

END GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, a TSA agent along with his wife had to sell plasma to make ends meet.

A Federal law enforcement employee just received an eviction notice after trying to explain the shutdown to his apartment manager. In a few days, he and his family will be kicked out of their apartment if they do not receive a paycheck in time to pay their rent.

A counselor at a Federal prison is already working under stressful conditions and not being paid. She and her coworkers wonder how they can make their Federal student loan payments when they aren't getting paychecks.

Members of the Coast Guard are working hard every day in dangerous conditions to keep our coastal communities safe, not knowing how they will pay their rent or other bills without their next paycheck.

Air traffic controllers work in a very complex field that requires concentration and dedication to keep the skies safe, and they are expected to do that without getting paid.

□ 1015

Mr. Speaker, I rise today because these Oregonians and hundreds of thousands of people across the country like them are suffering as a result of President Trump's government shutdown.

For 20 days, the President has held the American people hostage over his campaign slogan to build a wall along the southern border, a wall that he promised Mexico would pay for. In those 20 days, I have seen firsthand how harmful this shutdown has been for Oregonians.

I have spoken with individuals from Astoria, Sheridan, Portland, and beyond who are worried: How are they going to pay their rent? How are they going to afford childcare or continue to pay their student loans if their paycheck does not come through on Friday?

Missing even one paycheck can have catastrophic consequences. It is far too high a cost for these dedicated Federal employees to pay for a policy fight that they did not start and have no power to end. This is unconscionable.

Hardworking Oregonians should not lose their homes or be forced to sell plasma because the Federal Government is shut down, especially when they are continuing to report to work and protect our country without pay.

Since taking the majority last week, the House has taken swift action to reopen the government. We have passed bipartisan bills to fund government operations and pay workers who have been furloughed.

The American people have been held hostage long enough. It is past time for the President to abandon his ill-conceived border wall and reopen the Federal Government before more people are hurt.

U.S. POLICY IN SYRIA

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

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to read that President Trump has reflected on his initial instinct to pull our 2,000 soldiers out of eastern Syria based on his conclusion that ISIS is defeated, and, instead, he is ordering a withdrawal at a proper pace consistent with American objectives.

To meet our goals of a safe American homeland and progress towards regional stability, America must first develop a strategy to eliminate ISIS from northeast Syria along the lower Euphrates valley at the border of Syria and Iraq.

This plan must include a productive role for our partner and ally, the Kurds. It is not in America's interest to abandon our long friends, the Kurds, to Turkish treachery and annihilation.

Recent open-source data suggests there are 30,000 ISIS-related fighters in the lower Euphrates valley. With our allies, we must press this villainous band to its inglorious end.

Our leaving with no plan will squander our immense success in cutting off funding and winning back hard-fought territorial gains from the occupation of ISIS.

Second, America must block Iran. A key here is a small base and deconfliction zone at al-Tanf, a small force of 200 anchors that base along the key highway between Damascus and Baghdad. Not only is this a strategic imperative, Mr. Speaker, but 50,000 refugees are tenuously housed in this deconfliction zone at Rukban. Withdraw, and death awaits them.

Neighboring Jordan can take no more. We must ensure that an allied force remains at al-Tanf, blocking the Iranian-planned autobahn being considered from Tehran to Damascus. Withdraw, Mr. President, and you will leave Israel fully encircled by its greatest enemy, the Ayatollah in Tehran.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, America must achieve peace and stability in Syria. Our small elite presence, our supply lines, and our air superiority offer pressure on the murderous regime in Damascus to reach a settlement to return Syria to peace and return millions of refugees to their towns and ancestral homes.

Leave, Mr. President, and you will squander the great moral victory of your strategic strikes against Assad from his illegal use of chemical weapons and barrel bombs.

Your early decisive actions made our friends, villagers huddling in fear and from the Euphrates to Idlib, shout with joy. "America is back," they shouted.

Leave, Mr. President, with no plan and no strategy, and they will hang their heads as they did during President Obama's shameful abandonment.

