

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SMUCKER). Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY NEBRASKA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) for 30 minutes.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, for 150 years now, Nebraska has held a special place in the history of America. We Nebraskans rightly pride ourselves on the values of hard work, on the values of community life, on the proper value of the good stewardship of our precious resources. The mystique of the Great Plains, the nobility of the family farm, and the vibrancy of our people create the conditions for the good life.

Our story is one of strength, it is one of dignity, and I am proud to celebrate our 150th anniversary.

□ 2030

Mr. Speaker, a number of years ago, a gift of land donation enabled the expansion of the Homestead National Monument, which is near Beatrice, Nebraska. Run by the National Park Service, their personnel were kind enough to invite me to the dedication ceremony; and during that event, a young woman who was from a seventh-generation farm family—in high school at that time, as I recall—got up to speak. She gave a beautiful talk about our Nebraska values, our connectedness to the land, the deeper meaning of living on the plains, and the ideal of maintaining the continuity of family life.

Her remarks, Mr. Speaker, moved me so much that I literally tossed my own speech aside and spoke off the cuff, and I said something like this: Perhaps it was on a day just like this where that settler family came over the hill there, and they looked at the great expansion of the plains before them.

Perhaps that day they felt the warm, spring sun on their cheeks, and they heard the chirp of the western meadowlark in the air, and they watched as the beautiful bluestem prairie grass swayed in the wind. Perhaps it was then that they made their decision: We stay right here. Nebraska will be our home.

Mr. Speaker, when I finished that, I was very proud of myself, so I sat down. And then the next speaker came up, another political figure, and he had this to say: Well, my family came here because they were horse thieves. We all shared a little laugh, but really, Mr. Speaker, Nebraska's colorful history and droll wit were simultaneously captured in that moment.

Nebraska's official motto is "Equality before the law," but our unofficial

motto is "Nebraska nice." It is true. Nebraskans are generally nice. But beneath that friendly veneer is an unmistakable, unvarnished realism.

Nebraskans have a unique ability to look at a situation and size it up accurately, if often humorously. "Git r done" is an often-used phrase that I think can be safely attributable to us.

Now, sometimes, Mr. Speaker, Nebraska has been pejoratively described in the popular imagination of our country, first as the "Great American Desert" because it was thought that nothing would grow there. Today, we have the largest amount of acreage under irrigation in the country, including the fact that we are the largest grower of popcorn in America. We are a leader in livestock production and multiple types of commodity production, as well as specialty crops.

We were sometimes castigated as "flyover country." I hear that around here sometimes, that is, until you come to Nebraska and realize that it is a wonderful place to live and to work and to raise a family relatively free from crime, except even horse thieves, congestion, as well as pollution.

Nebraska has, routinely, the highest graduation rate in the country and the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

And, though, in true Nebraska fashion, self-effacing Cornhuskers would cringe at the term, we have had our fair share of celebrities as well, including Father Ed Flanagan, who founded Boys Town, now known as Boys Town and Girls Town; Civil Rights pioneers, Chief Standing Bear being one of the most prominent; Malcolm X; authors Mari Sandoz and Willa Cather; professional athletes Bob Gibson and Gale Sayers; and entertainers, Henry Fonda, Marlon Brando, Montgomery Clift, Johnny Carson, and Dick Cavett.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, our singular, unicameral legislature is a model for bipartisanship and frugality. And I would be remiss if I didn't say our run-it-up-the-gut offense with a few option twists, it may not have been flashy, but it helped the University of Nebraska's football team win five national championships.

I am proud to serve in the United States congressional seat once held by Williams Jennings Bryan, who along with Senator George Norris perhaps are the most famous, though controversial in some ways, politicians in our State's history.

As we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Nebraska's admission to the United States of America—by the way, the first State admitted after the Civil War—I recall Representative Bryan's words from over 100 years ago. It is a quote that actually is outside of our football stadium, known as Memorial Stadium, on Tom and Nancy Osborne Field. It says this: "Destiny is no matter of chance. It is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved."

And perhaps, Mr. Speaker, we can add to that quote today: And that the choice to be good makes the destiny arrive well.

Happy birthday, Nebraska.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 37 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, March 2, 2017, at 9 a.m.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. DEFAZIO (for himself and Mr. MASSIE):

H.R. 1265. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to make modifications to the passenger facility charge program administered by the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself and Mr. BUCHANAN):

H.R. 1266. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Transportation to make grants to assist units of local government in developing and implementing plans, known as Vision Zero plans, to eliminate transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. SMITH of Missouri (for himself, Mr. KIND, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. SESSIONS, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Ms. SINEMA):

H.R. 1267. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat certain amounts paid for physical activity, fitness, and exercise as amounts paid for medical care; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SMITH of Nebraska (for himself, Mr. KIND, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. YOHO, Mr. ABRAHAM, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. HARPER, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, and Mrs. DAVIS of California):

H.R. 1268. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for an exclusion for assistance provided to participants in certain veterinary student loan repayment or forgiveness programs; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LAMALFA (for himself and Mr. GARAMENDI):

H.R. 1269. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to take actions to support non-Federal investments in water infrastructure