

With the spirit of the “20 and odd Negroes” who arrived in this Nation 400 years ago, may we serve this present age.

In the name of our Lord, amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WALBERG 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.

WELCOMING PASTOR A.D. SHAW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SPANO) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. SPANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor A.D. Shaw, founder and pastor of Shekinah Glory Cathedral located in Plant City, Florida, and who most gracefully offered this morning's opening prayer. He is also my brother and my friend.

Pastor Shaw's dedication to family, friends, and community serves as an example to many. His over 15 years of hard work in the ministry without expecting anything in return embodies the definition of unity and the best of the human spirit.

As I listened to his prayer, I thought of the many distinguished men and women who have stood in this Chamber, at that podium, preaching the importance of unity in our great Nation.

One such man was Abraham Lincoln, who said: “A house divided against itself cannot stand.”

In our fast-moving society, it is easy to focus on those things that divide us over those things that bring us together. It is why, Mr. Speaker, I stand here today calling for greater unity among all who serve in this Chamber, among the American people and for the thousands of communities across our great land.

Only together can we withstand adversity, not just as individuals, but as a Nation. This does not mean that we will always agree. It does mean we should seek unity in those disagreements.

We do not need to see eye to eye to walk hand in hand.

If, as a Nation, we seek to remain strong into the 21st century, we must stand united through our differences.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

ACTION AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

(Mr. HIGGINS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of action in the fight against gun violence. Congress is finally acting.

Over the last decade, we have witnessed gun violence take the lives of innocent children in our schools, terrorize our neighborhoods, and harm our fellow colleagues in Congress.

Each event invoked a moment of silence. We can no longer remain silent.

This week we have the opportunity to vote on two pieces of legislation that close loopholes in the gun purchase background check process.

These aren't radical or partisan policies. Background checks are supported by 97 percent of Americans, including 97 percent of gun owners.

On behalf of the families who have lost someone to gun violence and those who we long to keep safe from future gun violence, I stand proudly in support of congressional action to protect our communities from gun violence and urge my colleagues to do the same.

REASSURING EUROPEAN ALLIES

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last week I was grateful to join Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM on a delegation for the Munich Security Conference. A highlight was Vice President MIKE PENCE reaffirming America's commitment to the Transatlantic Alliance.

I then joined the delegation led by Congressmen GERRY CONNOLLY and RICK LARSEN for the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

House Speaker NANCY PELOSI reassured our allies of bipartisan support for NATO's continued success. Congressman MIKE TURNER ably presided as vice president of the assembly.

Another highlight in Brussels was to meet with U.S. Ambassador Ronald Gidwitz and his wife, Christina, whose enthusiasm for service is extraordinary.

The ambassador is promoting the restoration of the Mardasson Memorial, honoring American servicemembers in the Battle of the Bulge.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

ETHYLENE OXIDE

(Mr. SCHNEIDER asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, every parent deserves to have confidence that the air they and their children breathe is safe. That is why we have environmental standards and why we have an Environmental Protection Agency to monitor, update, and enforce the rules.

So, when communities face a known public risk, new or recently reclassified, we rightly expect the EPA to act—quickly, comprehensively, and transparently.

In the Chicago area, this, sadly, has not been the case. Ethylene oxide, or EtO, was reclassified as a known carcinogen more than 2 years ago, yet we just recently learned facilities around Chicago could be emitting it at elevated levels.

The EPA has been unacceptably slow to respond and has failed to keep affected communities informed.

This month, I partnered with Senators DURBIN and DUCKWORTH and other colleagues in my delegation to introduce legislation that would require the EPA to immediately revise and update its EtO standards and to keep the public fully informed.

We are also demanding that EPA evaluate ambient levels of EtO in these communities immediately, something it should be doing already.

Our communities deserve more from the EPA. This is about our families and their public health.

RECOGNIZING LENAWEE COUNTY SHERIFF JACK WELSH

(Mr. WALBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lenawee County Sheriff Jack Welsh as he retires after 43½ years of service to Lenawee County, Michigan.

Sheriff Welsh has served in many roles during his law enforcement career, beginning as a volunteer reserve deputy and eventually working his way up to captain.

After his initial retirement from the sheriff's department in 2007, he went on to become an emergency management regional planner.

Then, in 2008, he accepted the call to run for sheriff, where he has served ever since.

Law enforcement officers like Sheriff Welsh are the fabric of our community. Day in and day out, they answer the call to serve and protect.

Over the years, Sheriff Welsh has been one of the very best. He is a man of integrity, a dedicated public servant, and a trusted friend to many. He has been instrumental in making Lenawee County a better and safer place to call home.

I thank Sheriff Welsh for his decades of distinguished service, and I wish him nothing but the best as he begins his retirement.