

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, after meeting with President Trump yesterday regarding the ongoing crisis in Venezuela, I rise to praise the Trump administration for its mindful and strategic response to conditions in that country.

All options must be on the table, including military force.

My constituents would likely be among the first in that fight. I am incredibly proud of them. If asked, they will successfully execute any mission that they are called to do.

Policymakers have an obligation not to send any of America's sons and daughters into any ill-advised conflict. The Trump administration clearly understands the risks associated with military intervention in Venezuela at this time. They include a few things.

First, if the United States military were to have troops on the ground in Venezuela today, it is very likely that the Maduro regime would scapegoat their own failures.

The people of Venezuela voted their way into socialism, and now it appears they have to fight their way out of it. While this should be a lesson to us all, military intervention should not be presented as an opportunity for the Maduro regime to explain away why people in Venezuela have no medicine, have no food, are starving, and at times see their own countrymen turning tanks and weapons against them.

Those failures belong to the Maduro regime. Those failures belong to the socialist dictatorship.

Were we to intervene in an unwise way, potentially, that would create confusion about the conditions that led to these terrible circumstances.

Second, if the United States military were to intervene at this time, it is my concern that it would allow the Maduro regime to externalize their conflict.

It is no surprise to any in this Chamber or many in the Trump administration that there remains some latent resentment within pockets of Latin America regarding U.S. intervention, regime change, and nation-building.

At a time when we are seeing democratic successes and governments stood up that are beginning to provide for their citizens, it would be deeply unwise to stoke any anti-American resentment with ill-advised conflict.

Right now, Maduro functionally lacks material support from the forward-thinking countries in the Western Hemisphere, and we would not want to create any opportunity for there to be a call to the new Bolivarian alliance.

Ultimately, that is what a lot of these transnational criminal organizations want in Venezuela. They want to erode nation-states and borders. They want to end nationalism in our hemisphere so that they have a more permissive environment for their illicit activities.

Third, the Trump administration clearly understands that, if the United States were deemed to be too involved

in the popular uprising in Venezuela, Maduro would potentially have the opportunity to deny the organic desires of Venezuelans to fight for their own freedom.

The reason people are rising up in Venezuela right now is not a consequence of the United States Government. It is a consequence of the failures of their own government and their passionate desire for freedom, one that we should stand with the people of Venezuela to execute.

Despite these conditions and despite the challenges, I remain hopeful that there is a brighter future for Venezuela. As we meet and gather now, Juan Guaido is able to go about the country freely. Despite not having a military, despite not having staff, he is able to rally thousands of his fellow countrymen in public squares and make the argument for freedom.

Meanwhile, the coward Maduro remains huddled up in a military base, unable to move around and unsure who will turn on him next.

If the last quarter century has taught our country anything about the nature of freedom, it is that freedom has to be fought for hardest by those who yearn to live it. Freedom cannot be the gift that America gives other countries, purchased solely with the currency of the blood of U.S. servicemembers.

People have to fight for freedom and earn it. They have to die for it. They have to bury their relatives over it. Then they have to love it and care for it so much that they will never let another strongman take it away from them and so that they will never fall victim to the passions that led Venezuela down this dark path to socialism, dictatorship, starvation, and desperation.

We stand with the people of Venezuela, and they must stand now to fight for a better future for their country.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 26 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CLAY) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

You look upon our world: men and women being born and being laid to rest, some getting married and others

getting divorced, the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the happy and the sad, so many people aimless, despairing, hateful, and killing, so many undernourished, sick, and dying, so many struggling with life and blind to any meaning.

Send us Your spirit, that the issues of our day might be met with compassion by the Members of this House and all who serve to improve the conditions of our shared humanity.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

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.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania 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.

RECOGNIZING FREDERICK WILLIAM RUSTEBERG

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

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Frederick William Rusteberg of Brownsville, Texas.

Mr. Rusteberg served the majority of his professional career as the original founding CEO and president of International Bank of Commerce in Brownsville until his retirement on October 27, 2016.

