

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.

SUPPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 11 VICTIM COMPENSATION FUND

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

Mr. ROSE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge all my colleagues to support the Never Forget the Heroes: Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victims Compensation Fund Act because it is the right thing to do.

I would like to thank my fellow New Yorkers CAROLYN MALONEY, PETE KING, and JERRY NADLER, who have led this fight for years, and LEE ZELDIN, who will work with me to build bipartisan support amongst the freshman class.

Because 9/11 wasn't just an attack on New York City; Washington, D.C.; and a field in western Pennsylvania; 9/11 was an attack on our entire country. This was an attack on the United States of America and everything that we stand for.

But what thousands of these 9/11 heroes and their families now face is being forgotten because the Victims Compensation Fund, which supports these families and these heroes in all 50 States, is running out of money and cutting benefits by 50 to 70 percent.

That is wrong. And if we fail to make this right, shame on us. Shame on anyone who says "never forget" and then turns their backs and pretends this doesn't affect their State or their district or they're suddenly fiscally responsible.

Shame on anyone who says that we can't afford to do this while we spend trillions of dollars on bombs in Afghanistan.

When it comes to doing what is right, it is about keeping our promises and honoring those who put their lives on the line and didn't ask for anything in return.

Now is the chance to put action behind the words "never forget."

ENSURE HEALTH PLANS COVER MEDICALLY NECESSARY SERVICES

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

Mr. RIGGLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak for Kannon Koser, a constituent and friend of mine who is with his family in the gallery this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, 3-year-old Kannon is one of 4 percent of children in the United States who is born with a congenital anomaly—in his case, hypohidrotic ectodermal dysplasia.

Most health plans provide coverage for congenital anomalies, and many States require insurers to provide coverage of any health services related to congenital anomalies.

Despite this, health plans systematically and routinely deny claims and appeals for any oral or dental related procedures under the pretense that such service is merely cosmetic.

That is why Representative COLLIN PETERSON and I have joined together to introduce the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act, a bipartisan bill that would directly address this issue and ensure that we don't have to tell children like Kannon that their health condition isn't valued by insurance companies.

As the original sponsor on the Republican side, I am proud to put my name on this bill and ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support it.

ELSA would ensure all health plans cover medically necessary services, including reconstructive surgeries that are a result of congenital anomalies or birth defects.

If enacted, this life-changing bill will allow the Koser family the opportunity to save for Kannon's college rather than spend money on reconstructive surgery.

Commonsense reforms like this will help children like Kannon grow up healthier and have a better quality of life.

Hi, Kannon. We will see you later, Buddy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from referencing occupants of the gallery.

IGNORING OUR CONSTITUTIONAL BORDERS

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, the serious border emergency that America is confronted with today is an emergency that Donald Trump has created by ignoring borders—ignoring the borders set forth in our Constitution, borders that were set forth to prevent an all-powerful executive, a would-be king, or the type of tyrant that Trump so admires abroad.

After Congress repeatedly rejected his phony border crisis and wasteful wall, Trump decided: build it anyway.

Well, today's emergency wouldn't have happened without two years of Republicans who have continued to yield the right-of-way to his creeping wrongdoing—more and more of it—Republicans who can just never summon the ability to say "no" to Trump.

Today, we must reject this unconstitutional power grab that diverts resources from real threats to an imaginary, politically contrived one.

Today, we defend our Constitution and our democracy by pushing back on the lies, the deceit, the anti-immigrant hysteria, and the fear-mongering mismanagement of this administration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Speaker, last year I attended a rally where the father of a gunshot victim spoke, and he talked about all the things that he and other people around this country are doing to end senseless gun violence.

Then he turned to the crowd and asked: But what is Congress doing? And tens of thousands of Americans, as if they had rehearsed it hundreds of times, all said in unison: "Nothing."

But what is Congress doing? Nothing. Standing in that crowd was not a proud moment for me, because he is right.

Mr. Speaker, 37 Americans have died from gun violence in my district alone in the past 5 years. Gun violence is now the second leading killer of young people Nationwide, trailing only car accidents.

For too long, Congress has done exactly what the crowd said: nothing.

This week, we are putting forth legislation to enhance background checks, but this alone isn't enough. Thoughts and prayers won't cut it. Only action saves lives. This is just a start.

□ 1215

WELCOMING THE MAYORS COUNCIL ON RAHWAY RIVER WATERSHED FLOOD CONTROL

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

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to welcome the Mayors Council on Rahway River Watershed Flood Control to Washington. They represent towns in and around New Jersey's Seventh District and are here to ask our help to stop the flooding that hurts thousands of people in our communities.

For years, homeowners near the Rahway River have lived under the constant threat of flooding that devastates businesses and homes whenever there are heavy rains. The last major flood was in 2011, when Hurricane Irene ravaged the East Coast. The town of Cranford was the worst hit, with 1,600 homes sustaining damage worth \$40 million.

Our mayors have presented a proposed solution to the Army Corps of Engineers and are now asking for a feasibility study to be completed. This will get us one step closer to authorizing construction on the Rahway River Basin.

Mr. Speaker, this is a solvable problem. We need to start now. I will do everything I can to support our mayors' call to action and expedite this process so that we do not have to be pulling people out of second-floor windows in suburban New Jersey, so people up and down the Rahway River can feel safe in their homes.

ADDRESSING THE EPIDEMIC OF GUN VIOLENCE

(Mr. LEVIN of California asked and was given permission to address the