

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Puerto Rico will provide a translation to the Chair.

NATIONAL FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA WEEK

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize and celebrate National FFA Week, an annual tradition that highlights the contributions of one of our Nation's most impactful youth organizations.

Last week, from February 15 to 22, we honored the FFA's mission, achievements, and ongoing work in preparing future generations of agricultural leaders.

Founded in 1928, the National FFA Organization has grown into a dynamic force in agriculture, education, leadership development, and career preparedness.

With over 1 million members and chapters in all 50 States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, FFA stands as a pillar of strength for young men and women pursuing careers in agriculture, agribusiness, and related fields.

FFA is a transformative experience that instills a sense of responsibility, leadership, and service in its members. The agricultural education programs offered through FFA equip students with the technical skills, scientific knowledge, and problem-solving abilities necessary to meet the challenges of feeding, clothing, and fueling our Nation.

Access to agricultural education is critical not only for our rural communities but for the entire country.

Agriculture is the backbone of our economy. As I often say, food security is national security, and investing in the next generation of producers ensures that there is food on our tables, clothes on our backs, and fuel in our vehicles. However, beyond that, agriculture is science, technology, and innovation. Its cutting-edge advancements will drive the future of food production and environmental stewardship.

The blue FFA jacket is more than just a uniform. It symbolizes hard work, commitment, and leadership. The young men and women who wear it today are tomorrow's farmers, veterinarians, researchers, policymakers, and business leaders.

Their dedication to agricultural excellence and community service exemplifies the very best of American values. The impact of FFA extends far beyond agriculture. The leadership training, teamwork, and problem-solving skills that members develop prepare them for a wide range of careers and civic responsibilities.

Many former FFA members have gone on to serve in Congress, lead Fortune 500 companies, and contribute

meaningfully to their local communities, including the recently confirmed U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Brooke Rollins, the first Secretary of Agriculture to have served as a State FFA officer.

As chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, I understand the vital importance of shaping the next generation of farmers, ranchers, and producers. Through education and hands-on experiences, FFA continues to make a lasting impact on the agriculture industry.

National FFA Week is also an opportunity to recognize the educators, advisers, and mentors who guide these young leaders, as well as the families and communities that support them. Their investment in agricultural education ensures that future generations will continue to innovate, adapt, and lead.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to celebrate the past successes of FFA while also looking ahead to the incredible contributions that future FFA leaders will make. Their passion, knowledge, and dedication give us confidence in the future of American agriculture and the prosperity of our Nation.

SOCIAL SECURITY IS AN EARNED BENEFIT

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

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the Nation's number one antipoverty program for the elderly and the number one antipoverty program for children. That program is Social Security.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, as you know, Congress has not addressed or enhanced Social Security in more than 54 years. Richard Nixon was President of the United States the last time that Congress enhanced Social Security.

I am sure it is of interest to some of our listeners here today that Social Security is the number one insurance program for a Nation who relies on their government to make sure that it passes on savings to them that they have paid for. This is no entitlement. All one has to do is go to their pay stub where it says FICA, Federal insurance contribution. Whose money is that? It is your money.

Yet, Congress hasn't acted on it. However, we want to give that opportunity to everyone to act on it.

What is especially alarming, Mr. Speaker, is now Mr. Musk—an unelected official who operates outside of government, who doesn't need to be approved by the Senate, who is neither a Federal employee nor a volunteer, he has the ear of the President of the United States and can get all the statistics and data that he wants—is currently going after Social Security data.

I commend the Federal employees who have stood up to this illegal act and refused, in an effort to protect

American citizens' valuable information and, most importantly, their privacy.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, you have 115,000 Social Security recipients in your district: 86,000 are retirees; 10,000 are disabled workers who rely on this money; 5,486 widows; 2,600 spouses; 8,613 children; and your district gets on a monthly basis \$197 million.

Where do they spend that?

Right back in your district, Mr. Speaker.

Nobody gets wealthy on Social Security. It is the safety net for capitalism. That is what Roosevelt intended it to be. It is long overdue that we have a vote in the United States Congress to enhance Social Security benefits for all Americans.

□ 1230

There are 10,000 baby boomers who become eligible for Social Security every day. More than 70 million people receive Social Security, and now Mr. Musk and Mr. Trump are out to cut those benefits?

Ask your constituents where those cuts are going to come from, Mr. Speaker. Are they ready to say that cuts ought to be made to the money that they receive?

In something that was widely debunked last week, President Trump made the most outlandish claim that Social Security is contributing money to people who are supposedly 150 years old. That was widely debunked as false and untrue, but it is the kind of thing that is seen in dictatorships or at the start of fascism when people all of a sudden make outlandish claims that are untrue with regard to the Nation's number one insurance program for the elderly and our children, which Congress hasn't enhanced in more than 54 years.