Mr. Speaker, this unfortunate chapter unfolding in the tragedy known as Syria foreshadows an unflattering

flashback to a time long ago when Great Britain abandoned a role of stability in the Holy Land and India.

In 1948, Churchill rose in the House to oppose Prime Minister Atlee's own unplanned precipitous withdrawal from the Holy Land, saying:

A time limit imposed—a kind of guillotine—will certainly prevent the full, fair, and reasonable discussion of the great, complicated issues that are involved.

Indeed, as Churchill foresaw, mayhem, terror, and destruction were the result of Britain's precipitous withdrawal.

It is said that history doesn't repeat itself, but it does rhyme. Mr. President, let's not repeat this historical mistake nor let our actions even result in a rhyme.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, we know the President doesn't like to read, but I think perhaps his acting chief of staff did.

There was something called the Maginot Line the French built between World War I and World War II, an impenetrable defense against the German invasion. Unfortunately, the Germans went around it.

Here we are in the 21st century. The President wants \$5.7 billion to build a wall along part of the Mexican border. Now, his own acting chief of staff, when he was a Member of Congress and perhaps speaking more freely, said:

You go under, you go around, you go through. What they need is more manpower and more technology.

That is Mick Mulvaney, well, saying something different now, I guess, because he wants to keep his job. But the point is, he had an honest opinion then, and that is the way it will work.

Here are a few things:

You can go over walls and fences—oh, by the way, we just had a demonstration today that the steel slats the President now wants can be cut with a handsaw.

Tunnels, drugs come through that way and people are smuggled in that way.

Oh, they are using the squad copters. You can buy those pretty cheap—oh, and then some more primitive device over here.

But, actually, the flood of drugs coming into the United States comes in right here, legal border crossings.

A couple of problems with that right now:

First off, the people who are manning the border crossings aren't getting paid.

Secondly, they don't have enough technology or the capability of inspecting more than 10 percent of the vehicles that come through. So for the cartels: "Hey, what the heck. We just lost a semi." What do they care? Pocket change. "Couple of hundred thousand

bucks, million bucks—whatever. We don't care." They just try all the time.

And we don't have the defenses we need. We could invest there, but, no, the President wants the wall.

Now, there is another way that drugs are coming into this country. Last year, the Coast Guard intercepted \$5.6 billion—sound familiar? \$5.6 billion, almost as much as the President wants for the wall—worth of illegal drugs being shipped via the ocean into the United States.

The Commandant of the Coast Guard testified 2 years ago, they are only intercepting 20 percent of the known shipments because their medium endurance cutters are half a century old. They don't have enough helicopters. They don't have enough air support. They don't have enough fast-pursuit boats.

But, no, we are going to invest in a stupid static way. They can go around it in the oceans. They can go around it in the desert. They can go under it. They can go over it.

And the people who are really doing the job, like the Coast Guard, guess what. They are not getting paid either. The first line of defense, Customs and Border Protection—not being paid. The Coast Guard—not being paid.

There is a very long list of Federal employees who are critical to national security who are not being paid today and don't have the tools they need. But the President wants to invest in a stupid static wall because they promised one.

And, oh, by the way, Mexico is going to pay for it, which, of course, they aren't.

You know, yesterday the tip sheet from the Coast Guard support group, the Trump administration, had helpful tips for coasties: you could hold a garage sale; you could perhaps dog walk; you could register as a mystery shopper.

They actually posted this for people who are the first line of defense in the United States of America, instead of saying: "Put them back to work and pay them, pay them for defending America."

Now, the President says he can relate to this. He understands. Yes, when he was in business, he stiffed a whole lot of people, and he is stiffing 800,000 Federal employees right now.

RECOGNIZING DR. BUD PETERSON

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 recognize G.P. "Bud" Peterson, who will retire as president of Georgia Tech in the summer of 2019.

