

I would like to recognize president Brian Damiani and vice president Allan Corless, along with the executive directors, board members, and volunteers, for the countless hours they put in to improve the lives of those in Bucks County.

RECOGNIZING WARWICK TOWNSHIP FOR ITS RANK AS ONE OF PENNSYLVANIA'S SAFEST CITIES

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, we have no higher priority than working to ensure the safety of the communities we represent. Working with law enforcement and local officials is essential to meeting this responsibility. I am proud to recognize Warwick Township in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, for being ranked as one of our State's safest cities.

In identifying Pennsylvania's safest cities, the statistics were compiled from the FBI Uniform Crime Report. This information indicated that Warwick Township was the 15th safest city in the State of Pennsylvania. I would like to thank Judith Algeo, chairwoman of the Warwick Township Board of Supervisors, and Police Chief Mark Goldberg for their hard work in keeping our district a phenomenal place to live, work, and raise a family. I look forward to continuing our mission together.

MEMORIALIZING THE LIVES OF FRANK SKARTADOS AND JUDY KENNEDY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to memorialize two beloved elected officials from the Hudson Valley who passed away this weekend: Assemblyman Frank Skartados and Newburgh mayor, Judy Kennedy.

First, Assemblyman Frank Skartados represented a number of communities up and down the Hudson Valley. He lost a battle with cancer early Sunday morning. Even though he was struggling through his sickness, Frank still fought relentlessly for his neighbors up in Albany.

□ 1045

Frank was an immigrant from Greece, grew up on a small Greek island, came to America as a teenager, learned English, paid his way through school, and built a successful business. He went on to represent the people of the Hudson Valley and the State Assembly for nearly a decade. Now, if that is not the American Dream, I don't know what is. My heart goes out to the Skartados family and to everyone else grieving his loss. We will miss Frank sorely.

I would also like to memorialize Judy Kennedy, the mayor of Newburgh, New York. Judy and I shared a love for the city of Newburgh. Judy also passed away from cancer this weekend. She fought through her sickness to serve

the people she cared so much about and the city she loved.

She was a relentless warrior for the people she represented. She brought the city of Newburgh through an economic crisis and presided over a real revitalization throughout that city. Our thoughts are with the Kennedy family as well, and, of course, the entire Newburgh community that will miss her leadership.

The public servants we lost this weekend were truly special people. They dedicated their lives to the people they served, and the best way for us to honor their legacy is to finish their work, to look out for the communities they represented, and to make sure they stay the wonderful places to live, work, and raise a family that they are.

Frank and Judy, thank you for all you have done for us. I hope everyone in the Hudson Valley joins me in saying a prayer in remembrance of their service, and, of course, we will see them; we will see them whenever we see the government doing something right. We will see them when we see the city of Newburgh continue to thrive. We will see them when we see the State government improving our environment—looking out for working families, fighting for people without a voice. That is where we will see their legacy, when we continue the work they fought so nobly and so long to advance.

Rest in peace.

CONCERNS ABOUT AMERICA'S FOOD BILL

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to raise concerns about the farm bill that we will consider in the House Agriculture Committee tomorrow.

In any legislation, there are parts of it that you support and there are areas that are problematic and there are titles that you may oppose. That is part of legislation. Some of these areas, of course, are works in progress. That is part of legislation as well. The farm bill is no exception.

There are parts of this proposal that are a continuation of good things that we have done in previous farm bills that have worked. This version of the farm bill supports programs that are critical to specialty crops in the San Joaquin Valley and across California and the Nation. Specialty crops are special. They are fresh fruits and vegetables that serve as the foundation of a healthy diet. California grows half of the Nation's specialty crops.

This bill also provides support for research and risk management tools that are necessary. That includes continuous support for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, a program that encourages farmers to be good stewards of our environment. It also has proposals that support programs that help our farmers, ranchers, and

dairy producers expand to foreign markets so we can compete.

Further, it also includes research and development of organic farming that continues to be very, very important, and it encourages a comprehensive approach to ensuring the health and security of our livestock. But we could do more in all of these areas.

There are also parts of this farm bill that, for me, are problematic. As written, the dairy provisions create an uneven playing field that protects some, while leaving others exposed, sowing a regional divide within the dairy industry.

Instead, we should raise the threshold for catastrophic coverage under the dairy safety net so we can respond more quickly for all dairy producers when milk markets plummet. The California dairy industry has hit hard times in recent years.

Lastly, there are components of this farm bill that I strongly oppose, as do countless other organizations, people in the San Joaquin Valley and across the country. One of these proposals makes changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, otherwise known as SNAP, that will devastate parts of the food program that are working well.

SNAP education and training programs are designed to help people and help recipients develop skills so ultimately they become self-reliant. I am a strong supporter of SNAP education and training programs. Although some of our SNAP education and training programs are yielding great results, we have a pilot project in Fresno County called the Fresno Bridge Academy that has expanded, and we now, as a result of the last farm bill, have 10 pilot projects around the country. In 2019, they are supposed to report back to the Congress to say what works and what doesn't work.

