

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Speaker, since I joined this body in January, I have done my darnedest to steer clear of the political circus that we see on a daily basis in Washington.

Instead, I have worked with so many Members to pass legislation preventing child abuse and legislation that makes it easier for Americans to save for school and for their retirement. We have made progress, and I have been a key part of that progress in USMCA, in welfare reform, and in implementing the farm bill.

But, Mr. Speaker, the impeachment proceedings going on in this Chamber in the last few weeks have given me pause, and they should give pause to every Member of this Chamber and to all American people.

I know—we all know—that some Members are for impeachment and others of us are opposed. But we should all admit that, by its very nature, impeachment is emotional, it is taxing, and it is divisive.

You are talking about removing our President from office. This is no small thing. This is changing the trajectory of this country.

Given how contentious and given how important that proceeding is, we have an obligation to play by the rules and to have a process that is open, that is sound, and that is fair. Mr. Speaker, we are failing at that special obligation.

First, the Speaker has launched impeachment without a vote by this body, and that is unprecedented. Members have been denied their authority, their voice, their opportunity to be on the RECORD in that matter.

Let us be clear: Under the Constitution, the authority to launch impeachment rests with the U.S. House of Representatives, not with the Speaker and not with the chair of House intelligence.

Second, this proceeding has not been open and transparent. Instead, Members have been denied access to witness testimony and kicked out of committees. There is no live streaming and there is no TV coverage as we have seen in past impeachments. The result is that Americans don't have access to important facts because they can't get them.

Finally, this proceeding has not been fair. In the past, Presidents have had an opportunity to have counsel present. Counsel has had an opportunity to cross-examine witnesses, and they have been given an opportunity to review the evidence and to prepare a defense instead of battling secondhand accounts of closed-door testimony selectively leaked to the media.

228 Members of this body have already announced that they are for impeachment even though the evidence is not fully gathered yet, and, in any case, they have not reviewed it. How is that fair?

Mr. Speaker, elections matter; transparency matters; due process matters; and faith in this Constitution, in our Constitution, and in institutions matter.

As I said, it is time that this body lives up to its special obligation. Our country deserves nothing less.

CHARLESTON C-17 CREW

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

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the heroic actions of Captain Forrest Lampela, Captain Ken Dickenscheidt, Senior Airman Chris Bowers, Airman First Class Timothy Henn, and Technical Sergeant Nick Scarmeas, who broke diplomatic protocol and fought near-zero visibility to save the life of a U.S. Navy sailor who was wounded in combat.

The Joint Base Charleston crew was flying a critically injured sailor to Walter Reed from Ramstein Air Base in Germany. Halfway through their mission, the sailor took a turn for the worse and needed immediate surgery. The commander, Captain Lampela, made the decision to turn around and make an emergency landing in Shannon, Ireland, in dense fog and without diplomatic clearance.

In an incredibly stressful situation, the team fell back on their training and made a life-and-death decision that ultimately saved the life of their fellow servicemember. I am honored to commend them.

WARREN COUNTY BICENTENNIAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Warren County, Pennsylvania's recent bicentennial.

In March of 1819, the Pennsylvania General Assembly approved legislation to establish Warren County. On October 1, later that year, the legislation became official, and Warren County became a part of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

This occasion was celebrated earlier this month at the Warren County Courthouse, with local leaders and live entertainment, including the Youngsville High School band. In addition to the remarks and performances, a time capsule was buried on the grounds.

As an avid outdoorsman, I am proud to call Warren County a part of my district, particularly for its beautiful natural landscapes. Home to a portion of the Allegheny National Forest, Warren County has beautiful outdoor spaces that rival much of the Commonwealth.

This bicentennial is an exciting occasion, and I would like to congratulate Warren County on this milestone. I wish them continued success in the next 200 years.

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COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. HAYES) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the chairman of the Committee on Education and Labor for his steadfast leadership of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, and introduction of the College Affordability Act.

But I cannot do that without further recognizing my colleague and my friend, Chairman ELIJAH CUMMINGS, whose family was from South Carolina, Clarendon County, to be exact, which is the home of the Briggs v. Elliott case, one of the first cases challenging school segregation. He understood the power of a high-quality education, and I know that he would be so incredibly proud of this remarkable piece of legislation that is being introduced this week.

This is an achievement that reflects the priorities of the entire Democratic Caucus to expand opportunities and make college affordable and accessible for all students.

I am proud that this bill embraces and reflects my priorities in Congress, including the Pell Grant Restoration Act, the Teacher Debt Relief Act, the Teacher Diversity and Retention Act, and the Jumpstart on College Act.

These bills would respectively protect student aid of vulnerable students who have been defrauded; provide educators with much-needed student debt relief so that they can stay in the classroom; reinforce critical programs that help develop a diverse educator workforce; and provide a robust investment in dual-enrollment classes that will lower the cost of a degree for students who need it most.

This bill is a year's-long effort to level the playing field for every demographic of students across the country, from veteran students, to working parents; and from small family farmers, to public servants. It is for students hoping to become the first in their family to go to college and afford it.

This bill is for families who struggle to put enough in the bank for their children's education. This bill is for students who struggle to fill out the overly complicated FAFSA; who struggle to earn degrees and keep the lights on while working and raising children; who utilize the Pell grant and other Federal aid to make it through, and still find themselves in debt.

My own journey reflects the challenges of navigating a system that simply is not built for everyone, of jumping through untenable hurdles to complete a degree. So it is deeply gratifying today to be part of the change that I so desperately needed as a student, to give a new, more diverse generation of students the supports they need to succeed.

The College Affordability Act would immediately lower the cost of college