

declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Robert Dillingham, Farina United Methodist Church, Farina, Illinois, offered the following prayer:

Creator of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, we come to You as broken vessels, called to Your holy task of governance. Be with the families of these gathered, build up, equip, protect, and empower all to the task before them this day.

Bring together through Your spirit those who are divided, and those who divide. Bring healing, bring unity, as You continually offer healing and hope to all of creation.

Omnipresent Creator, You have guided creation through the most difficult times. You have called us to this time and to this place, to this activity, to this body. We have followed that calling.

Now guide us, empower us, embolden us to this holy work of service and representation of Your creation. Guide us, O great Jehovah.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. 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. Will the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. STEFANIK) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. STEFANIK 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.

WELCOMING REVEREND ROBERT DILLINGHAM

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Reverend Robert Dillingham who led us in the opening prayer. He is a pastor in the Illinois Great Rivers Conference of the United Methodist Church where he serves Farina, Illinois.

Reverend Dillingham is both a chaplain and a volunteer firefighter with the Farina Fire Department and is also a chaplain with the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System, division 54. He serves as a hospice chaplain with the Hospital Sisters Health Systems through St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital in Effingham, Illinois, where he serves patients from over 20 counties in the central part of my congressional district.

In addition to his service as chaplain, Reverend Dillingham is also on the board of the Farina food pantry and is a clergy care guide, where he is a pastoral presence in the lives of over 70 pastors.

It is my honor to welcome Reverend Dillingham and his wife, Ashley, who is in the gallery today, and personally thank him for offering this morning's prayer.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. STEPHEN NIMER

(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. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Stephen Nimer on his successful 5 years as the director of the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center at my alma mater, the University of Miami. Go Canes.

Throughout his distinguished career as a noted leukemia and stem cell transplant researcher and clinician, Dr. Nimer has dedicated himself to caring for cancer patients in their greatest hour of need. Dr. Nimer has propelled the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center into prominence by bringing together a superb team of leading medical experts who have transformed the center into one of the worldwide leaders in cancer treatment and innovation.

Because of Dr. Nimer's efforts, people from South Florida, and indeed from all over the world, have come to view Sylvester as the ultimate destination for cutting-edge cancer programs, as well as a refuge and helping hand as they deal with this difficult disease.

Congratulations to Dr. Nimer on a successful 5-year tenure at the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center. Our South Florida community is indeed blessed to have you at the helm.

DON'T SILENCE THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, it looks like my colleagues have wasted no time moving back to familiar territory after their healthcare disaster last week.

Instead of fighting over how many people should lose health coverage, they decided that it is easier to unite around the shared cause of climate denial. This week President Trump announced plans to gut President Obama's landmark Clean Power Plan, and the House will vote on legislation to block the EPA from reviewing peer reviewed scientific research when forming regulations.

So think about that for a second—the majority couldn't agree on how many people should lose healthcare coverage; so they are united around the shared cause of climate denial. The President likes to claim that climate change is a hoax created by the Chinese.

Well, I know that the President and his party have developed a disdain for fact-checkers, but silencing the scientific community takes things to a whole new level.

Mr. Speaker, I have to ask: Can my colleagues handle the truth?

LIFT THE RELOCATION BURDEN FROM MILITARY SPOUSES ACT

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

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our resilient military families. These families endure countless relocations and deployments every couple of years, transitioning to new schools, new jobs, and fitting into new communities.

Military spouses wear their own patches of service and share a true sense of duty to our country. They sacrifice a great deal of themselves amid strain and the unknown, while providing unyielding support to their spouse in uniform.

Military spouses are often employed in professions which require new licensing that vary from State to State, with fees and wait times. To alleviate this burden and provide predictability in the lives of military spouses and their families, I have reintroduced the Lift the Relocation Burden from Military Spouses Act.

Military spouses serve, too, and my bill will help alleviate unnecessary stress and expenses, help make job changes easier, and will give these spouses and their families some deserved predictability as they serve their Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO IMPROVE THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my constituents and the millions of Americans who contacted their Representatives last week and voiced their opposition to the Republican bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Although TrumpCare failed, the debate on health care is far from over. I hope that Speaker RYAN will reach across the aisle so we can improve a law that works and is more popular than ever.

Thanks to the ACA, over 20 million more Americans are insured. People with preexisting conditions can no longer be denied. Consumers are protected from the worst abuses of the insurance industry. There are parts of the law that can be improved, and that is what we should be working on.

The Republican bill never tried; not one public hearing was held on that bill. Their complete lack of transparency in the Republican leadership tried to ram it through without public comment. We worked on the ACA for more than a year before there was a final vote.

