

Partnership streamside mentors and other interested members to support veterans in crisis situations.

The VSP program is a Trout Unlimited initiative to serve veterans, Active-Duty military, and their families by engaging them through the recreational benefits of angling, with the support of the Trout Unlimited community.

Mr. Winters' service that he provided in training has been utilized by at least one volunteer to save a veteran's life who was in crisis.

Mr. Speaker, Scott Winters has gone above and beyond to be available at a moment's notice to support veterans in his community, and his service is greatly appreciated.

IMPORTANT ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, obviously, it is a new year, and we return to Washington with an agenda that is completely full and, in many, many ways, a tragic and an extremely dangerous agenda out ahead of us.

Last December, this House undertook the issue of how to deal with the issue of a President who was not paying attention to his oath of office, and so we passed an impeachment resolution. That issue is now over in the Senate and in their hands. I could spend some time talking about that.

Then, last Friday, another issue occurred, and I will spend more time talking about that a little later.

But what I came to the floor tonight for is to talk about what our Democratic Caucus, our leadership, and the 230-plus members of our Caucus have been working on diligently over the last year for the people, a series of legislative initiatives that address the fundamental concerns that America has, that Americans talk about, as we like to say, at their breakfast table or dinner table: the concerns about their family's education, about their job, about their retirement, and, as I learned yesterday from my neighbor, a rancher, about the extraordinary cost of health insurance.

I come to the floor tonight for that purpose, but I am going to delay my discussion of that and ask the chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, BOBBY SCOTT, to talk about the extraordinary work that his committee has done on the issue of education and for the working men and women of America.

Mr. Speaker, I know the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) represents one of the largest military districts in the Nation, and I know that the thoughts of his constituents are on our minds. I also know that it is time for America to recognize the work that he has done on the Education and Labor Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

□ 1930

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding, and, yes, we have a lot of military installations in the Hampton Roads area, and we are very concerned about the present situation in the Middle East.

We want to talk about what is going on in the Committee on Education and Labor, and I just want to share a few things that we have been doing over the last year.

Comments have been made of what Congress is or is not doing. Well, we have been protecting the income of hardworking Americans by the House passing the Raise the Wage Act, which will gradually increase the Federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$15 an hour by 2025, giving 33 million workers a raise and lifting over a million people out of poverty.

We haven't had an increase in the minimum wage for over a decade. The last minimum wage was over 10 years ago, and inflation has eroded the value of that minimum wage so much to the point where one study concluded that a full-time, 40-hours-a-week, minimum-wage worker cannot afford a modest two-bedroom apartment in any county in the United States.

We are not talking about San Francisco or Manhattan. Not a single county in the United States can a full-time minimum-wage worker afford a modest two-bedroom apartment. So we voted in the House to increase the minimum wage.

The Paycheck Fairness Act addresses pay inequity by holding companies accountable for gender-based wage disparities and protecting a worker's right to challenge systemic pay discrimination. We passed that bill.

The Rehabilitation for Multiemployer Pensions Act, or Butch Lewis Act, will prevent the imminent collapse of our multiemployer pension system, saving over 1 million hardworking Americans their pension, while protecting those benefits and the taxpayer's dollars.

We also passed the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act to prevent violence and the injuries that occur because of that.

In addition, the committee has reported the PRO Act, the Protecting the Right to Organize Act, which will enable workers to negotiate for better wages and better working conditions.

We also passed the legislation to help in the area of children's access to quality education and a safe learning environment.

We passed in the committee the Rebuild America's Schools Act which will invest \$100 billion to repair our public schools' crumbling digital and physical infrastructure and will create 1.9 million jobs.

We passed two important civil rights bills in the area of education: the Eq-

uity and Inclusion Enforcement Act and Strength in Diversity Act, which will empower students, parents, and communities to challenge discriminatory education policies and increase school diversity.

The committee passed the College Affordability Act, which will comprehensively overhaul our higher education system so that students will be able to achieve a college degree without incurring crushing debt.

We also passed legislation to protect children from school shootings.

In the area of healthcare, the House has passed legislation to protect consumers from junk health plans by trying to overturn the Trump administration's short-term, limited duration insurance rule, as well as passing the Lower Drug Costs Now Act which will reduce out-of-pocket costs for customers, lower prescription drug prices, and increase transparency.