In the early 1970s, Mr. Rusteberg served his country as an officer in the United States Army.

After receiving the Army commendation medal and an honorable discharge, he returned to his hometown of Brownsville. He helped develop the area's future as assistant port director for the Port of Brownsville.

Mr. Rusteberg began his 40-year banking career at Bank of the Southwest. Shortly thereafter, he opened the first International Bank of Commerce bank facility in Cameron County in 1984.

A champion of education, Mr. Rusteberg led successful efforts for the Brownsville Independent School District to secure funding for our schools. He and his family established the very first scholarship endowment at the University of Texas-Brownsville, now University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

Mr. Rusteberg has been married to Frances Hill for 48 years and has two children, William Rusteberg and Liz Rusteberg Hainley, and two grandchildren, Jessie Hainley and Will Hainley. Fred and Frances have been highly active in the community throughout the years and are blessed to call Brownsville home.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to honor Frederick William Rusteberg. His character and hard work make him a tremendous role model for the citizens of Brownsville, and I am confident his contributions will continue to guide south Texas in a positive direction.

I ask my colleagues to join me, his family, and friends in commending his life of service.

JOBS BOOM BEST IN 50 YEARS

(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 Friday's economic numbers continue to show that policies championed by the President and Republicans are helping the American people succeed:

The economy added an incredible 263,000 jobs in April;

More than 5.8 million jobs have been created since the election;

The unemployment rate fell to 3.6 percent in April, the lowest since December 1969;

The employment rate for women is the lowest rate since 1953;

The veterans' unemployment rate fell to 2.3 percent, the lowest rate on record;

The employment rate for Americans with a disability fell to the lowest rate on record;

Average hourly earnings rose by 3.2 percent over 12 months. Before 2018, wage gains had not reached 3 percent since April 2009.

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

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICING

(Ms. GARCIA of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the serious threat that soaring costs of prescription drugs pose to the health and well-being of families.

Americans spend more money on prescription drug prices per person than any other country in the world. The problem has grown so much that now Americans are paying more for out-of-pocket drugs every year than for hospital care. These inflated prices are sapping the strength of our economy and the health of our families.

However, this is a challenge, Mr. Speaker, we can begin to tackle in this Congress this year. We can begin to fight this battle now by targeting abusive barriers to entry for cheaper generic drugs and taking steps to simplify pricing in our overly complicated system.

That is why, last week, my colleagues and I on the Judiciary Committee voted to refer four bills for consideration that will give generic drug manufacturers greater access to our markets, increase competition, and save lives in the process.

I call on all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bipartisan measure.

NATIONAL SKILLED NURSING CARE WEEK

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, next week is National Skilled Nursing Care Week, and hundreds of nursing home administrators will gather at State College, Pennsylvania, for the 2019 Spring Health Care Conference.

Hosted by Central Pennsylvania Educational Resources, the conference will allow nursing home administrators the opportunity to exchange ideas and gain information from knowledgeable speakers.

This year's theme for National Skilled Nursing Care Week is "Live Soulfully," which will celebrate skilled nursing centers and their residents and staff by showcasing how they achieve happy minds and healthy souls.

Whether it is planting, cooking, reading, or listening to music, these centers pay it forward by helping individuals find happiness to improve quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, before coming to Congress, I worked nearly three decades as a recreational therapist, a rehab services manager, and a licensed nursing home administrator. I know firsthand how important quality of life is and how each and every person at a nursing home can impact the lives of residents.

National Skilled Nursing Care Week thanks and celebrates caregivers for

their tireless work to care for others. They truly make an impact.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 6, 2019.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on May 6, 2019, at 11:14 a.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 693.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

CHERYL L. JOHNSON.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 9 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1600

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CLAY) at 4 o'clock p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

TAIWAN ASSURANCE ACT OF 2019

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2002) to foster security in Taiwan, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2002

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Taiwan Assurance Act of 2019".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) April 10, 2019, marks the 40th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 (Public Law 96-8).

(2) Since 1949, the close relationship between the United States and Taiwan has benefited both parties and the broader Indo-Pacific region.