

in 2011, and then served as deputy chief of staff from 2013 until she left recently in March.

She focused on telecommunications as her expertise, and we primarily in our office dealt with 911 issues, especially the Next Generation 911 Advancement Act. She also spearheaded the Next Generation 911 Caucus in my office.

She is married to Bob and has two children, Gavin and Hadley. We already miss her activity and work in the office, and we pass on best wishes.

Next is Mr. Chris Sarley, who has a 14-year career on Capitol Hill. This is his tenth year with me, and I think it is uncommon in many offices for people to stay that long. I think it is a tribute to my chief of staff, Craig Roberts, and the fact that I don't meddle too much how they manage the office and get their job done.

Chris has served 10 years with me. In addition to handling health care and energy policy in my office, Chris has served the committee under Chairman WALDEN and Chairman Emeritus UPTON as policy coordinator for the Subcommittee on Environment since 2011.

Chris has been an invaluable member of my team, and some of his achievements include:

Before he came to my office, he worked on the Medicare part D rollout.

Under my office, he advanced several medical device titles in the 21st Century Cures Act.

He worked on what we call the ADAPT Act and the GAIN Act, which target the antibiotic threats that hopefully will not occur in our country, but we need to be ready to respond.

He was very involved in ADUFA, Animal Drug User Fee Act, and enabling the FDA to approve drugs used for pets and livestock.

But for all of us on the Energy and Commerce Committee, he was one of our primary House negotiators during the first major rewrite of a United States environmental protection law in over 2 decades, and facilitated passage of the Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, which amends the Toxic Substances Control Act, which is the Nation's primary chemical regulation law.

I think the public really would appreciate if they knew the work that our staff members do on long hours and over the weekends. We mention it all the time, especially when we are fighting across the aisle, because it is primarily the staff that is trying to get to the point where they can share language where we can then give a thumbs up or thumbs down, and it is very seldom that we say thanks for those. A Member is only as good as the folks he has who work for him and who he or she surrounds himself with.

I wanted to take this time, Mr. Speaker, to call out two great government employees who served their Nation well and served me well. And it also sends a signal about all our other staff members who do tremendous

work under great stress to serve this country.

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 44 minutes 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

Rabbi Richard Boruch Rabinowitz, Aish International, New York, New York, offered the following prayer:

May we humbly ask You, God Almighty, to help us focus on the beauty and good of this great country.

God, we thank You for giving wisdom to Presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald J. Trump for proclaiming May as Jewish Heritage Month.

The Jewish people of this country are grateful and indebted to You, God, for the opportunity to contribute in making the United States a great nation.

Aish founder, Rabbi Noah Weinberg, of blessed memory, would say to young people: "When older people see your idealism, they might say, 'you'll grow up,' but what they really mean is 'you'll give up.'"

Rabbi Weinberg would say: "Never give up—get tougher instead."

Let us pray for the Members of Congress and this great Nation: God, please grant us clarity and courage to always do right and never give up on our principles.

God bless the United States of America.

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.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska 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.

HONORING LYDIA STRUNK

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

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because this is Lydia Strunk's last week working on the House floor.

Before I talk about Lydia, I want to talk about the work that she and all the people here on the floor do for us, for the people's House, on both sides of the aisle. They are the ones who keep the floor running on time on a day-to-day basis. They make sure that the votes are counted and conducted impartially. They make sure that every Member, majority and minority, is treated fairly. And though the hours are long and unpredictable, they always set a fantastic tone of decorum.

No one better exemplifies this professionalism than Lydia Strunk. She has been a part of this institution since 2008, when she started out in the Republican Cloakroom. We all knew her so well then and enjoyed watching her rise to these great responsibilities that she now holds.

For more than 4 years now, Lydia has served as the Speaker's deputy floor director. As it turns out, she accepted this job on the night of her wedding. How is that for commitment?

Lydia's quiet dedication to the people's House comes through in almost everything that she does; and because she does her job so well, almost no one ever notices. Think about it. If you ever wondered how a joint meeting with a foreign leader or a State of the Union goes off without a hitch, it is because of Lydia's doing.

One of her jobs, of course, is to keep us on schedule. So I will make one last point before she tells me to wrap this up, because I assume that is what she will be doing in a minute.

I want to thank Lydia's family. I want to thank Lydia's husband, Jeff, and I want to thank, in particular, her children.

Graham and Evie, I want you to know that your mother is an incredible public servant. She has done so much for us, for this country and this institution, and we are grateful to you for sharing your mom—and your wife—with us. This whole House is in her debt.

HONORING LYDIA STRUNK

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I agree with almost everything the Speaker just had to say, and I may repeat some of it. What I do not agree with, however, Mr. Speaker, is that we didn't notice. I noticed. My staff has noticed. My staff has not only noticed, but appreciated the extraordinary work that Lydia has done for this House—yes, for your office, yes, for the Republican side of the aisle, but for this House and for the American people.

Lydia and I have a great relationship, but probably more importantly, she has a great relationship with Shuwanza Goff, who runs the floor on our side of the aisle.

What a privilege it is to rise and say to Lydia, thank you—not as a Democrat, not as a Republican, but as an American who appreciates the role that you have played, Lydia, in making a difference. I always say that, when the House runs well, it is the staff's work. When it doesn't do so well, it is the Members' responsibility and fault. So you have been absolutely terrific.