That is the way we should be doing this so that we can get people off of assistance, make them self-sufficient. We all agree that able-bodied people should be working. Yet, this farm bill makes enrollment in the SNAP education and training program mandatory, and in many cases, without giving them the necessary tools to get real jobs that exist.

We have been warned that such a strain on burgeoning programs may very well collapse, costing billions of dollars, and creating a new Federal bureaucracy. In addition, this proposal would systematically prevent people from getting food assistance that they badly need, including our disabled, our seniors, and our veterans. Twenty-five percent of my constituents are on SNAP and require food assistance.

This program is vital to the health of our communities, both in rural and urban areas in every State in the Nation. The farm bill is America's food bill. It is about our national security. It is very important. It should not serve some well and abandon others.

Although this proposal does include some good provisions, it fails to serve

important parts of our community, and it builds a bigger and more intense divide between regions and groups in our country. Our Nation's food policy should not be something that further divides us. This part of the House farm bill proposal, I think, is bad policy. It will not succeed legislatively, nor can it be successfully implemented.

The United States Senate is writing a bipartisan farm bill, and that is what we should be doing in the House. As a matter of fact, the farm bill, for over 40 years, has been one of the most bipartisan things that we do in Congress.

I call upon my colleagues to work together, in a bipartisan fashion, to negotiate these differences, one that serves the widest range of Americans so that we can produce enduring good public policy decisions that serve to protect the safety net for all Americans, promote American farmers, ranchers, and dairy people so that we can not only feed the Nation but compete in foreign markets.

We can do better. We should do better.

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 52 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: Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day. Lead us in this day in Your ways, that our Nation might be guided along the roads of peace, justice, and goodwill.

Grant strength and wisdom to our Speaker and the Members of both this assembly and the Senate, to our President and his Cabinet, and to our Supreme Court—as well as to us all, that all of our institutions and all of our communities fulfill the noble promises of our representative form of self-government.

Grant us the courage to become whom You have called us to be—our better selves—so that the United States might continue to be a nation worthy of emulation.

Bless us this day and every day, and may all that is done within the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's pro-

ceedings 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 Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. MCGOVERN 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.

CONGRATULATIONS MURPHYS BORO MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS VOLLEYBALL TEAM

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, today I proudly honor the Murphysboro Middle School Blue Devils Girls volleyball team for winning the Class L State Championship for the second straight year.

Along the way, the team also captured their eighth consecutive Junior Southwest Egyptian Conference title. That win was also a career milestone for Coach Mike Layne. It marked the 1,000th combined career win while coaching volleyball for Murphysboro Community Unit School District at both the middle school and high school levels.

I extend a heartfelt congratulations to the players, coaching staff, school officials, family, and friends who supported these young ladies on their incredible journey. Southern Illinois is proud of you.

Go, Blue Devils.

REJECT THE REPUBLICAN FARM BILL

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the House Agriculture Committee will mark up the Republican farm bill. This incredibly partisan proposal was drafted in secret. Almost nothing in the bill reflects the 23 hearings our committee held on SNAP.

We heard from 90 experts, and not a single one of them, liberal or conservative, suggested eliminating State flexibility through broad-based categorical eligibility and worsening the benefit cliff.

Not a single one of them said to us: Kick 400,000 working families out of the

program and 265,000 children off of free school meals.

Not a single one of them told us to add hurdles for families with heating and cooling costs, and not a single one suggested we kick vulnerable adults off of benefits when they can't find work.

Yet that is exactly what this bill does. The reckless Republican proposals in this bill cut SNAP benefits by over \$20 billion, reducing or eliminating benefits for 2 million kids, veterans, working families, and other vulnerable adults.

Make no mistake, this bill will make hunger worse in our country. I plead with the Republican leadership of this House: Stop beating up on poor people.

MARKING TAX DAY 2018

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

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark tax day 2018.

I do not make it a habit of celebrating tax day, but this year is different. Tax day 2018 is the last time the American people will have to file their taxes under a complex, outdated Tax Code.

The new Tax Code lowers the tax rate for every Montanan. The reduced rates are creating larger paychecks. A teacher in Billings told me her take-home pay has gone up \$1,500 a year.

The new Tax Code provides relief to Montana families by doubling the child tax credit. Parents will have more money to buy their children clothes, diapers, and food.

Today, I am celebrating tax day 2018 because we are putting that old antigrowth Tax Code out to pasture. In its place is a new, simpler Tax Code that cuts rates for all Montanans, helps families, and is growing our economy, leading to more jobs and higher wages.

ADHERE TO THE RULE OF LAW

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, it is my task this morning to encourage my colleagues to adhere to the rule of law.

In keeping with that, my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee—Mr. NADLER, the ranking member, myself, and Mr. COHEN—introduced H.R. 5476, the Special Counsel Independence and Integrity Act, to protect the work of Special Counsel Mueller and to allow his work to proceed.

In the recent days, Mr. Mueller's prosecutors found information that generated questions about criminal activity. No prosecutor can ignore that kind of evidence. He referred it first to the Deputy Attorney General, Mr. Rosenstein, to approve his potential referral of that information, and he did approve it. It was referred to the Southern District of New York.