

areas: diet quality and physical activity, food resource management, food safety, and food security.

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program tends to be less flexible in how it delivers services than SNAP-Ed, but it has the capacity to reach more people than SNAP-Ed because it operates in more areas, both urban and rural, across this country.

Mr. Speaker, both of these educational programs are helping low-income families lead healthier lives and make better choices when it comes to nutritious food. Through education we can help ensure that American families—especially children—learn about the importance of a balanced diet as part of a healthy lifestyle and the joy of preparing their own meals.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to strengthening these programs in the next farm bill so that we can continue to educate and serve American families.

CONCERNS BREWING ABOUT NUCLEAR POWER PLANT CONSTRUCTION

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address concerns brewing in Lithuania and other Baltic States about the construction of a nuclear power plant. This plant is 12½ miles from the Lithuanian border and in sight of Vilnius, Lithuania's capital and largest city.

I speak here not only as a friend of the Baltic people and as a descendant of Lithuanian immigrants, but also as co-chair of the Baltic Caucus and chairman of the Subcommittee on Environment.

Like all my colleagues here, I am concerned about ensuring the security, integrity, and safety of nuclear projects in Europe and around the world. Here is the capital of Lithuania, Vilnius, and that is where the power plant is being built.

This site was first chosen during the era of the Soviet Union but was halted after the Chernobyl disaster in 1986, which contaminated a quarter of Belarus. Now, in 2019, Belarus is supposed to house a different Moscow-run nuclear power plant, this one run by the Russian state-owned company Rosatom.

This project is very environmentally sensitive. Both Lithuania and Belarus are signatories to the Espoo Convention. The Espoo Convention calls for member states to consult with bordering countries about such projects, to allow experts to review information about the projects, and to share information with bordering countries about safety and security of these projects.

Building a nuclear power plant is hard, especially when it is a country's first. That is why the International Atomic Energy Agency has recommended a six-step review process meant to prevent disasters like

Chernobyl's and the more recent one in Fukushima, Japan. But Belarus has chosen to skip four of the six steps, including crucial steps, and ignore the people in the land of Lithuania.

There is a real concern that the main purpose behind the project is to grow Russian influence and power, especially over energy, in the European Union. The President of Belarus said that the Astravets plant and another Russian plant are a fishbone in the throat of the European Union and the Baltic States.

Nuclear power plants in sensitive areas should be discussed within the Espoo Convention. Nearly all of Lithuania is within 186 miles of the plant, which means that, if a disaster were to strike, the land of Lithuania could be affected. The country's drinking water could also be affected since the plant is supposed to draw water from the Neris River that supplies drinking water to Lithuania.

But incidents are occurring that cast doubt on Belarus' commitment to working with neighbors and ensuring the plant is safe. In 2016, four accidents occurred, and Belarus has failed to be upfront with Lithuania about any of them.

A 330-ton nuclear reactor shell was allegedly dropped from about 13 feet last summer. Belarus did not reveal anything about the incident until independent media reported it, and then downplayed it.

Building a nuclear power plant requires care in construction according to the most stringent standards with the utmost transparency, and for the best reasons. This plant fails on all four counts. It is in the wrong location. It has been irresponsibly handled.

Instead of transparency, we have seen stonewalling and obfuscation. Instead of making the most economic sense, this plant seems to make good geopolitical sense—and for Russia, not for Belarus.

Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. No one here objects to the safe, secure design, construction, and running of a nuclear power plant. But the people of Lithuania are firmly opposed to irresponsible attitudes toward nuclear power, particularly so close to their most populous city.

This concern makes sense. As chairman of the House Subcommittee on Environment and long-time observer of Eastern Europe, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that the people of the United States have no better friend than the people of Lithuania.

Lithuanians have the right and the responsibility to ensure their and their children's environmental security. They should not be expected to accept inadequate or misleading information about a serious, environmentally sensitive project right on their borders. The Government of Belarus should respect the commitments it has made, including with its neighbors.

Until these issues are resolved, Mr. Speaker, I cannot fault the Lithuanian

people for their concerns about the Astravets nuclear power plant. I share their concerns. I hope Belarus will calm their fears by allowing in international experts and representatives.

Belarus should also comply with the International Atomic Energy Agency's recommendations for the design, construction, and running of safe nuclear power plants.

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 12 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. POE of Texas) at noon.

PRAYER

Rabbi Sanford D. Akselrad, Congregation Ner Tamid, Henderson, Nevada, offered the following prayer:

O source of wisdom, gathered before this august body, I ask Your blessings upon us.

Decisions impacting the fate of our country weigh heavily upon our leaders. They stand here with backs bowed, eyes turned downward, shoulders formed into an amorphous shrug.

I pray, therefore, that You will grant our leaders strength to stand tall.

With eyes raised skyward, seeing today, tomorrow, and the next, let them govern our country with compassion, courage, and insight.

Let them stand tall to give voice to those who feel unheard and presence to those too long ignored.

Let the pursuit of justice and mercy lift them with heavenly wings, closer still to Heaven than before.

Let them stand tall.

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 New York (Mr. HIGGINS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HIGGINS of New York 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.

WELCOMING RABBI SANFORD
AKSELRAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand here today and introduce my friend, Rabbi Sanford Akselrad. As leader of Congregation Ner Tamid, he has been a friend, a mentor, and my rabbi for 25 years.

His vision for a campus, a spiritual hub, has been realized in his nearly 30-year career at Congregation Ner Tamid. He has led us with strength, with poise, and with wisdom as he has shared in the sorrows and joys—from the simchas to the shivas—of our entire community.

