

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PRIVILEGE AND HONOR OF A LIFETIME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KLEIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to thank all of my colleagues here in the House and especially my constituents back home in south Florida.

The opportunity to serve in this body has been the privilege and honor of a lifetime. I truly have been honored and feel honored to have been entrusted with the responsibility of fighting for families, businesses, seniors, and veterans in our community every single day.

And fight we did. When I came in 4 years ago, we were challenged with a war; we were challenged with a lot of other things. And as those years have passed, there have been new challenges, economy and others.

Together we fought to take on skyrocketing homeowners' insurance costs in Florida and other places. We wrote a commonsense solution that makes insurance look and work like it was supposed to. It wasn't easy, but we brought together every single member of Florida's delegation, Republican and Democrat alike, as well as allies from around the country and passed the Homeowners' Defense Act in a very bipartisan way. I am very proud of that.

We also fought to deliver on a campaign promise in my first race to close the Medicare part D doughnut hole, something that is so significant to so many seniors in my community. Our seniors should never have to make the choice between food and medicine. And because we shall and will bring down the cost of prescription drugs, many in our community will no longer have to.

We stood up for our Nation's veterans, something that is a prized responsibility that every American shares in, because I believe it is our responsibility to fight for those who have fought for us. We passed the biggest increase in VA history to make sure that our servicemembers have access to everything that they need. And we turned local ideas from our Palm Beach and Broward County veterans advisory boards into the law of the land.

But we didn't stop there. We took on energy and the recognition that there is a national security threat of an energy policy that continues to support Middle East rogue countries, in particular Iran. I helped work with others in writing and passing the toughest sanctions in history, because we cannot allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon, not on our watch and certainly not on our dime.

We tackled health care and equal pay for women. We expended Pell Grants so that every child and every student has a right to go to college and help create a workforce that will compete worldwide. We passed an innovative and forward-looking energy plan to end our dependence on foreign oil. But most of all, many of us worked together to do what is best for our community.

Some might disagree with any one policy; but I think at the end, each of us in this Chamber knows that we have a responsibility to our country, we believe in our country, and we try to do the right things.

Madam Speaker, my colleagues and south Floridians who are watching today, I want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart for giving me this privilege. Choosing public service isn't always easy. There are bad headlines and tough attacks and long weeks away from your family, and our families truly make the greatest sacrifice. But it is worth every one of those sacrifices for the opportunity to make our country better for our children and our grandchildren than it was for us.

This is the American Dream, and that is what I fought for and many of us fight for every single day at home at here and in town here. When I first came to this historic U.S. Capitol building, a very wise colleague said to me—and it stuck with me to this very moment—look up at the Capitol dome at nighttime. Look at it when we are working late. You see the light at the top and a beautiful dome.

And I look up and I see that every time I am here in the evening, and I see that magnificent dome against the dark sky. And I think about the great figures that have passed through in time here. Most names we will never know, but every one of them was truly just passing through, whether here for 2 years, or 10 years or 20 years. Every one had the same goal to make this country a little better place.

My colleague said to me, if you look up at that dome at one point and you aren't inspired, then it's time to go home. Well, certainly I have been inspired every day I have been here and continue to be inspired, and he was right. The opportunity to serve our community in these hallowed Halls does inspire me, and I hope it continues to inspire every single other person and the next generation of leaders who come into this Chamber.

So I want to thank all of you. Thank you for allowing us to be here. Thank you for the privilege of serving, and I look forward to being part of our community and continue to work on behalf of it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

DEDICATION OF LONG BEACH ROSIE THE RIVETER PARK AND INTERPRETIVE CENTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. RICHARDSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to support the dedication of the Long Beach Rosie the Riveter Park and Interpretive Center. This launch is going to be next Saturday on December 11, and it's going to be a historic occasion, not just for Long Beach, not just for California, but for the Nation. Let me tell you why I would take 5 minutes out of our time to talk about this.

Back in World War II, from 1942 to 1945, we had 6 million brave women, women who stepped forward, who helped us as a Nation to be able to help us to really move forward, to keep the economy going and to really begin to enter into a workforce that they had never been a part of before.

In my own area, 175,000 women bravely worked and led the way. They were really trail blazers, and they worked at the Douglas Aircraft Plant where now we build the very famous C-17.

When you consider a lot of the Rosie Riveters, on average they are about 85 years old. So it's important for us now more than ever to really acknowledge them and to thank them for their service. When we talk about the work that they did and how they supported the United States, they deserve our honor and our respect.

This Long Beach site includes an interactive display of women, Air Force Service Pilots, who were known as WASPs at that time. These women transported the airplanes. They assembled them. They actually flew them to the places where they were needed the most. Because of their efforts, they were able to produce—imagine, women—300,000 airports, 102,000 armored vehicles, 77,000 ships, 20 million small arms, 40 million bullets, and 6 million tons of bombs.

They were as much a part of our success and freedom for people all over the world, the women, the Rosie the Riveters, as were all of the veterans who also served. We will have in this area, not only a park and interactive center, but also a history and the names and telling of the work that these fine women did. There will be a rose-colored walking path, circles around that park area, etched with the timeline of all of the work that these ladies incredibly performed.

Along the pathway, we will have stopping points where there will be

etched stars and colored tiles and replicas of some of the many famous posters that we see today.

The park will also have the “compass rose” that was known to be very famous back at that time at the Roosevelt naval base where they would fly from one section to another and that would be their focal point. Adjacent to the compass rose is a quiet garden, a memorial to the men and women who served in the military, noting the inscription: “All Gave Some, Some Gave All.”

