

and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HURD 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

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

#### HONORING THE LATE CHIEF JUSTICE EARNEST A. FINNEY, JR.

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, sadly, South Carolina lost a trailblazer with the death, Sunday, of Chief Justice Ernest A. Finney, Jr.

Justice Finney started his storied career in public service as an educator and then went on to become a renowned civil rights attorney and was South Carolina's first African-American chief justice since Reconstruction.

My first judicial commitment as a State senator was for Justice Finney, after meeting him with former Congressman John Napier, who had been my classmate in law school.

A graduate of Claflin University and South Carolina State University School of Law, the justice was elected to the South Carolina House of Representatives in 1972. As a member of the house, he made history as a founder of the Legislative Black Caucus. He served as the first caucus chairman.

In 1976, the justice was elected the first African-American circuit court judge. In 1985, he became the State's first African-American supreme court justice since Reconstruction. Justice Finney became chief justice in 1994.

South Carolina is grateful for the life and service of Justice Finney. We lift up his family and friends in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

#### OPEN ENROLLMENT

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to remind every American that the window to purchase health insurance on [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov) will close in 10 days. I encourage anyone who doesn't get insurance through a job or government program to apply before December 15.

Financial assistance is available, and the Department of Health and Human Services has said before that 8 out of 10 consumers qualify for a plan that costs less than \$75 a month.

Although the sign-up period was cut in half by the Trump administration, nearly 2.8 million people have already enrolled so far this year compared to 2.1 million this time last year. That is an increase of 33 percent, and this doesn't include numbers from States that have their own exchange.

Mr. Speaker, the Affordable Care Act is still the law of the land, and I urge my Republican colleagues not to harm the ACA by including provisions in the tax bill and, instead, work with Democrats to improve the law.

Millions of Americans depend on us to do the right thing, Mr. Speaker.

#### WORLD SOIL DAY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on World Soil Day to highlight the importance of soil quality for our food security, healthy ecosystems, and overall well-being.

As vice chair of the House Agriculture Committee and chairman of the Nutrition Subcommittee, I know firsthand the importance of good management practices to keep this essential resource healthy.

This year's theme is "caring for the planet starts from the ground." Globally, 815 million people are food insecure and 2 billion people are nutritionally insecure, but we can mitigate this through soil health.

Mr. Speaker, 95 percent of our food comes from soil. Soil is a finite resource, and on a human scale, it is non-renewable. However, despite the essential role that soil plays in human livelihood, there is a worldwide increase in the degradation of soil resources due to inappropriate management practices, population pressure driving unsustainable intensification, and inadequate governance over this essential resource.

World Soil Day 2017 aims to raise awareness of the importance of sustaining healthy ecosystems and human well-being by addressing the increasing challenges in soil management. Today we encourage people around the world to engage in proactively improving soil health.

Happy World Soil Day.

#### BIRTH CONTROL RULE

(Ms. SCHAKOWSKY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today against the Trump administration rule allowing corporations to decide whether their employees can access birth control. This morning, 500,000 comments were delivered in opposition to this rule.

It is astonishing to me that we are having this debate in 2017: women's access to birth control.

Birth control is not healthcare alone. It is the right of women to control

their own bodies, plan their own families, and chart their own futures.

Obstetricians and gynecologists from Chicago submitted a comment, saying: "Women who are able to control when and how they become pregnant are able to finish school, pursue graduate degrees, and further the greater social and economic good of our Nation."

Mr. Speaker, for 99 percent of women of reproductive age, birth control is an essential part of their lives. This is a direct attack on women, and we will not stand for it. Women in America are watching.

#### TEXAS OFFICER DOWN: SAN MARCOS POLICE OFFICER KENNETH COPELAND

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, yesterday afternoon, 58-year-old San Marcos, Texas, Police Officer Kenneth Copeland was shot in an ambush-style attack while he was serving an arrest warrant for a violent crime.

The 19-year veteran of the force was working on his day off doing what he loved: protecting and serving the community. This wasn't unusual for Officer Copeland. A father of four, he worked just about every day simply to provide for his family and help the shorthanded department out.

As guns blazed around them, fellow officers sprang into action loading Copeland into a patrol car and rushed him to the hospital with their sirens blazing. But it was too late. Another member of the thin blue line murdered simply because he wore the badge.

Mr. Speaker, this is the sixth peace officer in Texas murdered this year, the first in San Marcos history. We must do everything in our power to stand by our men and women in uniform who wear the badge. Peace officers like Copeland are the last strand of wire in the fence between the law and the outlaws.

We mourn his sacrifice, but we thank the good Lord that such a man as Officer Copeland ever lived.

And that is just the way it is.

#### WELCOMING USS "LITTLE ROCK" TO BUFFALO, NEW YORK

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

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize and welcome the newly constructed naval ship, the USS *Little Rock*, to my home city of Buffalo, New York, where it will be docked until its formal commissioning on December 16.

For the first time in the history of the United States Navy, the commissioning of the new USS *Little Rock* will take place alongside the original USS *Little Rock*, which served during the Second World War and for the last 40 years has stood tall as an honored exhibit at the Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park.