His work in both the outreach and interfaith communities has left impact and meaning on so many lives across the Las Vegas Valley and beyond.

May he continue to serve us all with grace, compassion, and strength.

Mr. Speaker, as leader of Congregation Ner Tamid, he has been a friend, a mentor, and my rabbi for 25 years.

Since moving to Las Vegas in 1988, Rabbi Akselrad has served as the spiritual leader of Congregation Ner Tamid.

His vision for a campus, a spiritual hub has been realized in his nearly 30-year career at Congregation Ner Tamid.

He has led us with strength, with poise, and with wisdom and has shared in the sorrows and joys from the simchas to the shivas of our entire community.

His work in both the Interfaith and Outreach communities has left impact and meaning on so many families across the Las Vegas Valley.

His unwavering commitment to building a strong community as our Congregation's spiritual leader and in creating a vibrant Jewish community in Southern Nevada has not gone unnoticed.

During this time, the Synagogue grew from approximately 60 to over 600 families, becoming the largest Reform Synagogue in the State of Nevada. In his nearly 27 years of service to our Congregation, Rabbi Akselrad has served on a wide variety of community boards including the Humana Hospital Pastoral Advisory Board, the Jewish Federation of Las Vegas, Jewish Family Services and the National Conference of Community and Justice.

A firm believer in K'lal Israel and building a strong Jewish community, Rabbi Akselrad has spearheaded many community-wide boards, commissions, and organizations that have helped shape the Jewish community we live in today.

In the wake of the Great Recession of the late 2000's, Rabbi Akselrad envisioned Project Ezra, a partnership between the Jewish Federation of Las Vegas, the Board of Rabbis, and Jewish Family Service Agency. Project Ezra helps people of all faiths secure new employment in this changing economic climate.

Rabbi Akselrad is currently a board member of the Anti-Defamation League of Las Vegas and the Interfaith Council of Southern Nevada. Rabbi Akselrad has served on the National Commission on Jewish Living, Worship and Music for the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ) since 1999. He has also served on the Out-

reach Committee (to interfaith families) of the URJ.

Rabbi Akselrad's community contributions and leadership are the best example of Congregation Ner Tamid's commitment to Tikkun Olam and Social Justice.

May he continue to serve us all with grace, compassion, and strength.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

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

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR DAY

(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 Saturday, March 25, marked National Medal of Honor Day. Designated by Congress in 1990, the National Medal of Honor Day celebrates each of the men and women who have earned America's highest, most prestigious military decoration.

I am grateful that South Carolina has a long tradition of military service, with 34 Medal of Honor recipients, including the youngest living honoree, Corporal Kyle Carpenter of Gilbert.

To mark National Medal of Honor Day, I join Medal of Honor recipient Major General James Livingston and South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson with a wreath-laying ceremony at Mount Pleasant Memorial Garden. The inspiring program was organized by the Fort Sullivan Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, led by Regent Nancy Herriage.

Additionally, congratulations to the University of South Carolina women's basketball team and head coach Dawn Staley on their victory in the Elite Eight last night. I am happy to cheer for the Gamecocks as they head to Dallas, Texas, for their second Final Four appearance in just 3 years.

In conclusion, God bless our troops. We will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

USE LEVERAGE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE QUALITY AND COST OF HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, last week's healthcare disaster was instructive because, in the end, it was never really about health care at all.

Your plan was a thinly-veiled scheme to deliver a massive tax cut to health insurance executives and their cronies. UnitedHealthcare is one of America's largest, private healthcare insurance companies. UnitedHealthcare is under

investigation for defrauding Medicare and the Federal Government out of billions of dollars. UnitedHealthcare's CEO made \$66 million in 2014—one man, one salary, in 1 year—\$66 million under investigation for defrauding the Medicare program; and your bill, on page 67, in seven simple words, would have rewarded this potentially criminal behavior with a massive tax cut.

Mr. Speaker, Americans, on average, will pay more than \$10,000 per person for health care this year. Let's use the enormous leverage of the Federal Government to drive down those costs and to drive up quality for all Americans.

REMEMBERING JOHN CRUTCHER

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to mourn the loss of John Crutcher, who passed away on March 12, 2017, at the age of 100.

A native of Kansas, John spent many years in public service, including teaching in a one-room school on the prairie. He was elected to a seat in the Kansas Senate and served two terms as Lieutenant Governor in his home State. In 1982, President Reagan appointed him to the Federal Postal Rate Commission, where he gained a reputation as an outspoken critic of the Postal Service.

In World War II he served as a Navy officer in the Pacific theater and Korea. He retired as a captain in the U.S. Naval Reserve and always remained active in Navy organizations.

A true, very modest gentleman, John was respected and beloved by all who knew him. He will be greatly missed in the mountains of North Carolina, which he came to call home after marrying his lovely wife, Edith.

KEEP THE CLEAN POWER PLAN
INTACT

(Mr. WELCH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, President Trump today plans to unravel the Clean Power Plan that, once implemented, would reduce carbon emissions by 870 million tons, the equivalent of 166 million cars.

Why? False science, false economics.

Some of the best minds of the 18th century apparently are advising President Trump on science matters. This planet is melting. We have had the worst wild weather in centuries; the three hottest years on record. Let's not deny what is before our very eyes, false economics.

President Trump apparently believes we have to make a choice: either jobs or a clean environment. The exact opposite is true; 8.1 million people worldwide work in clean energy. It will be 24 million in 2030. Solar jobs in Vermont grew at the fastest pace of any jobs.