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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 27, 2020.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY CUELLAR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2020, 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, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS

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 highlight the importance of our Nation's National Heritage Areas. These sites are rich with history, culture, and the marvels of our Nation's natural resources.

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan signed the first National Heritage Area

into law, calling it "a new kind of national park." Today, nearly 40 years later, our Nation touts 55 National Heritage Areas across the country.

I am proud of the 12 National Heritage Areas in Pennsylvania, more than any other State in the Nation. National Heritage Areas in Pennsylvania span 57 of our 67 counties, and these areas are truly an economic development powerhouse.

In 2014, tourists spent an estimated \$2 billion worth of goods and services during their travels to Pennsylvania's National Heritage Areas. That is \$2 billion back into our rural communities.

One of those areas, the Oil Region National Heritage Area, is in my district. The oil region was established as a Pennsylvania Heritage Area in 1994. Ten years later it became a National Heritage Area.

Pennsylvania's oil region is rich with history. In 1859, Edwin Drake changed our Nation's energy future forever when he drilled the world's first commercial oil well in Titusville, Pennsylvania, which is in my congressional district, establishing Pennsylvania's oil region as the birthplace of the world's petroleum industry.

Recently, I had the pleasure of joining the Alliance of National Heritage Areas for their annual Heart & Soul Breakfast, where I was reminded of the positive impact that these areas have on our communities.

Mr. Speaker, National Heritage Areas represent one of the finest public public-private partnership models in the country. It is for that reason and their unwavering commitment to preserving our Nation's history that I am so proud to stand beside them as they tirelessly promote our Nation's rich history.

National Heritage Areas are preserving our Nation's history, not only to celebrate it, but to learn from it and, quite frankly, to create economic development and opportunity utilizing it.

RECOGNIZING THE 176TH ANNIVERSARY OF DOMINICAN REPUBLIC INDEPENDENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, today is February 27, and we celebrate the 176th anniversary of independence of the Dominican Republic, which gained its independence in 1844 from the Republic of Haiti.

Led by Juan Pablo Duarte, Sanchez, and Mella, this island nation moved forward under great adversity. Throughout its 176 years, it has endured military occupation, dictatorship, and other strong and determining challenges. But throughout these many decades, the nation has prevailed.

Today, we enjoy the presence of over 2 million Dominicans in the United States, many of them in New York State, and many of them in the 13th Congressional District, particularly in Washington Heights.

We see many streets in the neighborhood named after some of the patriarchs of the nation. We have Juan Pablo Duarte Boulevard, Manolo Tavarez Justo Way, Mateo Rojas Alou Street, Miguel Amaro Way, Freddy Beras-Goico Way.

We also have schools named after very prominent members of that community. Salome Urena School, the Mirabal Sisters School, Juan Pablo Duarte School, the Juan Bosch School.

We also have a huge parade, which now goes down Sixth Avenue, but originally started right there on Audubon Avenue in Northern Manhattan.

We have social and cultural institutions like Club Deportivo Dominicano. We have many bodega owners, supermarket owners, hair salons, and other small businesses that I think are characteristic of their resolve, our people's resolve to work hard and make it a better city for all of us.

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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We send remittances back home, becoming the first and most important column of the Dominican economy, and we continue to contribute in many, many ways to that island nation and the United States of America.

Last Saturday, we witnessed an unprecedented event where young people convened in Washington Heights to protest the failed municipal elections back home.

Last weekend, the Washington Heights neighborhood of Manhattan, which I am honored to represent in Congress, witnessed thousands of young people who came to protest against the most recent failure by the Dominican Republic's electoral board to properly execute the country's municipal elections on February 16.

Tais Garcia Heredia, Emely Curiel, Andres Gonzalez del Rey, Candido Santana, Alberto Valentin, Albelis Reyes, and others, particularly a young man by the name of Felipe Batista, led these young people—thousands. Close to 10,000 of them descended on Washington Heights.

Their initiative to fight for their people's future will probably not go down in the history books; you may not be able to find them in a Wikipedia page in the future; you may not be able to even Google their names; but their names will be echoed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, and their patriotism will forever be remembered.

They are fighting to strengthen democracy. They are fighting to strengthen the best values of any democratic system and process. That is why I am here; to exult their names and to tell all that know them that we are very proud of them.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

Today we are fighting for Dominican Independence, wherever there's a Dominican there's homeland. God, homeland and freedom.

