

IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE FOR YOUNG JUVENILES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me, first of all, say how grateful we are that, as the assessment has been made, none of our brave soldiers lost their lives last night in the Iranian attack and that it is crucial this week that this Congress assert its authority, its constitutional authority as it relates to any declaration of war, which is our authority under Article I, in spite of the unfortunate determination made by this administration putting American soldiers in danger, diplomats making their families have great concern, and, certainly, jeopardizing the security of the American people.

Our soldiers, most of all, we respect and honor, but we must do our job. As we do that, it is important, as well, to recognize that our work must go on.

Over the years, I have worked on any number of responses to improving the quality of life of our young juveniles. On any given day, over 48,000 youth in the United States are confined in facilities away from home as a result of the juvenile justice or criminal justice involvement. In many instances, they are not assigned a particular sentence and can stay incarcerated or detained until they are 21. Most are held in restrictive correctional-style facilities, and thousands are held without even having had a trial—no sentence.

Mr. Speaker, 92 percent of youth in juvenile facilities are in locked facilities. According to a 2018 report, 52 percent of long-term secure facilities, 44 percent of detention facilities, and 43 percent of reception and diagnostic centers also use mechanical restraints like handcuffs, leg cuffs, restraining chairs, straightjackets, with 40 percent of long-term secure facilities and detention centers isolating youth in locked rooms for 4 hours or more.

In the State of Texas, we have had a long history with our foster care system and our detention system where young people—juveniles—have been abused, sexually assaulted, and other indignities, altering them for life.

According to selected findings from the Juvenile Residential Facility Census released in December 2018, 46 percent of all facilities reported locking youths in their rooms. Among public facilities, 81 percent of local facilities and 68 percent of State facilities reported locking young people in sleeping rooms.

These young people are going to be the future leaders or the future citizens, residents of this Nation. They will have to take their rightful place.

This is wrong, and so I intend to introduce an omnibus reformation of the juvenile justice system to reform it so that we can respond appropriately to these 48,000-plus and really restore their lives.

I have already introduced legislation to ban solitary confinement, and locking juveniles in their rooms, lockdown, is equal to that.

We don't know the altering factor in the development of these young people. Studies have shown brains are not fully developed until the age of 25, and yet we put on the brains of these young people under 25 in the juvenile justice system the kinds of stimuli that would alter their life forever.

We also want to address the question of juveniles having a future, to ban the box of having to admit being arrested or in a juvenile detention center.

Remember, most of these juveniles have not had trials. They have not had due process. They don't have a sentence. They can remain in that facility until, in many instances, the age of 21 if they came in at 12 or 14 a for non-violent offense.

Then, of course, we need to find alternative places for juveniles to be able to have wraparound services that really restore them to being a full, young person who can enjoy life and get an education.

Many times when juveniles are in juvenile detention centers, their educations are spotty, at best. They don't return to the school system, and they are isolated and prone to dropping out.

Yes, families need help. Families wind up in the juvenile justice system or the family court system out of desperation because we don't have help for those families.

We need wraparound services, support services, that will encourage and enhance family unity and the ability to address the needs of this young person.

Maybe it is volatility, immaturity. Maybe it is a response to home life. Maybe it is because there is drug abuse in the family or criminal activity in the family, or maybe there is poverty in the family or one parent struggling to raise a number of children.

We cannot abandon 48,000 children every year in this Nation, Mr. Speaker, and so I will introduce the omnibus reform bill of the juvenile justice system to ensure that we save and build the lives of our young people.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 57 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Lord our God, we give You thanks for giving us another day. At the beginning of this new session, surround us with Your Holy Spirit. Lord, these are anxious days for Your children on

Earth. The risks of misunderstanding and failed messaging are great. Help all of us to seek Your presence in our midst that peace and goodwill might prevail.

We know, O Lord, this is a lot to ask. Have mercy on us.

May the comings and goings of Your people be under the seal of Your loving care, and may all our work be done 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

U.S. SOLDIERS IN HARM'S WAY

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

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, 4,559 U.S. soldiers have been killed in Iraq since the 2003 invasion and occupation. Despite their sacrifices, 17 years later, Iran now owns and controls Iraq today.

2,430 U.S. soldiers have been killed in Afghanistan, and today we are negotiating for peace with the Taliban, the terror organization that is most responsible for the killing of our soldiers.

These wars have cost nearly \$5 trillion and have taken nearly 7,000 lives of U.S. soldiers.

Before going after Qasem Soleimani, the 5,200 U.S. soldiers still stuck in Iraq should have been evacuated and out of harm's way. But they weren't. They were put in harm's way by our Commander-in-Chief during Iran's highly predictable retaliatory attack last night on U.S. military installations in Iraq.

2020 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

(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 week, I traveled across