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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 10, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIMI WALTERS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 8, 2018, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

HIGHLIGHTING THE LOUISIANA NATIONAL GUARD YOUTH CHALLENGE PROGRAM

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight the Louisiana National Guard Youth Challenge Program, a wonderful program that is changing young people's lives and making Louisiana a better place.

Youth Challenge accepts high-risk students 16 to 18 years of age, and of-

fers them the education, training, and emotional support they need to finish their high school equivalency requirements, and gives them the life skills that they need to be productive adults.

These students face challenges completing their education in traditional classroom settings. Some come from troubled homes, some are victims of severe bullying, some have their own discipline and anger issues, some have fallen so far behind in the coursework that they feel they cannot finish, and some have already dropped out of high school. Youth Challenge offers them the second chance that they need to get back on the path to success.

The Youth Challenge Program lasts 17 months, 5 months of which are at residential sites. We have three camps in Louisiana: Camp Minden near Shreveport, Camp Beauregard in central Louisiana, and the Gillis Long Center near Baton Rouge.

While there, students learn from the structure and discipline offered by the military. They drill early in the morning and pursue coursework and job training in the afternoon. They also learn life skills and hear from motivational speakers and anti-substance abuse experts.

I recently had the privilege of speaking at a graduation ceremony in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and there are fewer things that are more inspiring than seeing the faces of these young people who have worked hard to turn their lives around and successfully complete the program.

Youth Challenge students also give back to the community. They complete at least 40 hours of community service that usually is focused on helping veterans, working with children, and volunteering with Special Olympics.

While Youth Challenge Programs exist in States across the Nation, none has been more successful than in Louisiana. According to the Louisiana National Guard, more than 1,400 students

graduate per year, which is more than any other State, and 83 percent of these pass the GED, which is the highest rate in the Nation.

After completing the program, graduates can continue their education, join the military, or get full-time employment. Many businesses in Louisiana recognize the value of these hardworking students and actively seek to employ them.

The Youth Challenge Program relies largely on Federal support, and it is an endeavor we in Congress should all support.

Youth Challenge is also asking Congress to consider pilot programs aimed specifically at job training and apprenticeship programs. As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I look forward to discussing this request with my colleagues as we consider the fiscal year 2019 Defense Appropriations bill.

In conclusion, I want to thank the Louisiana National Guard instructors who give so much of themselves to this program and make it a wonderful success. It is because of their dedication that these students do have a second chance to succeed and become thriving, productive adult members of our society.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to seeing where the future of this program goes and the lives it has yet to change.

RECOGNIZING KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY'S KANSAS WHEAT INNOVATION CENTER

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

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight my alma mater, Kansas State University, and the Kansas Wheat Innovation Center, which I had the honor and the pleasure of touring over this Easter work period. This

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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