



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 164

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2018

No. 152

House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MEADOWS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 12, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK MEADOWS 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.

VICTORY OR DEATH

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, there is a battle brewing back home in Texas. According to news reports, it seems that some in our education system have taken issue with one of the most treasured and significant historical letters in Texas history, Lieutenant Colonel William Barrett Travis and his passionate plea in his letter "to all the people of Texas and all Americans in the world."

To add insult to injury, they have also called into question the heroic nature of Travis and the 187 volunteers who sacrificed their lives at the Battle of the Alamo on March 6, 1836.

A committee evaluating the State's history curriculum standards has proposed that we eliminate the study of Travis' historical "Victory or Death" letter. They have also recommended that we remove the word "heroic" from the curriculum because it is a value-charged word, a hero and the heroes of the Alamo.

Well, to quote Travis, I have a value-charged word or two to say about that: "Victory or death," Mr. Speaker. These are the most iconic words in Texas history. That is our battle cry and has been our battle cry since 1836. It is who we are.

Texas' defiant, independent nature was born from those words of that letter written from behind the walls of a besieged Alamo mission in Bexar, Texas. The words on that paper are as much a part of who we are as the blood that runs through our veins.

We shall "never surrender or retreat," to quote Travis. We cannot allow political correctness to rewrite any history or, in this case, edit history.

Maybe they didn't take Texas history from Mrs. Wilson, like I did. However, it seems now that this committee is walking back that original suggestion.

Whatever the case, the Travis letter is every bit the core and soul of freedom as the words of Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence. He says: "I have answered that demand with a cannon shot, and the flag still waves proudly over the north wall. I shall never surrender or retreat."

Mr. Speaker, history is the greatest teacher we have. Book burners who want to erase from textbooks "the establishment of the Republic of Texas brought civil, political, and religious freedom to Texas" are just trying to ignore history.

Those elites who want to rip the Travis letter from our Texas history books dishonor the sacrifice of 187 freedom fighters at the Alamo, of all races, from most of the States and several foreign countries, including Mexico. These individuals gave their last full measure of devotion to liberty.

Webster's dictionary may not define "hero" with the names of those who died March 6, 1836, at the Alamo, but it should.

Travis isn't just my favorite hero. He has intertwined himself throughout my life. He is the inspiration of why I am a lawyer. He was a lawyer.

My first grandson is named Barrett Houston. And inscribed along the bottom of my stationery are the words, "I shall never surrender or retreat."

Travis' letter hung on my wall of the courtroom in Texas and still hangs in my office today in D.C.

Because of men like William Barrett Travis and the Alamo defenders, we are called the great State of Texas. Travis' legacy embodies the passion and loyalty that makes Texans stand out in the world. To consider anything to the contrary is a disgrace.

We must preserve one of our greatest treasures in Texas history so that future generations can learn the meaning of "what is due to his own honor and that of his country." God and Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the Travis letter.

COMMANDANCY OF THE ALAMO

Bejar, Feby. 24th. 1836

To the People of Texas & All Americans in the World—Fellow Citizens & compatriots—

I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna—I have sustained a continual Bombardment & cannonade for 24 hours & have not lost a man—The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken—I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, & our flag still waves proudly from the walls—I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism & everything dear to the American

☐ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., ☐ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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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character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch—The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily & will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor & that of his country—
Victory or Death.

WILLIAM BARRETT TRAVIS.

Lt. Col. comdt.

P.S. The Lord is on our side—When the enemy appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn—We have since found in deserted houses 80 or 90 bushels and got into the walls 20 or 30 head of Beeves.

Travis.

Mr. POE of Texas. And that is just the way it is.

IDEA PARITY FOR OUTLYING AREAS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the IDEA Parity for Outlying Areas Act, which would amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to better support students with disabilities in our smaller U.S. territories and the Freely Associated States.

During my final congressional address to my constituents in Guam, I pledged to sponsor this important legislation for our youngsters and students with disabilities, as well as their families.

I want to give special recognition to Ms. Nadia Pablo, who interned in my office this past summer, for her work in developing this legislation with my staff. Ms. Pablo currently attends Virginia Commonwealth University, where she is studying to become an occupational therapist and pursue a rewarding career working with people with disabilities.