Hoy en día estamos luchando por la Independencia Dominicana, donde está el dominicano esta la Patria. Dios, Patria y Libertad.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York will provide a translation of his remarks to the Clerk.

EFFORTS TO FIGHT ASIAN CARP

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

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, last week, I had the opportunity to travel to Kentucky Lake, alongside Senate Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL and other local leaders, to observe progress being made to remove Asian carp from our west Kentucky waterways. Senator MCCONNELL and I took a boat out on the water to observe the new Modified Unified Method for removing this invasive species from our lakes.

Thanks to Federal funding we have secured, efforts are in progress that will improve the fishing industry and

our overall tourist economy in the First Congressional District of Kentucky. The Federal resources that have been steered toward this problem are instrumental in fighting the war on carp.

It has truly been a team approach, with local leaders like Lyon County Judge-Executive Wade White doing a tremendous job of advocating for action.

While there is certainly work left to do to eradicate Asian carp, we are moving in the right direction. I pledge to continue working with State and local officials and to be an effective Federal partner moving forward to rid our waters of this harmful species.

HONORING UNION COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT PATRICIA SHEFFER

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Union County Schools Superintendent Patricia Sheffer for winning the F.L. Dupree Outstanding Superintendent Award. This prestigious honor is awarded annually by the Kentucky School Boards Association to a leader who has demonstrated a high level of accomplishment within their school system.

Serving as superintendent comes with a variety of steep challenges and responsibilities. Based on this award, Patricia has gone above and beyond to excel in this critically important role.

She has committed her career to working with community leaders to improve opportunities for the next generation, including placing a heavy emphasis on improving career and technical education opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, her impact on Union County and public education cannot be overstated. I have seen firsthand the great work Ms. Sheffer has done there in Morganfield, and I join with all of my constituents in the First Congressional District of Kentucky in congratulating her.

HONORING NATIONAL FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA WEEK

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National FFA Week, an event that always brings back fond memories and is very special to me. Not only am I a proud farmer and former commissioner of agriculture, but I was also very active in FFA and had the high honor of serving as Kentucky FFA president.

FFA had an extraordinary influence on my life, as I know it does for many young people today. I proudly display my blue and gold jacket here in my congressional office.

While I will admit to being biased, there is no better way to learn, grow, and excel than being part of FFA. This quality organization uses agriculture education to empower students and put them on a lifelong path to success.

The leadership skills that students gain through FFA are extremely valuable, and I know that it makes a positive difference in the lives of young people every day.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent so many high-quality FFA programs,

and students here in Washington, and FFA will always hold a special place in my heart.

ONE YEAR SINCE WE VOTED TO PREVENT UNNECESSARY GUN DEATHS

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

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I rise on the anniversary of the House passage of H.R. 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act.

It is has been 1 year since we stood together in this Chamber, Democrats and Republicans, and voted to pass a commonsense bill that will help save lives; 1 year since we voted to prevent unnecessary gun deaths and keep guns away from those who should not have them; 1 year since we acted to protect our children, to protect our communities, and to protect our families.

One hundred Americans die every single day from gun violence. In 2020, there have already been more gun deaths in the United States than our peer countries will experience in an entire year. That is unconscionable, and it is why 90 percent of our country supports universal background checks.

Yet, we are told that, instead of changing our laws, we must have more active-shooter drills; more first graders coming home with tears in their eyes, 6-year-olds asked to decide for themselves whether they are more likely to survive by hiding in a closet or if they should rush the gunman; more mother's reading messages from their children locked inside a school that plead: Mom, if I don't make it home, I love you, and I appreciate everything that you have done for me.

Too often we are told that we must accept these tragedies, but millions of Americans refuse to accept that, and I stand with them.

Today marks 1 year since we passed the Bipartisan Background Checks Act.

Tomorrow marks 1 year since the passage of the Enhanced Background Check Act, which would close the Charleston loophole.

I introduced a bill that would give loved ones and law enforcement more tools to keep guns away from those who are a danger to themselves or to others, tools that would help people like Mary Miller-Strobel, whose brother, Ben, was a combat veteran suffering from depression and PTSD.

Mary and her family worried about his mental health, and they drove to every gun store in their area pleading with the store owners not to sell her brother a gun. Ben Miller died by suicide. He used the gun he bought at his local gun store.

□ 1015

There is injustice in this year without action. I know that sense of injustice. On black Friday in November 2012, my son Jordan was sitting in the back seat of a car at a gas station with his