

When it comes to American leadership, we pulled out of the Paris climate accord, we ended the Cuba appeasement, we condemned and decertified the Iran deal, and Guantanamo Bay is still open with no threat of closing.

By changing the rules of engagement, trusting our generals, and unleashing our military might, he has overseen the total destruction of the ISIS caliphate. The entire world is safer because of American leadership. Through his words and deeds—most recently with Jerusalem—the world sees America leading with moral clarity and confidence again.

Mr. Speaker, tonight I will have the privilege of hearing the State of the Union that I have been waiting to hear for 7 years. Tonight we will look at an economy and a State of the Union that is as strong as Pittsburgh steel.

Our economy is roaring, and America's optimism is soaring. Our citizens are becoming more prosperous. Our law enforcement is becoming empowered and not undermined. Our military is growing stronger by the day. Our international credibility is being restored. Our friends, once again, trust us; and our enemies, once again, fear us. The whole world knows that we will also put America first.

But this is just the start. There is still much work left to be done. But as of today, the facts say it all: America is winning again.

MILITARY PAYCHECKS

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is nice to have the United States economy starting to win again. It was a great tribute to the President's leadership that we got a tax bill done that is already reaping fantastic benefits for so many across the country.

It is rather amazing to see people in some parts of the media who have taken surveys already to see if people have benefited from a tax bill that actually applies to the taxes due at the end of this year even before they get their February paycheck that will actually reflect those savings. But I guess if your goal is to undermine the President at every turn rather than to be fair and impartial media, that is the kind of thing you do in January. You do it quickly before individuals have a chance to say and know how much the tax bill will improve their lives.

It is also rather amazing to hear people from this body refer to a \$1,000 bonus as crumbs. One would think you would have to basically be a multimillionaire to think of \$1,000 as crumbs. But for those of us who cashed out most everything we had in order to come be a servant in Congress, \$1,000 is still a lot of money. It will pay a lot of bills. It is good for American families and individuals that they are able to do that.

I do want to call attention to something that my friend, Mrs. HARTZLER,

referenced, and that is the threat of paychecks not coming to our military when they are in harm's way protecting our very freedoms that allow us to debate and push through legislation.

Going back to 2011, I saw the military used as pawns in order to force—or try to force—Republicans to vote for a bad continuing resolution that broke many of our promises. I had encouraged the Speaker, at that time, that we needed to do something to make sure that our military—the military pay—was treated as our Social Security paychecks were treated where they are on automatic pilot, and even if there is a shutdown, those checks continue to go out.

I know that is a surprise to some of our seniors because, in the last administration, the President and others continually told people that, if there was a shutdown, the Social Security checks would not be going out. Unfortunately, that was just a problem of ignorance, and, of course, there is no House rule that objects to our pointing out ignorance of a fact. But the fact is Social Security checks go out automatically. If someone is entitled to an increase in their Social Security check, that does not occur until after the shutdown is over.

After I saw that the Republican Speaker, back in 2011, after being warned that we shouldn't use our military pay as leverage to get people to vote for a bill that they shouldn't vote for, I actually filed a bill before that CR came due that would ensure that the military was paid as Social Security. If you are entitled to a promotion or additional pay, that doesn't come until the shutdown is over.

That bill has again been filed in this Congress. The name is the ASAP bill, Armed Services Always Paid. We need to go ahead and bring that bill to the floor, push the Senate to do the same thing, and put our military's pay on automatic pilot. They would never have to worry.

Having served in the military, in the U.S. Army, for 4 years, I know our military is being paid better than we were back when I was on Active Duty. But even still, I know too many in our military who are barely getting by on what they are paid. The last thing they need is to be in harm's way dodging bullets or IEDs or rocket-propelled grenades and have to be worrying whether their loved ones back in the United States are going to have the check so that they can pay their car payment and their home payment.

Let's pass this ASAP bill immediately.

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 40 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

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

As You make available to Your people the grace and knowledge to meet the needs of the day, we pray that Your spirit will be upon the Members of this people's House, giving them the richness of Your wisdom.

Bless the Members of the majority party as they prepare and gather these next days. May they, with those who accompany them, travel safely and meet in peace.

Bless also the minority party as they prepare for their own gathering. May these days be filled with hopeful anticipation.

Bless also the President as he visits the people's House to address the Nation this evening.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

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 gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PANETTA 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.

AMERICANS ARE BETTER OFF

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the differences are stark between President Obama's first year in office and President Trump's first year in office. If you just listen to the liberal media, you would think our country is worse off under President Trump. However, if you follow the facts, Americans are far better off.