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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2019, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. TRONE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TRONE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of more than 23 million Americans who are in recovery.

September is National Recovery Month. In 2019 we are celebrating 30 years of that designation. We are marking that today in Congress with an effort we are calling "Congress Goes Purple".

Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues DENVER RIGGLEMAN, ANNIE KUSTER, and BRIAN FITZPATRICK for partnering with me to make this happen.

Those among us who are struggling with mental health concerns or substance use disorder need to know there is no shame in seeking help. Their journey to recovery is something to be celebrated.

These disorders don't discriminate, and neither should we in helping find people a path back. I came to Congress to help make recovery a real possibility for more Americans.

Starting in the mid-1990s, we have seen opioids invade and destroy fami-

lies across America. From the district I represent in Maryland to big cities and small towns across the country, there is not a single community that has not been fully spared from the devastating effects of the opioid epidemic. It is a true crisis.

For the first time in 100 years, we have seen life expectancy decline for 3 straight years in this country. Americans are dying sooner than their parents' generation, and we can blame the opioid epidemic.

The numbers are staggering. Last year, we saw over 70,000 people die of a drug overdose. More Americans have died in 1 year of drug overdose than from the wars in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq combined.

Behind each one of those numbers is a person. Behind each one of those numbers is a family and a community that feels the immense pain and loss. My family was one of those.

In 2016, on New Year's Eve, my nephew Ian Jacob Trone died of a fentanyl overdose. He was 24 years old, and he died alone in his hotel room.

I worked with Ian for over 5 years while he was struggling with addiction. We tried treatment centers and halfway houses and mental health specialists. I worked closely with him to do everything I could to get him the help he needed, and we still lost him.

Unfortunately, it is not just addiction numbers that are staggering. SAMHSA estimates in 2017, over 19 million people in the U.S. experienced substance use disorder, but of that group, 8.5 million also had a co-occurring mental illness.

This is the most important issue in America. We must act now and stop more people from losing their lives. I know if we are going to make a difference, then all of us, including the Federal Government, need to act. That is why, as a new Member of Congress, ending the opioid addiction epidemic is my number one priority.

I have started a bipartisan freshman working group, which is now composed

of 64 lawmakers from 31 States all dedicated to ending this epidemic. Together, we are pushing bills that will bring consistent funding and resources to those on the front lines who are fighting this every day. Most importantly, we are doing this together, both Democrats and Republicans. Every action we take is bipartisan. We need to work together if we are going to end the stigma around mental health and substance use disorders.

Right now someone suffering from substance use disorder is being thrown into jail instead of getting the treatment they need. We need to start treating this like the disease that it is. Instead of locking people up in jail, we need to reach out and give those that are struggling a helping hand.

That is why the message of National Recovery Month is so powerful. We can be that village. Together, we know this is a disease, not a crime. Together, we can put the focus on recovery so that no one has to do this alone.

Madam Speaker, I pledge to do everything in my power to make sure we end it. I thank the Representatives wearing purple today for recognizing the importance of National Recovery Month.

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER IS A CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor many Americans who are forgotten: those who have gone through difficult times that are now on a path of recovery.

Substance abuse disorders are running rampant throughout our communities all over America. They have crossed borders of race, ethnicity, gender, and politics. This crisis knows no bounds, and we are here to bring awareness to the fact that there is a

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