We passed legislation that will protect children from child abuse, the Stronger Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

We protected seniors by passing legislation, the Protecting Older Workers Against Discrimination Act.

All of those bills have passed the House. None have been taken up by the Senate, and so we need to make sure that the hard work of our committee is rewarded by the passage of those bills in the Senate.

But as I have said, our committee has been busy. All of the committees have been busy doing the people's work. We are doing the people's agenda, and I thank the gentleman for the opportunity to do a little bragging about what we have done.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman can use the word "brag," but I would recommend that it is not bragging. It is simply a fact; not an alternate fact, but it is a fact that the gentleman's committee and this House—now under Democratic control—has passed well over 250 bills that are for the people.

The work that the Committee of Education and Labor has done for the working men and women of this Nation is an extraordinary example of what can be done when we focus on legislation that is for the people.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the opportunity to mention these bills for the people. The people will be much better off if we can get a little cooperation down the hall and improve education, improve healthcare, and improve working conditions.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman did mention the grim reaper, I don't think by name, but, clearly, the Senate leader intends to delay legislation that would be in the interest of the American people: higher wages, better healthcare, better insurance products, jobs, making it in America, all of the things that I know the gentleman and his committee have worked so hard on.

So I thank the gentleman for that, and I look forward to the days ahead when I know that the gentleman has an additional agenda of legislation that he is going to be putting on the floor of the House.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to work.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I am sure the gentleman will. I thank the gentleman very much.

Mr. Speaker, I am really torn. I want to continue discussing the legislation that is out there, but I really stand in front of this Chamber—which at the moment is empty—with a very, very heavy heart and extraordinary concern.

I am looking at where we are as a nation this evening, and I am going to really ponder tomorrow what fate may behold our men and women in the military.

A couple of hours ago the inevitable happened. I think I was a freshman in high school and my science teacher was trying to give me some of the principles of physics. He was talking about for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

He was showing various examples of that and, of course, I was then playing football and I could really understand. I hit somebody, and they would hit me back; or I would push somebody and they would push back. I would like to think that I was more than equal.

Last Friday, our President took an action and launched missiles at the highest commander of the Iranian military and killed him, along with one of the major, if not the major commander of the militia units in Iraq.

That attack took place just outside the Baghdad International Airport. That was an action, presumably, to prevent some future action that might be taken by the Iranians and by their leader or directed by their leader, Soleimani.

My high school science teacher could not have been more correct. For every action, there is a reaction. And we will undoubtedly engage in a debate here on the floor and in the Congress and across the United States about whether the first action taken by the President to take out the leader of Iran's Revolutionary Guard was an appropriate action.

I think not, for a variety of reasons. And then we will also debate whether the Iranian reaction to that action which occurred a couple of hours ago was appropriate.

I am quite sure that our military on the base in Iraq at Al Asad views the Iranian action as a very serious threat. We don't yet know the results of the bombardment of missiles, but we can assume that there was certainly destruction of buildings or airfields and we pray that there was no destruction of life.

But perhaps we may find that prayer unanswered. Where do we go from here? Where do we go from here? We are not on the verge of war. In a very, very un-

fortunate, tragic sense, we are in a war and some would claim that war is now 40 years old and started way back with the embassy in Tehran being occupied, and we could say that is correct.

This is different. I am on the Armed Services Committee, and I have had the briefings and I know, as do our generals and our intelligence community, the capabilities of the Iranian military. Furthermore, we know the capabilities of their proxies, the various military units that they have set up, or quasi-military units that they have set up: the militias, Yemen, Houthis, Hezbollah, and others.

It is really a moment this evening for us to hold our anger, which is a normal and natural thing that certainly I, and I am sure every one of my colleagues possesses: anger at the attack on our military base.

I suppose we should also think that perhaps Iran should hold its anger, although they certainly expressed it in the streets, in the funeral ceremonies, and in the launching of ballistic missiles at an American air base.

We should hold our anger. We should say: Where does this go from here? What is the next tit for tat? Unfortunately, I don't believe our President thought about the next move, about the equal and opposite reaction when he ordered the launching of the missiles that took out a very dangerous, bad, bad person.

I don't think he thought about the next order, nor do I think he thought about the third, fourth, fifth, or sixth order. Where does it go from there?