When we think of Rosie the Riveter, it’s also been an inspiration to many of us. I see our Speaker who is sitting here now tonight, and I think of some of the things we have had where we have really valued what those women did and how they have inspired us today.

At this particular location, we will have three flags that will be flown. One will be a U.S. flag that is actually being flown today. We will have a California flag and then a local flag as well.

I call on my colleagues to take an opportunity to study and reflect and think about all the important stories that made this country so great. And we certainly couldn’t leave out the Rosie the Riveters in World War II who began for many of us and why we stand here today.

□ 1730

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GRAYSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GRAYSON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FRANKS of Arizona addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AMPHIBIANS: CANARIES IN THE COAL MINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Madam Speaker, it wasn’t many years ago that coal miners relied on a small bird, a canary, to signal that conditions were toxic. The canary in the coal mine would become sick before the miners, who would then have a chance to either escape or to put on protective respirators.

Today, our ecosystems face dire threats. Toxic gases, chemicals and the exploitation of our natural resources have jeopardized our air, water, lands and the wildlife that inhabit our ecosystems. The telltale sign? The frog, the “canary in the coal mine” of our natural environment, is sick.

Today, nearly 33 percent of amphibian species are threatened, and estimates of species extinctions over the past several decades number in the hundreds. Losses of these species result from the usual suspects, land-use change, overexploitation and disease.

Why all the emphasis on frogs? Aside from the fact that these animals regulate their local ecosystems and control populations of insects that spread disease, they are important to our human health as well. Findings point the way toward new drugs for fighting diseases such as cancer and HIV/AIDS. Scientists have reportedly found chemicals that are naturally produced in the skin of various frog species that can kill the HIV virus.

But these medicinal tools are disappearing at astronomical rates. That should tell us something. A frog’s skin is relatively thin and permeable to water, so frogs are directly exposed to pollutants such as coal ash and environmental radiation. In addition, their eggs are laid in ponds and other bodies of water where they absorb chemicals.

The frog, the canary in the coal mine of our natural environment, is first in line in an environmental pollution war, a war the frog is quickly losing. If we don’t heed this call, much like the miners who relied on their singing canary, we are destined for illness and, ultimately, shorter, unhealthier lives.

Sadly, this degradation of human health and quality of life is already happening across the country. Colstrip, Montana, is home to the second-largest coal plant west of the Mississippi. One boxcar-full of coal is burned every 5 minutes. The burning coal creates sodium, thallium, mercury, boron, aluminum and arsenic, which is pumped out of the factory and into the air.

The chemicals that aren’t pumped into the air are caught in the factory scrubbers and then dumped with coal ash into giant settling ponds. These ponds are shallow artificial lakes of concentrated toxicity which leach this poison into wells and aquifers. The sludge flows into the surrounding towns and countryside, bubbling up against foundations and floorings, cracking the floor in Colstrip’s local grocery store. Ranchers in eastern Montana are now suing the plant for damages. Noxious water, they cite, is the only liquid that fills their wells and stock ponds.

James Hansen, a renowned climate scientist, says Colstrip will cause the extinction of 400 species. But Colstrip burns on. Why? Because we have no national energy plan and because there are currently no federally enforceable regulations specific to coal ash. This lack of federally enforceable safeguards

is exactly what led to the disaster in Tennessee, where a dam holding more than 1 billion of gallons of toxic coal ash failed, destroying 300 acres, dozens of homes, killed fish and other wildlife and poisoned the Emory and Clinch Rivers.

From Tennessee to Colstrip and across the Nation, the story is the same. We have no national conservation plan, no national energy policy, no regulatory reinforcement powers. And the biggest environmental disaster the country has ever faced, the Horizon Deepwater oil spill, has not propelled us any further toward passing a cap-and-trade bill through both Chambers. Senator REID said they were sidestepping a cap-and-trade bill for oil response legislation, but we haven’t seen that either.

Worse, as we mark 40 years of cleaner air under the Clean Air Act, it is heartbreaking that we must now fight to protect this monument law from attack. Some in Congress are considering weakening this landmark law, seeking to bail out polluters who continue to lobby for loopholes and giveaways that put Americans’ health and safety at risk.

We are poisoning our ecosystems, our animals and, yes, our frogs. We are poisoning our families, our communities, our Nation and our entire world. If we do not heed this canary song, we will only have ourselves to blame. And by the time we take notice, it may be too late.

CHAIRMAN SKELTON BIDS FAREWELL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARNAHAN). Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is recognized for 30 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to express my gratitude for the honor of serving in the House of Representatives and to share a few thoughts as I prepare to leave this distinguished body. About this time 34 years ago, my wife, our three boys, and I were surrounded by scores of well-wishers organized by my friend, Bob Welling, as we boarded a train at Warrensburg, Missouri, to travel to Washington, D.C. Shortly thereafter, I was sworn into Congress. I arrived eager to tackle the problems of the day and represent the people of the Fourth Congressional District. It was a political highlight for me.

The Roman orator Cicero said that “gratitude is the greatest of all virtues,” and I’m grateful to so many people. First, I’m extremely grateful and appreciative to the residents of Missouri’s Fourth Congressional District whose votes allowed me to serve as their Representative in this House for 34 years. Representing the fourth district has been a tremendous privilege.

I also want to thank my family whose support made it possible for me