And Jeff and Graham and Evie, I join with Speaker RYAN in saying that your mom is a great American, a wonderful human being. You know that personally. You see it every day in your own lives. But for the past 9 years, Lydia has been a presence on this floor first in the Republican Cloakroom as an assistant, later as a staffer with the Rules Committee, and then, as the Speaker just pointed out, deputy floor director for the Republican side of the aisle.

They are the majority party, so Lydia's responsibility really is institutional—not partisan, but institutional—and she has performed that in the best traditions of the best of this House.

It is a testament to Lydia's skill and professionalism that she has earned the respect not only of her own colleagues on the Republican side, but also those who work on my staff and the Democratic leader's staff on this side of the aisle. That is why, Lydia, I said we have noticed, we have appreciated it.

In many ways, Mr. Speaker, public service is a family affair for Lydia Strunk. She grew up around it when her father worked in the George H.W. Bush White House handling legislative affairs. Her dad is a good friend of mine, so perhaps I am not objective. I am also the father of three daughters, so perhaps I am not objective.

Nick Calio is one of the great people with whom I have served through the years. I think he is here in the gallery somewhere with his wife.

Thank you, Nick, for your service, and thank you for being such a wonderful example for your daughter. She has brought that same kind of cooperative, collegial, inclusive spirit to her work that you brought to yours not only working in the public sector, but also in the private sector.

Let me end. She grew up in a great State: Maryland. Again, perhaps making me more subjective than I otherwise would be.

After she began as a Cloakroom assistant, she met and later married Jeff Strunk, who then worked on Speaker John Boehner's floor staff, also very effectively and productively. And when Jeff left Capitol Hill in 2013, Lydia was promoted to take his place, a somewhat incestuous operation, but it worked extraordinarily well, Mr. Speaker.

I am grateful. We ought to all be grateful. The American people ought to be grateful for her efforts, her know-how, and the dedication she brings to the task of ensuring that our work, Americans' work, the American people's work here on this floor and on behalf of all of us can continue smoothly each day.

Lydia, thank you. We wish you the very best. We know that whatever you do, you will be extraordinarily successful in doing, and that you will be perceived by your colleagues and by those with whom you work in the same very positive and very appreciative way that we view you today. Godspeed.

CONGRATULATIONS TO GERING
HIGH SCHOOL

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

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Gering High School, one of three national winners of the 2017 Samsung Solve for Tomorrow contest. The team of 19 Gering students took top honors out of thousands of entries and 10 national finalists.

It is exciting to see young innovators from western Nebraska, especially my alma mater, recognized nationally for their ideas on how to advance agriculture. The students designed a drone-powered system to reduce herbicide quantity by allowing farmers to directly target specific areas rather than spraying entire fields. I applaud each of them for their hard work and the dedication they put into their winning project.

Congratulations go to Curtis Anderson, Jonathan Blanco, Dakota Boles, Blake Brunner, Gabriele Castro, Cody Catron, Eric Crane, Jeremy Forella, Michael Haworth, Xavier Horst, Elexus Johnson, Kaiden Reinmuth, Trevor Satur, Tyler Smith, Joel Torres, Carson Wallace, Skylier Ward, Payton Welfl, Joshua Wilson, and their teacher, Mr. Justin Reinmuth.

TODAY IS WORLD PRESS
FREEDOM DAY

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, today is World Press Freedom Day, a day that

deserves commemoration now more than ever.

Undermining the credibility of the free press and attempting to turn the American people against the media is reminiscent of authoritarian tactics, not the conduct of the leader of the free world. Yet the President has referred to the press as the "enemy of the people" for simply doing their job: reporting the facts and holding all of us accountable.

He has also dismissed distinguished publications as fake news, again, for simply doing their job and has threatened to change libel laws that will weaken the First Amendment, making it easier for him to attack and sue the press.

This antagonistic relationship between the President and the press is not only beneath the dignity of the office, it is also dangerous for our democracy. We have seen strongmen and autocratic countries suppress the media through intimidation and by discrediting the integrity of the very institution of journalism.

It is hard to believe that I have to say this in this country at this point in our history, but as Thomas Jefferson said: "Our liberty cannot be guarded but by the freedom of the press, nor that be limited without danger of losing it."

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

MATKINS FLOWERS AND GREENHOUSE
CELEBRATES 90 YEARS
IN BUSINESS

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

Mr. WOMACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a small business in my district that is celebrating its 90th anniversary this week.

Matkins Flowers and Greenhouse in Bentonville, Arkansas, has served the northwest Arkansas region since 1927, when Henry Lenny Matkins, Sr., founded the company. Throughout the last nine decades, this Arkansas small business has persevered in good times and bad, and it serves as an example of how you make a small business sustainable with integrity, accountability, and hard work.

Working through the Great Depression, World War II, and the modern era, the Matkins family has continuously exhibited the importance of the family-owned small business to the American economy. Now in its fourth generation of leadership with Jim and his son Jeff, it is worth celebrating this important milestone.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to represent this outstanding family and offer my thanks and admiration for the success of Matkins Flowers and Greenhouse.