

Those powerful words pack a tremendous amount of compassion and theology. It is the belief of millions of Americans that there is a God who created us, He cares for us, and He is interested in our lives. It is the belief that if we pray, a loving God hears our prayer and He responds to our needs and the needs of others.

This is the week of the National Day of Prayer. This is a time for us to be able to reflect on prayer and to remember and recognize the Americans who value prayer. I share the belief with many others that people are separated from God because of our choices to walk away from God and God's path for our lives, so people live their lives alone, even in a crowd. The Bible says, in Romans 6:23:

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Simply put, what we earn for what we do wrong is separation from life, real life. God gives us the opportunity to have eternal life, life with God forever, by accepting the gift of Jesus Christ through his death and his resurrection.

It was my first real prayer. When I was 8 years old, I realized for the first time that there is a God and I did not know Him. I was separated from Him. At my home, I prayed for Jesus to forgive my sin and come into my life and take control. It is that same simple prayer that millions of others have prayed to begin a walk with God.

The Bible teaches us—and I believe—that God hears our prayer, not because of our good behavior, but because God opened the line of communication when Jesus paid for our sin on the cross, and I accepted His offer of forgiveness and a relationship.

It begs the question still: Does it matter if we pray and pray for each other? Yes is the simple answer. Prayer puts our hearts and thoughts back in line with God's design. Prayer allows us an opportunity to spread out our most painful problems before a loving God. Prayer also provides an opportunity for the God who can do anything to demonstrate His care and power in a world that thinks they do not need God.

This attitude is not new. President Lincoln in his proclamation for a National Day of Prayer on March 30, 1863, wrote this:

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched us and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us. It behooves us then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

The National Day of Prayer is not a mandate to pray. It is not a congressional establishment of religion. It is two things: a congressional acknowledgment that millions of people in our Nation believe in God, and they believe that God hears our prayers and responds when we pray; and a request that those who believe in prayer should pray, and pray for our Nation and pray for our Nation's leaders.

If you are considering calling my office to complain that I mentioned prayer and God on the House floor, you are always welcome to call, but you are not going to change my mind, and you are not going to change our Nation. Each day we begin with prayer in the House of Representatives. The words of our national motto, "In God We Trust," are emblazoned on the wall right over my right shoulder. There is a prayer chapel in the Capitol set aside for Members of Congress to stop and pray before votes. We have always had prayer as a nation. That is the free exercise of religion that is protected by the Constitution.

I am well aware that some people want people of faith to be silent and never speak about God in public. They condemn my insensitivity for their lack of belief by trying to require a fellow free American to live life more like them. But I would remind them that they are not required to believe in God because they are an American, and I am not required to stop believing in God just because I represent Americans. We are both free. You can choose not to pray, and I can choose to pray for you.

For those in our Nation that pray, I humbly request that you set aside this National Day of Prayer to renew your commitment to pray for our Nation. We need God's help in our Nation right now. We are in obvious trouble and conflict. Even many Christians that I meet would rather complain than pray.

For everyone who says to me we are too far gone in debt, our culture is past the tipping point, we have lost our way forever, I tell them that I believe there is still a God in Heaven who hears our prayer, who cares about our lives. I will work, but I will also pray, and I ask you to join me.

Let's pray.

RENEW UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to show you and my colleagues the faces of the Americans that are hurting by refusing to renew unemployment benefits.

Just 3 days after Christmas, this House leadership left these people out in the cold and made it more difficult for them to provide for their family, to buy food, to pay their mortgages or pay their rent. It has been 4 months

since the House Republican leaders turned their backs on millions of unemployed Americans, and the situation grows more dire for these individuals and their families with each passing day.

For far too long, this Congress has described the long-term unemployed in numbers, figures, and statistics only. Well, today I hope that will begin to change and that the Speaker and other Republicans leaders will understand what is happening to real people because of their refusal to extend unemployment benefits.

I am launching something called the "Faces of the Unemployed" to show my colleagues on the other side of the aisle just who they are hurting. This poster board will be outside my office, and I will be adding people to it as they share their stories. It will force my Republican colleagues to look into their eyes as they pass them in the hallway and to understand that these individuals should not be invisible.

Mr. Speaker, I want you and all of my colleagues to look at these faces and explain to your colleagues and to America why you won't allow a vote that will help them put food on their table, pay their rent, and provide for their families.

These are real people, Mr. Speaker, who have been left behind and forgotten about by this body. It is disgraceful that, while the Republican budget spends billions of dollars abroad and protects special interest tax loopholes that encourage companies to ship American jobs overseas, this body can't provide immediate relief to the long-term unemployed who are still recovering from the Great Recession.

In the end, this debate is about more than dollars and cents. It is about the families who continue to lose unemployment benefits with each passing day that the House fails to act. It is about the more than 200,000 veterans and more than a million children who have been affected by this loss of benefits.

It is about my constituents, Michael from Riverside, Rhode Island, who is about to lose his electricity and gas because he can't pay his bills and, in his own words, has "nowhere to turn."

It is about Paula from Bristol, who has always worked since she was 15 years old and says she is "being made to feel like a thief."

It is about Lillian from North Providence, who said she would "rather be working" but can't find a job.

These stories are not unique to Rhode Island. This is happening to people in every part of our country: Nevada, Illinois, California, Kentucky, and Mississippi, to name a few. These people aren't Republicans or Democrats. They are hardworking Americans who can't find work and need our help.

It is time to put aside our differences and come together to provide immediate relief to these struggling families. In tough times, Congress has a

longstanding history of extending these benefits, as we saw during the Bush administration. I urge Speaker BOEHNER to look at the faces of these unemployed Americans and hear their stories so we can work together to solve this problem as we have in the past.