TrumpCare was voted on in only 18 days after it was introduced—18 days—a bill that would cut 24 million Americans from health care. As ranking member of the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee, I hope to work with my colleagues on a bipartisan solution to improve the ACA.

CONGRATULATING HERMITAGE FFA FORESTRY TEAM

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the outstanding achievements of four young men in my district. The Hermitage, Arkansas, FFA Forestry team not only placed first in Arkansas but also won the 37th annual National 4-H Forestry Invitational and the National FFA Forestry Career Development Event.

The Hermitage FFA Forestry team was comprised of: Ethan Boykin, Hunter Saunders, Cade Wilkerson, and Connor Wilkerson, all of Hermitage, Arkansas. During the Forestry Invitational, teams competed for overall team and individual awards in events such as tree identification, insect and disease identification, forest evaluation, and a written forestry exam. The National FFA Forestry CDE tests students' skills and knowledge in forest management.

As a forester serving in the House of Representatives, I recognize the many hours that these young men dedicated to competing on a national level, and I admire them for their hard work.

Additionally, special recognition is due to Mr. Taylor Gwin, who coached the Arkansas Forestry team, the parents of the team members, and the Bradley County Extension Services.

They all played a crucial role in making this victory possible.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture and forestry are the main economic engines in Arkansas, and there is little doubt, in my mind, that one day soon, talented and passionate young people, such as these, will be called upon to lead our State into the future.

Once again, I offer them my most sincere congratulations and wish them the best as they continue to pursue their passion for forestry.

DON'T SHELVE FUEL EFFICIENCY RULES

(Mr. HIGGINS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, in 2009, when gas prices were very high and our dependence on foreign oil was at its peak, the Environmental Protection Agency set standards to increase fuel efficiency of trucks and cars. This helped achieve three main goals: It lessened the burden on consumers faced with high gas prices, addressed the urgent national security priority relating to our addiction to Middle East oil, and sought to limit the admittance of harmful fumes into our atmosphere.

At the same time, we made unprecedented commitment to our auto industry, and in their most uncertain and darkest moment, facing collapse and bankruptcy, America bailed them out. We did this, and it came with political consequences, but we believe in their centrality to the future of the American economy, and we still do.

That is why it is so disappointing to see the eagerness the auto industry has with this administration's choice to cave—and cowardly—on fuel efficiency standards. Gas prices may be low now, but they won't be forever. It would be a misguided decision to shelve these fuel-efficiency rules now.

WHAT MY CONSTITUENTS WANT

(Mr. MARCHANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I made a promise to my constituents when they sent me back to office this year. They entrusted me to represent them on the issues that affect them the most.

They sent me here to repeal ObamaCare, our health system. Our health insurance system is crushing those that it is supposed to help.

They sent me here to remove Washington bureaucrats from the healthcare business and to restore the doctor-patient relationship that has broken down. If ObamaCare has shown us anything, it is that coverage and affordable care are two very different things.

They sent me here for sweeping tax reform that benefits every American, to create a tax structure that rewards American workers and American businesses.

Lastly, they sent me here to make sure that we secure our borders and enforce our border laws because border security is national security.

Mr. Speaker, these are the issues this House should be tackling.

NOTHING TO HIDE?

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned that the Trump administration tried to limit former Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates' testimony on Russian interference in the 2016 election.

As reported in The Washington Post, Sally Yates and former CIA Director John Brennan had made clear that their testimony would contradict statements that have been made by officials at the White House.

The hearing at which they were to testify has now been canceled, and all of us have a responsibility to ask why. If there is nothing to hide about his ties to Putin's Russia, then why doesn't President Trump want Sally Yates to testify?

If there is nothing to hide, then why does President Trump continue to withhold his tax returns?

If there is nothing to hide, then why won't President Trump make public the visitor logs at Mar-a-Lago?

We are now in day 68 of the Trump administration. Each day, more and more information emerges about ties between Vladimir Putin's regime and Trump's inner circle, and the Trump campaign officials. Each day, the White House scrambles to contain the damage. It is time for the President to come clean with the American people.

Mr. President, let Sally Yates testify. Mr. President, release your taxes. Mr. President, let's see the guest logs at Mar-a-Lago. And Mr. President, support an independent, bipartisan commission to get to the bottom of this. The American people deserve answers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair reminds Members to address their remarks to the Chair.

□ 1215

TAX REFORM

(Mr. WILLIAMS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on tax reform. Many of my colleagues know this is a matter that I am the most passionate about.

Mr. Speaker, I am a second-generation small-business owner, and my daughters are third-generation. I understand firsthand the impact that unfair, job-killing taxes and regulations have on Main Street.

I know what it is like to nearly lose a family business that was built from the ground up just because the Federal Government believes in a death tax.