The IDEA Parity for Outlying Areas Act would ensure that American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, classified as outlying areas by the U.S. Department of Education, receive their fair share of Federal funding to serve students with disabilities and their families.

The intent of Congress, outlined in current Federal law, is that the U.S. Department of Education set aside a fixed percentage of available Federal funding each year for the four outlying U.S. territories and the three Freely Associated States in the Pacific.

However, the U.S. Department of Education frequently allocates far less than the 1 percent reserved for the outlying areas under current law. So, to fix this, my bill would require the U.S. Department of Education to reserve the full 1 percent of available IDEA funding each year for the outlying areas, as Congress always intended.

This will ensure that special education in American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands gets full Federal funding.

It will also ensure that the U.S. Department of Education provides adequate support for special education in the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau consistent with the Compacts of Free Association between the U.S. and those allied countries.

There are some 7,177 students with disabilities in the outlying U.S. territories and the Freely Associated States, all of whom would benefit under this bill. According to the most recent figures, Guam recorded more than 2,020 students with disabilities, including 171 preschoolers with disabilities.

Our territorial Departments of Education are chronically underfunded, and many developmental and learning disabilities simply go undiagnosed. So we desperately need Federal support under the IDEA.

Instantly, and importantly, my bill would also make Guam and the other outlying U.S. territories eligible to receive IDEA funding for preschoolers, children ages 3 to 5, with disabilities. Under current law, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are not eligible to receive U.S. Department of Education funding for preschoolers with disabilities.

Finally, my bill removes a number of antiquated and unnecessary restrictions in current law to allow the U.S. Department of Education to exercise the same flexibility in awarding IDEA funding to the territories as the Department may do so under other programs.

As a daughter of a schoolteacher, with many members in my family as part of education, and someone involved in special education on Guam over many, many years, the education of our island's youngsters with disabilities is very close to my heart. Students with disabilities in the territories deserve nothing less than the full support of their Federal Government, and that is exactly what my bill would provide.

While I will be leaving Congress at the end of this year, I am confident that my colleagues from the other territories will take on my IDEA Parity for Outlying Areas Act in the next Congress, and I look forward to supporting them in that important work in any way that I can.

NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate September being National Recovery Month. Sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, SAMHSA, I encourage everyone to take time this month to reach out to those they know who are suffering or have suffered from mental and substance abuse disorders.

Currently, 115 people die every day from an opioid overdose. Clearly, that is way too many and, sadly, only one example of numerous types of mental and substance abuse disorders in the United States.

If you or anyone you know is struggling, there are resources available, including the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, SAMHSA's National Helpline, and more. SAMHSA's website, www.samhsa.gov, has these phone numbers, treatment center locations, grant applications for local governments, and general health information.

With hard work, smart policy decisions, and a dedicated American public, we can turn these numbers around.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1918 INFLUENZA PANDEMIC

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the 100th anniversary of the 1918 influenza pandemic, one of the most deadly pandemics in human history called the Spanish flu.

The illness claimed 675,000 lives. No part of the United States was immune to the Spanish flu, and it claimed victims of all ages, urban and rural citizens alike.

Sadly, we still do not know exactly what caused the 1918 epidemic, but, even today, deadly strains of the flu are still possible.

It is important that we remember the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic to remind ourselves how important it is to strongly invest in research and development for lifesaving medications that may prevent a future outbreak, like the one in 1918.

As we enter into the new flu season, I encourage everyone to see your doctor, see your pharmacist, and get your flu vaccine.

UNSPEAKABLE SUFFERING OF THE ROHINGYA PEOPLE

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

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise, once again, to speak about the unspeakable suffering of the Rohingya people.

Two recent developments have accentuated the vital need for the House to speak formally and clearly about this human disaster.

First, last month, a factfinding mission of the United Nations spelled out what is undeniable, that Burma's Rohingya Muslim population has been subjected to "systemic oppression" culminating in so-called clearance operations that "targeted and terrorized the entire Rohingya population."

The U.N. report called for Burma's military leaders to be investigated and prosecuted on charges of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes related to the atrocities committed against the Rohingya.

Let me quote directly from the U.N. report on the violence and brutally inflicted on the Rohingya by operations