These photos and stories will be posted outside my office—and I hope many of my colleagues will do the same—to serve as a reminder that this is about the individuals and the families who are hurting every day because we have not extended this critical lifeline. I hope this will put a face on the real stories of the people who are hurting and it will cause the Speaker to bring a bill to the floor that will extend unemployment so we can answer the call and be sure that we are doing everything we can to help those most in need.

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TRIBUTE TO MASTER CHIEF
PETTY OFFICER GARY “DOC”
WELT

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

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great American hero, a quiet legend in the special operations community and in military medicine, Master Chief Petty Officer Gary “Doc” Welt.

Doc Welt passed away on April 8 due to complications of ALS. He passed away in Seminole, Florida, surrounded by his family. He was only 55 years old. He dedicated his life to service—service to his country, to his family, to those in the ALS community, and service to his brotherhood of special operators.

He joined the Navy in 1976, becoming a Navy SEAL in 1980, proudly serving on SEAL Teams 2, 4, and 8. He also served instructor tours at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and the Naval Special Warfare Center. After retiring in 2006 as a USSOCOM senior enlisted medical adviser, Doc continued to serve as a contract specialist, conducting counterterrorism and counter-piracy operations until 2012.

Doc is survived by his loving wife of 17 years, Brenda Ann Thompson Welt; his son, Robert; his daughters, Crystal Lynn Elliott and Sabrina Audell Ranford; his brothers, Robert Welt and Donald Wolford; as well as his four grandchildren, Lillian, Meadow, Andon, and Michael.

Mr. Speaker, two communities gathered at MacDill Air Force Base last week. One was the community of Pinellas County and the Tampa Bay area, who knew and loved Doc. The second community was the special operations community, who loved Doc. It was a fitting tribute to a great man.

Today, we honor his life, his legacy, and his service. We pledge and commit to carry on the fight that Doc fought

against ALS. We commit to not quitting until that fight is won.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to pay tribute to a great man from Seminole, Florida, who had an impact across this world.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

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

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as cochairman of the Congressional Prayer Caucus in recognition and celebration of the annual observance of the National Day of Prayer.

Each year, we take this opportunity to pause from the hurried pace of our daily lives to reaffirm our Nation’s rich spiritual heritage and our commitment to maintaining and strengthening our great country’s religious freedom. Throughout more than 200 years of our Nation’s history, faith, prayer, and trust in God have played a vital role in strengthening the fabric of our society.

From the dawn of our country, when the first national call to prayer was issued, to that day on April 17, 1952, when President Harry Truman made the annual National Day of Prayer a permanent fixture, to this upcoming Thursday, when we will celebrate the 63rd annual National Day of Prayer in the Cannon Caucus Room right here on Capitol Hill, we have continued to turn to prayer as a guiding compass as we seek God’s guidance and wisdom and healing balm for our land. It is from these historic underpinnings that our Nation has grown and thrived.

We stand here today on the shoulders of those Americans who have boldly fought for our rights to be able to assemble, to be able to speak out, and to be able to worship freely. One of our great opportunities as Americans is to be able to come together and say we want to be able to ask God for his blessings and his help upon our Nation so we indeed can be one Nation under God, as we say in our Pledge of Allegiance, and also a Nation that honors our national motto, which is not “e pluribus unum,” as some have mistakenly thought, but which is, “In God We Trust.”

In fact, for all Members of Congress that would like, we have plaques being made and distributed that say, “In God We Trust,” just to reaffirm our national motto.

That is why I have joined with my friend and cochairman of the Congressional Prayer Caucus, Congressman RANDY FORBES of Virginia, to introduce a bipartisan resolution, H. Res. 547. I hope all of our Members listening today will join us in supporting the National Day of Prayer and urging all Americans to come together to pray and reaffirm the importance that prayer has played in our national heritage.

We hear so much today about partisanship and bickering and asking why don’t people get along. The one

thing that I share back home, Mr. Speaker, which usually surprises people, is there is one group on Capitol Hill where all those labels are put to the side, and that happens every Monday night or Tuesday night, depending on the night we go into session, right across the hall in room 219, where there is no agenda except to pray and ask God for wisdom, like Solomon of the Old Testament.

So my hope is that as many Members and your staff—you will allow your staff to join us this Thursday morning to come together as we celebrate the National Day of Prayer.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the true source of power is not found here in the Halls of Congress or in the Oval Office in the West Wing or in the chambers of the Supreme Court. The true source of power is found on our knees before the throne of grace, before almighty God.

It is in that spirit that I rise today to reaffirm this celebration of prayer in our Nation’s history for the past, the present, and, God willing, the future.

Indeed, the power of prayer knows no bounds. May we be a Nation that does stand for our motto, “In God We Trust.” Indeed, we pray, may God bless America.

NEED ACTION IN THE SENATE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, just a short while ago, one of my colleagues talked about the plight of folks who are unemployed—individuals who are unemployed either short term or those chronically unemployed. He actually failed to mention those who are underemployed in this Nation. It is an issue that needs to be addressed.

I am actually proud to be a part of solutions that have passed out of the House of Representatives but sit in the Senate, waiting for Senator REID to take the leadership to bring those House-passed jobs bills to the Senate floor for action—bills that would provide some immediate opportunities for individuals who are unemployed.

More than anything else, what folks who are unemployed need is a job—a good-paying job with family-sustaining wages.

Mr. Speaker, the House has passed bill after bill to help working middle class Americans get the skills they need, the jobs they desire, and adequate pay to provide for their families. In the Senate, yet another day has passed when Leader REID has chose to deny consideration of these common-sense bills and chose to deny the relief that would come for those who are unemployed.

The House has acted on more than one occasion to advance completion of the longstanding Keystone XL pipeline. This decision has again been delayed by the Obama administration.