild Challenge. Hats off especially to the board members, staff, and the many volunteers of the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, and most especially to Mr. and Mrs. Greer, the heart and soul of these beautiful botanical gardens.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CLYDE HOLLOWAY

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a true servant of the people. Many knew him as a former schoolbus driver, the chairman of the Louisiana Public Service Commission, or a successful nursery owner in Forest Hill, Louisiana.

Some of you here today knew him as former Congressman Clyde Holloway. Mr. Holloway was one of the first Republicans in Louisiana to be elected to Congress since Reconstruction. Serving from 1986 to 1993, Mr. Holloway was a trailblazer for other Republican lawmakers in our great State.

On August 16, 2016, I, along with many Louisianans, were saddened to hear of the news of Mr. Holloway's passing. Clyde left a legacy among his constituents of always looking out and representing their best interests.

I stand before you today to pay tribute to Mr. Holloway and the life he

lived. He fought the good fight. He finished his course. I urge you today to join me and my constituents in honoring the life of Clyde Holloway by charting our course to lead and represent the best interests of the people who entrusted their leadership to us today.

HONORING THE LIFE OF BOBBY SMITH

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a man whose life was a living definition of courage.

In 1986, working as a Louisiana State trooper, Bobby Smith, from Buckeye, Louisiana, was shot in the face and blinded in the line of duty. He not only lost his sight, but also lost the career that he deeply loved.

Never one to succumb to adversity, Bobby earned a Ph.D., authored books, and set out on a path of helping others. In 2001, he organized the Foundation for Officers Recovering from Traumatic Events. This foundation helped provide training and counseling to law enforcement individuals, firefighters, emergency services personnel, and their families going through tough times from various traumatic events.

Bobby's will to help others would carry him through his personal challenges as he traveled across the United States and throughout the world literally sharing his story and lifting up others. Before his death in October of this year, Mr. Smith had addressed and touched the lives of over 1 million people.

Many who knew Bobby would often hear him say, "I see. I see." Today, as we remember Bobby Smith, let us not be blinded by our own tragedies, adversities, and obstacles in our lives, but let us also have the courage that Bobby had to look beyond and see the beauty of life and see the good in others.

HONORING THE LIFE OF LANDON WEAVER

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to mourn the loss of Pennsylvania State Trooper Landon Weaver, who was killed in the line of duty on Friday, December 30.

Trooper Weaver had been on patrol for 1 year with the Pennsylvania State Police. He was investigating a domestic incident in Juniata Township, Huntingdon County, in Pennsylvania's Fifth District, when the situation turned deadly and he was fatally shot by the suspect. Flags throughout Pennsylvania are flying at half-staff in honor of Trooper Weaver being taken from us too soon.

I rise today to speak about who Trooper Landon Weaver was: a son, a brother, a husband, a friend, a hero.

Trooper Weaver's law enforcement career had just begun. He was 23 years old, and he married his high school sweetheart, Macy, in June. They graduated from Central High School in

Martinsburg in 2012, and he went on to study criminal justice at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He was proudly on the dean's list.

In December 2015, he enlisted to join the Pennsylvania State Police Academy in Hershey, Pennsylvania. He graduated from the State Police Academy in June, was assigned to Troop G of the Pennsylvania State Police, and served at the Huntingdon Barracks. He loved his family, and he loved being a police officer.

Trooper Weaver attended Zion Lutheran Church and enjoyed spending time with his family, and especially his wife, Macy. To him, family was everything.

Trooper Weaver is the 97th member of the Pennsylvania State Police to be killed in the line of duty.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his parents, Eric and Christine Weaver of East Freedom; his brother, Larett Weaver of East Freedom; his paternal grandparents, Merrill and Christine D. Weaver; as well as other family members and friends. He grew up in a small town where there is a deep sense of community. Many hearts are broken over this tragic, senseless situation.

One of Trooper Weaver's teachers at Central High School in Martinsburg remembered Trooper Weaver from his days as a student. Teacher Joe Logan said Trooper Weaver was a "great kid" whom you could call on during times of need and he would be there. He said he was "beside himself with grief and sadness."

He went on to say: "He would do anything for you. He was humble, dedicated, and a loving person to his wife and family. You'd be proud to call him a colleague or friend."

Trooper Weaver was one of Pennsylvania's finest. He was committed to his family, to his profession, and to the community that he loved. His dedication to service embodies the values of law enforcement officers across the Nation. Our law enforcement officers risk their lives every day to help people.

Trooper Weaver put on his uniform that day and went to work like he had done so many days before, knowing that any moment he could be in harm's way. That is a commitment our officers make to serve and protect the public and uphold the law. That is the commitment that Trooper Weaver made to serve the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

May we all honor Trooper Weaver's memory. He was a young man just starting out in life. He was a newlywed with so much to look forward to. In one moment, he was gone.

On behalf of the Congress of the United States and the people of the Fifth Congressional District of Pennsylvania, I offer my sincere condolences and prayers to his family, especially to his wife, Macy, during this tragic and difficult time. He risked his life to keep all of us safe.

Trooper Landon Weaver is a hero who was taken from us too soon. May we

mourn his loss and honor his memory. May God bless Landon Weaver and his family.

MINERS' PENSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. JENKINS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, in this new year, we must make things right for our miners and their widows. We must act now to keep the promise. We must honor their work in the mines by protecting the pensions and healthcare benefits they worked their whole lives to earn.

We must pass legislation I have cosponsored to protect these hard-earned benefits for families like Rita Blankenship of McDowell County who wrote me asking for help. Here is what she said: "My husband was promised healthcare coverage in 1975 when he went to work in the mines and joined the union. I am asking if you could do everything possible to get this passed so we will have health care," she wrote.

These miners and their families deserve no less than what they worked their entire lives to earn: the peace of mind that comes with a pension and secure health care.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting legislation to protect our miners, their widows, and their families. We owe it to them to keep our word.

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 30 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. EMMER) at noon.

PRAYER

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

We thank You for the joy, excitement, and ceremony of yesterday, when the 115th Congress convened. It was a celebration of the ongoing American experiment of participatory democracy and the peaceful shifting of power.

Today begins the work of that Congress, when the difficulties facing our Nation, and some communities especially, come into focus. We ask again an abundance of Your wisdom for the Members of the people's House.

May we be forever grateful for the blessings our Nation enjoys and appropriately generous with what we have to help those among us who are in need.

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. POE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. POE of Texas 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 entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

JIMMY BURNSED, RETIRING CHAIRMAN OF BRYAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Jimmy Burnsed, who has served as chairman of the Bryan County Board of Commissioners for the past 12 years.

On December 31, 2016, he officially retired from serving on the board. Beyond serving as chairman, Mr. Burnsed has dedicated an admirable amount of his life to public service. Nearly 40 years ago, he began serving on the City Council for Garden City, Georgia, before serving 4 years as mayor. In 1989, he moved from Garden City to Bryan County. In 2005, he ran and was elected chairman of the Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Burnsed's accomplishments on the board since that time are numerous. He worked to build a new administrative building for the county to hold meetings and other events; he managed and planned the infrastructure for Bryan County, which has grown more than 50 percent in size during his tenure; and he helped to upgrade Bryan County's trails, parks, and recreation centers. Mr. Burnsed always put the community first and performed his duties in a way that would make any constituent very proud.