The public ought to be demanding a vote of its Members. Do not let any Member of Congress stand up without saying where they stand on your benefits.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

In the beginning, God, You created the heavens and the Earth. When Your

spirit moved over the chaos of the deep, it brought a purifying wind over the formlessness and void of the Earth.

Lord, let there be light in our darkness. Where warfare continues to rage in Ukraine and where hostilities between Israel and Hamas threaten the fragility of life, in the civil wars in Africa and in urban violence in our own country, Lord, separate the light from the darkness. Speak Your purifying Word and bring order into the turmoil of our world.

You have laid the foundations of the Earth, determined its measurements, and rested it on the cornerstone of Your Word. As You have set the limits of the sea and commanded the proud waves to stop, restrain our surge for power. Demand of humanity the humility to serve You only and submit to Your will.

Look upon the work of our hands this day as we tend to the world You have entrusted to us. For You are the author of all creation, the one who made us. May we give You reason, when You look at Your handiwork, to call it good.

In Your sovereign name we pray.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania 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.

RECOGNIZING WELLSBORO ROTARY CLUB'S CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Wellsboro Rotary Club's centennial anniversary.

For a century, the Wellsboro Rotary Club provided unwavering, dedicated service to the community.

The men and women of the Wellsboro Rotary are guided by The Four-Way Test, which is as follows: Of the things we think, say, or do:

Is it the truth?

Is it fair to all concerned?

Will it build goodwill and better friendships?

Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

These guiding principles are the foundation of the Wellsboro Rotary Club's work, shaping a century of service that has left a mark on Wellsboro and the surrounding communities.

Their impact is evident, from recognizing outstanding students and supporting local charities to installing bicycle service stations and funding scholarships.

At its core, Rotary is about service above self. It is about bringing people together, regardless of background, to make the world a better place.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Wellsboro Rotary Club for its contributions to the community and congratulate these volunteers on 100 years of making a difference.

WE MUST CONTINUE TO SUPPORT UKRAINE

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

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise to voice my unwavering support for the people of Ukraine.

As Russia persists in its unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, it is crucial that we unite against Putin as defenders of freedom. By coming together, we can safeguard Ukraine's sovereignty and the future of democracy.

Ukrainians, demonstrating extraordinary resilience, have displayed unwavering courage on the front lines for nearly 3 years. I remain steadfast in supporting democracy, standing with Ukraine, and opposing all of the enemies of freedom around the world.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. FEDORCHAK). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1600

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania) at 4 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

ASSISTING SMALL BUSINESSES NOT FRAUDSTERS ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 825) to prohibit individuals convicted of defrauding the Government from receiving any assistance from the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 825

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Assisting Small Businesses Not Fraudsters Act".

SEC. 2. ASSISTANCE PROHIBITED AFTER FRAUD CONVICTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 16 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 645) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(h) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROHIBITION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—An associate of a small business concern who is finally convicted of any crime involving or relating to financial misconduct or a false statement with respect to a covered loan or grant shall be ineligible to receive any financial assistance from the Administrator, other than financial assistance under section 7(b).

“(2) BUSINESS CONCERNS.—A small business concern that has as an associate an individual subject to paragraph (1) shall be ineligible to receive any financial assistance from the Administrator, other than financial assistance under section 7(b).

“(3) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

“(A) ASSOCIATE.—The term ‘associate’ means, with respect to a small business concern—

“(i) an officer, director, or owner of more than 20 percent of the equity of, or a key employee of, such small business concern;

“(ii) any entity not less than 20 percent owned or controlled by one or more individuals referred to in clause (i); and

“(iii) any other individual or entity in control of or controlled by such small business concern, except for a licensed small business investment company (as defined in section 103(3) of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 662(3))).

“(B) COVERED LOAN OR GRANT.—The term ‘covered loan or grant’ means—

“(i) a loan made under—

“(I) paragraph (36) or (37) of subsection (a) of section 7; or

“(II) subsection (b) of such section in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; or

“(ii) a grant made under—

“(I) section 5003 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (15 U.S.C. 9009c); or

“(II) section 324 of the Economic Aid to Hard-Hit Small Businesses, Nonprofits, and Venues Act (15 U.S.C. 9009a).

“(C) FINALLY CONVICTED.—The term ‘finally convicted’ means, with respect to a person, that such person has been convicted of an offense and such conviction—

“(i) has not been appealed and is no longer appealable because the time for taking an appeal has expired; or

“(ii) has been appealed and the appeals process for such conviction is completed.”.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—Subsection (h) of section 16 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 645), as added by subsection (a) of this Act, shall not apply to any contract or other agreement entered into by the Government prior to the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from