

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.

Mrs. BUSTOS. 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.

Mrs. BUSTOS. 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The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.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 gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BUSTOS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. BUSTOS 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 DR. JAMES MERRITT

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I have the honor of hosting the guest chaplain today, and I believe you were feeling his words that we are all going to be held to account at the end, as you recall, in that vote series there. Those are powerful words, and it is not just something he shares in Congress today; it is something he shares with our entire community.

If you recognized his voice in that prayer, Mr. Speaker, it is because he is the host of the Touching Lives Ministry. It can be seen in all 50 States and around the world.

He has his lovely bride of more than four decades, Teresa, with him here in the gallery, and he leads back in my home State, Mr. Speaker, Cross Pointe Church in Duluth.

He left First Baptist Church Snellville and was called to plant a new congregation. It is a powerful ministry, not just with the Word, but with what the Word tells us we should do in deed, and it is lived out there every day.

From 2000 to 2002, Mr. Speaker, he was the president of the Southern Bap-

tist Convention. I told the gentleman earlier that, if he can handle church politics, he can certainly handle the politics that we are involved in here.

But the honor for me, because I have such deep respect for all of my colleagues here, is to share a little bit of back home with each one of you.

Dr. Merritt embodies the Seventh Congressional District values of faith and family and duty, and I am grateful to him, not just for his prayers in ministry to me, not just for his prayers in ministry to our community, but to the entire Nation and to the world.

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.

SECURE OUR ELECTIONS

(Mrs. BUSTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that Russia, a foreign adversary, interfered in our election and even breached the voter database for the State of Illinois, my home State.

For the sake of our national security, this is an issue that must be addressed by the United States Congress because this isn't a Republican issue and it is not a Democratic issue. It is our duty as Americans and elected officials to protect our democracy.

That is why, this week, we will pass the Securing America's Federal Elections Act. Our bill would require voting machines to be manufactured in the United States of America. It would also make investments to secure our elections and prevent interference from foreign enemies in the future.

As Members of Congress, we take an oath to protect our Constitution and our democracy. I hope both Republicans and Democrats will come together to support this bill and secure our elections.

CELEBRATING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM 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, Religious Freedom Week began on Saturday and runs through June 29.

Freedom of religion is a fundamental human right and is protected by our Constitution. The First Amendment protects freedom of religion, along with freedom of speech and freedom of the press. This affords us the opportunity to have open and thoughtful debates on the floor of the House each and every day.

The United States is a place where people of all faiths can peaceably prac-

tice their religion without fear of persecution, which is something we have recognized since our founding. The very foundation of our Nation, a place of freedom and liberty for all, was conceived by individuals in search of religious freedom.

Mr. Speaker, the United States of America will always be a beacon of light in the world, and we will always protect our fundamental, unified commitment to religious freedom. It is a central part of what makes America exceptional. It affords our citizens the right to live in a free society, because no person should live in fear for their beliefs.

SPLIT TOLLING ON THE VERRAZZANO-NARROWS BRIDGE

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

Mr. ROSE of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to support the appropriations bill on the floor this week that would implement split tolling on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

This legislation is common sense. It is nonpartisan, and it represents a massive win for all New Yorkers. It addresses the unintended consequences of an archaic 30-year-old piece of legislation that singled out Staten Island and South Brooklyn with the only bridge in the country whose technology is controlled by Congress.

Split tolling removes an obsolete mandate that cars on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge only be tolled as they arrive in Staten Island, meaning that eastbound drivers across the bridge move across toll-free. Thousands of cars each day take advantage of this free ride and cause unnecessary congestion on Staten Island, in Brooklyn, and in Manhattan.

Split tolling cuts the toll in half and collects it in both directions, closing the loophole, and at no cost to commuters in Brooklyn or on Staten Island.

Cutting down on out-of-State toll shopping will also generate revenues for New York to invest in mass transit projects on Staten Island and in South Brooklyn, two places that all levels of government have consistently ignored or ripped off for a generation now.

Finally, my constituents are starting to see a new day after a long commuting nightmare: fewer cars on our streets, better buses, more mass transit options, and credible alternatives to reach the other boroughs.

This is commonsense legislation, and we are going to get it done.

PRO ACT HURTS JOB CREATORS AND THEIR EMPLOYEES

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

Mr. RIGGLEMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today as a small business owner