But we have a chance this evening and tomorrow, and in the days ahead, to stop and think about the next event, the next tit for tat. What does it mean now for those of us in Congress, 435—I guess 434 since one of our colleagues resigned today—and the Senate—undoubtedly occupied with impeachment?

It is time for us to reach into our desk drawer and pull out the Constitution of the United States and read Article I, and for the American people to do the same. When we read that, we will find that only Congress can declare war; not the President, not the Secretary of State, not the Secretary of Defense, and not a general, but only Congress.

□ 1945

Maybe we could argue that it is already starting, in which case, stop, come to Congress, Mr. President, and tell us why you must, why we must, why America must, and why our military must pursue the next tit for tat. Stop and tell us where it leads. Tell us how you think it might end.

I know that our Secretary of Defense says that we are not going to start a war but that we will end it. Okay, then you come here. You come to the floor of this House as Roosevelt did and as others have done, and you tell us why we should have a war with Iran. Tell us how you intend to pursue that war and at what cost in human lives and the treasury of this Nation.

Then, let us ponder your wisdom or lack of wisdom. Let us ponder—no, not “let us.” This is not a matter of the President letting us. This is a matter of the Congress of the United States asserting its constitutional obligation.

At this moment and on this day, when it is easy to argue that America has been attacked, on this day, stop, come to us, Mr. President, and tell us why you want to pursue a war with Iran. Tell us what equipment you will need. Tell us the number of troops that will be dispatched.

Then it is our responsibility—535 of us—to say that, yes, we will go to war with Iran, or, no, we will not.

This is a critical moment. This is a moment when I am thinking about that science teacher who said that for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. We have seen an action and a reaction. Yes, we attacked Iran by taking out their top general, and, yes, they attacked us by launching their missiles into our airbase and quite possibly harming our military personnel and others.

Now stop. Come here, Mr. President. Stand before us. Stand before the American people, and tell us why, how, and what it will cost to pursue this.

That is his responsibility. Then it is our responsibility on behalf of the American people and people beyond this Nation to say that, yes, we will pursue a war, or, no, we will not.

Keep in mind, Mr. President, that the existing authorizations to use force do not apply to this situation, not the authorization to use force that was established for al-Qaida and Afghanistan, not the authorization to use force to go after Saddam Hussein in Iraq. No. Those don't apply.

This is different. This is demonstrably different. This requires the President to come to the Congress and explain why we should conduct a war with Iran.

It is not to say we cannot protect ourselves. But the next action by our military likely would be far more an action of protection but, rather, an action in response to what happened a couple of hours ago.

I would have loved and would have desired not to be here at this moment, talking about this issue but, rather, following what Mr. SCOTT had said about what has been done this last year for the American people, about the efforts that we have made to bring down healthcare costs, to provide pharmaceuticals that people can afford, and to guarantee that Americans do not lose their right to health insurance, as the President and our Republican colleagues are attempting and have attempted to do for the last 10 years.

I would love to have spent this evening talking about that. I would have loved to talk about the education programs that Mr. SCOTT has already brought to our attention and to talk about raising the minimum wage. But that is not where I am tonight.

My thoughts are with those military personnel, the airmen, many of whom

are from my district and probably at the bases there in the Middle East. My thoughts are with them and their families. I pray that all are safe.

And I pray that tonight or tomorrow morning a tweet says: “I, the President of the United States, will come to Congress and explain why we should or should not pursue a war with Iran.”

It is a good time for all of us to pray. It is a good time for all of us to take a deep breath and realize the path that we are on and where it might lead.

I am deeply, deeply disturbed by what has happened. I am willing to take up my responsibility here, and I anxiously await what the President of the United States of America has to say as he stands here in the Congress and explains to a joint session of the Senate and the House why we should pursue a war with Iran. That is his responsibility, and then it is our responsibility—elected by the people of America—to go to war or not to go to war. We shall see.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 53 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, January 8, 2020, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3392. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Gary J. Volesky, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 1370(c)(1); Public Law 96-513, Sec. 112 (as amended by Public Law 104-106, Sec. 502(b)); (110 Stat. 293); to the Committee on Armed Services.