After 10 years serving Georgia Tech, President Peterson is certainly leaving it in a better place than he found it:

Under his leadership, Georgia Tech became the first university in a decade to be invited to join the Association of American Universities;

Research funding increased and nearly doubled;

The size of enrollment grew, including the number of women enrolled at the university.

And these are only a few of President Peterson's most notable impacts on campus.

Thank you, President Peterson, for your service to Georgia Tech as a premier research university that cultivates innovative leaders in Georgia, across the U.S., and throughout the world. I wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors.

And to Georgia Tech, I wish you the best of luck in your search for a new president.

NATIONAL PHARMACIST DAY 2019

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Pharmacist Day 2019 on January 12.

According to Census data, there are over 200,000 pharmacists across the U.S., with another 25,000 pharmacy aids. Each day, these pharmacists are providing vaccines for a number of illnesses and carefully counseling patients on prescriptions to help heal sickness and reduce pain.

Through this work, pharmacists are considered one of the top three most trusted professions in America. Today, and throughout the rest of the year, I encourage everyone to visit your pharmacist, ask questions about your prescriptions, and get to know the people who provide your medicine and work to keep you healthy.

As the only pharmacist currently serving in Congress, I am proud to recognize the work these individuals are doing every day to serve their local communities across the country.

ABBAS FAMILY MEMORIAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. DINGELL) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, today, I stand before this House heartbroken.

This past weekend, tragedy struck our Dearborn community as we learned of the death of all five members of the Abbas family. They were killed by a drunk driver while driving back from a family vacation in Florida, and their loss has devastated our community in ways that you cannot imagine.

In every sense of the word, they were our community. The parents were born and raised there. Rima served many as a respected doctor at Beaumont and had just been promoted to head all of the doctors at the hospital. And Issam had a successful career as a lawyer and real estate agent. Their children—Ali, age 13; Isabelle, age 12; and Giselle, age 7—were gifts from God and the center of their parents' lives, and so many other families in Dearborn.

Their family, their very extended family was devoted to everything that they did. Their absence stunned this community and is felt deeply and emotionally.

Thousands attended one of the memorial services this week and then the

funeral. Many in attendance chose to remember the good memories—the smiles, the laughs, their careers, their deep connections to friends, neighbors, coworkers, classmates, and friends—but some came up to me and spoke very honestly. I was struck by the children and grown men who came up to me in tears, asking me why we hadn't done something to stop drunk driving.

A young girl, a classmate, who will never see her friend again, had channeled her grief into research. She came up to me and asked why, when the technology exists, has Congress never done anything to mandate interlock breathalyzers to prevent this kind of senseless accident from ever happening again.

□ 1030

She wasn't alone.

Elders in the community had also researched this subject, and the senior men, in their very deep way, asked me why nothing had been done, why weren't we using and mandating technology that would save lives. And I had no good answer.

Too many lives across this country are taken because of drunk driving. In 2016, 10,497 people died in alcohol-impaired driving crashes. That is 28 percent of all traffic-related deaths.

The young girl was right and the elders of the community were correct that technology does exist to stop drunk driving once and for all, and Congress has never had the will to take it on.

I have to go home tomorrow to a community that is still grieving. I can't look them in the eye unless we are really willing to try to do something.

This week I am introducing legislation in memory of the Abbas family that would mandate all new vehicles be equipped with interlock breathalyzer devices. This will stop intoxicated drivers from ever starting a vehicle and keep them off the roads.

If we can keep one person from dying on the roads and make people think twice before getting behind the wheel when they shouldn't, even when they are buzzed and think they will be okay, then won't we have been successful?

I know that some will say: "This is too much of a burden. It won't work. Why should we have to do that?"

Well, I am going to look them in the eye and tell them why no community should ever have to feel what our community is still feeling this week.

I will work with all my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, and the auto industry to save lives. It is our moral imperative.

Nothing will bring back the Abbas family, but their lives were too important to forget. Our community will deeply miss them, but we need to make sure that their death was not in vain. We must dedicate ourselves in their memory and those of others we know to try to prevent another life being lost this way senselessly.