3393. A letter from the Director, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, transmitting the Bureau's report on the Truth in Lending Act, the Electronic Fund Transfer Act, and the Credit Card Accountability, Responsibility, and Disclosure Act, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 1613; Public Law 90-321, Sec. 114 (as amended by Public Law 111-203, Sec. 1100A(2)); (124 Stat. 2107); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3394. A letter from the Director, Regulations Management Team, Rural Development, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program [Docket No.: RHS-18-SFH-0020] (RIN: 0575-AD09) received December 17, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3395. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of

State, transmitting the Secretary of State's Determinations Under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 and Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act of 2016; to the Committee on Financial Services.

3396. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Idaho: Final Approval of State Underground Storage Tank Program Revisions, Codification and Incorporation by Reference [EPA-R10-UST-2019-0363; FRL-10003-28-Region 10] received December 19, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3397. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Alabama: Approval of Plan for Control of Emissions from Commercial and Industrial Solid Waste Incineration Units [EPA-R04-OAR-2018-0183; FRL-9996-80-Region 4] received December 19, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3398. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; South Carolina; 2008 8-Hour Ozone Interstate Transport [EPA-R04-OAR-2018-0666; FRL-10003-56-Region 4] received December 19, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3399. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; Indiana; Limited Maintenance Plans for the 1997 Ozone NAAQS; Evansville, Fort Wayne, Greene County, Jackson County, Muncie, and Terre Haute areas [EPA-R05-OAR-2019-0267; FRL-10003-54-Region 5] received December 19, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3400. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Quality Plans; Tennessee; Infrastructure Requirements for the 2015 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard [EPA-R04-OAR-2019-0203; FRL-10003-55-Region 4] received December 19, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3401. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; California; Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District; Stationary Source Permits [EPA-R09-OAR-2019-0165; FRL-10002-05-Region 9] received December 19, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3402. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Tennessee; Approval of Plan for Control of Emissions from Commercial and Industrial Solid Waste Incineration Units [EPA-R04-OAR-2018-0186; FRL-9997-01-Region 4] received December 19, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3403. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Protection of Stratospheric

Ozone: Adjustments to the Allowance System for Controlling HCFC Production and Import, 2020-2029; and Other Updates [EPA-HQ-OAR-2016-0271; FRL-10003-80-OAR] (RIN: 2060-AU26) received December 19, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3404. A letter from the Chair, Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission, transmitting a report on Oversight of Institutions for Mental Diseases, pursuant to Public Law 115-271, Sec. 5012(a); (132 Stat. 3962); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3405. A letter from the Executive Director, Southeast Compact Commission for Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management, transmitting the 2016-2017 and the 2017-2018 Annual Reports of the Southeast Low-Level Radioactive Waste Commission that include the Annual Commission Audits; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3406. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Belarus that was declared in Executive Order 13405 of June 16, 2006, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); Public Law 94-412, Sec. 401(c); (90 Stat. 1257) and 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); Public Law 95-223, Sec. 204(c); (91 Stat. 1627); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3407. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser, Office of Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report concerning international agreements other than treaties entered into by the United States to be transmitted to the Congress within the sixty-day period specified in the Case-Zablocki Act, pursuant to 1 U.S.C. 112b(a); Public Law 92-403, Sec. 1(a) (as amended by Public Law 108-458, Sec. 7121(b)); (118 Stat. 3807); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3408. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting Transmittal No. 19-58, proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance, pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3409. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense, transmitting Fourth Quarter FY 2019, July 1 — September 30, 2019, pursuant to Secs. 36(a) and 26(b) of the Arms Export Control Act, the March 24, 1979, Report by the Committee on Foreign Affairs (H. Rept. 96-70), and the July 31, 1981, Seventh Report by the Committee on Government Operations (H. Rept. 97-214); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3410. A letter from the Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Report, pursuant to 6 U.S.C. 345(b); Public Law 107-296, Sec. 705; (116 Stat. 2219); to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

3411. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Labor, transmitting the Semiannual Report to Congress from the Office of Inspector General, for the period April 1, 2019, through September 30, 2019, pursuant to Section 5 of the Inspector General Act; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

3412. A letter from the Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board, transmitting the Board's report on competitive sourcing efforts for FY 2019, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 501 note; Public Law 108-199, Sec. 647(b); (118 Stat. 361); to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

3413. A letter from the Chairman, Labor Member, Management Member, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting the Board's Performance and Accountability Report for Fiscal Year 2019, including the Office of Inspector General's Audit's Report, pursuant