

through all the U.S. Senators and attempt to try to get to the magic number of 60.

COMMEMORATING GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Today, I rise to honor and commemorate Greek Independence Day.

On March 25, 1821, Archbishop Germanos of Patras raised the flag of revolution over the Monastery of Agia Lavra in the Peloponnese, and "Eleftheria i Thanatos," which means "Liberty or Death," Mr. Speaker, became the battle cry. This day to start the Greek War of Independence was not chosen by chance because it coincides with the Greek Orthodox Church's celebration of the Annunciation to the Mother of God. Again, this was not a coincidence because to the Greeks of 1821, Mr. Speaker, the Mother of God was their champion and their protector.

As we all know, the price of liberty can be very high. Socrates, Plato, Pericles, and many other great minds throughout history warned that we must maintain democracy only at great cost. Our Greek brothers earned their liberty with blood, as did our American forefathers. The freedom we enjoy today is due to the sacrifices made by men and women in the past.

Like the American revolutionaries who fought for independence and established this great Republic, Greek freedom fighters began an arduous struggle to win independence for Greece and her people. After four centuries of Ottoman oppression, they faced what appeared to be insurmountable odds. This was the 19th century David versus Goliath.

The revolution of 1821 brought independence to Greece and emboldened those who still sought freedom across the world. It proved to the world that a united people, through sheer will and perseverance, can prevail against tyranny.

The lessons the Greeks taught us then continue to provide strength to victims of persecution throughout the world today. By honoring the Greek struggle for independence, we reaffirm the values and ideas that make our Nation great.

I take great pride in both my Greek and American heritage, and each time I perform my constitutional duties, I am doing so in the legacy of the ancient Greeks and early Americans.

□ 1050

As Thomas Jefferson once said:

To the ancient Greeks, we are all indebted for the light which led ourselves, American colonists, out of gothic darkness.

Throughout American history, Greece and her people have stood as a staunch and unrelenting ally of the United States. In 1917, Greece entered World War I on the side of the Allies,

as well as when they were invaded in 1940 during World War II. The enemy was then forced to divert troops to Greece to protect its southern flank in 1941. Alongside the American and Allied Forces, Greece played an integral role in defeating the enemies.

I would be remiss if I stood on the floor today and did not also pay homage to the American and Greek soldiers who fought side by side during the Korean War and, most notably, at Outpost Harry. As many of you know, each night the outpost was defended by only a single company of American or Greek soldiers. The Chinese had anticipated an easy capture; however, they did not anticipate the resolve of our soldiers to hold Harry at all costs and, therefore, making withdrawal not an option. Due to Harry's defense, the enemy ultimately called off their attacks due to the heavy losses suffered. This, ladies and gentlemen, was heroic.

For the first time in United States military history, five rifle companies together—four American and one Greek—would receive the prestigious Distinguished Unit Citation for the outstanding performance of their shared mission.

In expressing his sympathies with Greece revolting its Ottoman rulers, Thomas Jefferson said:

No people sympathize more feelingly than ours with the sufferings of your countrymen, none offer more sincere and ardent prayers to heaven for their success. Possessing ourselves the combined blessing of liberty and order, we wish the same to other countries, and to none more than yours, which, the first of civilized nations, presented examples of what man should be.

I stand here before you today to commemorate the Greeks who fought against oppression. I stand here before you today to celebrate that day, March 25, 1821. By doing so, we reaffirm the common democratic heritage we share. And as Americans, we must continue to pursue this spirit of freedom and liberty that characterizes both of these great nations.

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 54 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Loving and gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Help us this day to draw closer to You so that, with Your Spirit, and aware of Your presence among us, we may all face the tasks of this day.

Bless the Members of the people's House. Help them to think clearly, speak confidently, and act courageously in the belief that all noble service is based upon patience, truth, and love.

May these decisive days through which we are living make them genuine enough to maintain their integrity, great enough to be humble, and good enough to keep their faith, always regarding public office as a sacred trust. Give them the wisdom and the courage to fail not their fellow citizens, nor You.

And may all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. 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. Will the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. MCHENRY 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 3606. An act to increase American job creation and economic growth by improving access to the public capital markets for emerging growth companies.

The message also announced that the Senate concurs in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the bill (S. 2038), "An Act to prohibit Members of Congress and employees of Congress from using nonpublic information derived from their official positions for personal benefit, and for other purposes."

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 105-292, as amended by Public Law 106-55, and as further amended by Public Law 107-228, and Public Law 112-75, the Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, upon the recommendation of the Majority Leader, appoints the following individual to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom:

Katrina Lantos Swett of New Hampshire, vice Dr. Don H. Argue.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

LOWER THE PRICE OF GASOLINE AT THE PUMP

(Mr. MCHENRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, my constituents in western North Carolina and my neighbors and I are really upset about what's happening at the price of gasoline at the pumps.

What we see out of this administration and what we see out of some extreme environmentalists is an unwillingness to tap our natural resources to relieve the price at the pumps today. We've seen out of this administration Solyndra. We've seen scandal after scandal with this green energy policy lending coming out of the stimulus from a couple of years ago and out of liberal policies in Washington.

What my constituents want to see is real exploration so that we can lower the price at the pumps. That's what we deserve, and that's an action that I ask this administration to take.

REPUBLICAN PLAN TO END MEDICARE

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, here we go again. This week, the House will vote on yet another Republican plan to end Medicare as we know it.

America's seniors have given a lifetime of service to our Nation. They deserve better than to be left out in the cold.

If it becomes law, the Republican budget will end the Medicare guarantee of secure health coverage for our seniors and replace Medicare with a voucher system that would, instead, give our seniors a premium support payment.

Even worse, the Republican budget gives new tax breaks to millionaires, billionaires, and Big Oil companies. Economists agree the Republican budget plan would destroy 4.1 million American jobs by the end of 2014.

Last year the American people weren't fooled by the dangerous and unfair House Republican budget. If it didn't work the first time, it's not going to work this time.

Let us work together on a bipartisan budget that does not favor the super-rich over seniors and the middle class.

REPUBLICAN BUDGET

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

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss the

budget, contrasting the Republican plan, which would actually strengthen and extend Medicare, and the President's plan that would actually maybe allow Medicare to go bankrupt only 2 years later than it would otherwise.

One particular provision in the President's budget, a cut in reimbursement to critical access hospitals, would endanger access to nearby hospital care for millions of seniors, including those served by the 48 critical access facilities in Nebraska's Third District.

However, the Republican budget provides an alternative which ensures access to care without relying on arbitrary cuts. Our plan would also focus future Federal support on the sick and poor, while ensuring no change for those at or near retirement.

Madam Speaker, inaction now will only guarantee Medicare is more problematic in future years. We must act now to ensure it remains solvent for those who depend on it most.

POSTAL SERVICE FACILITY CLOSURE PROCESS

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise to express my deep concerns about the postal service's facility closure process.

Testimony at a recent Postal Regulatory Commission hearing brought to light details of a study kept secret because it projected billions of dollars in losses, despite facility closures. It also revealed mail volume would take a huge hit due to service standard changes.

Yet the postal service has no plans to change its course, further proof that the postal service is operating under an ill-conceived "decide now, justify later" strategy.

The Buffalo Mail Processing Facility recently developed a training session for postal employees that is now the template for a national model. Surprisingly, this facility is scheduled for closing. It doesn't make any sense.

My colleague GERRY CONNOLLY is asking the postal service to release the full results from the study, and I agree. We should not—and cannot—stand by and watch these facilities close without taking all facts into account.

THE JOB-KILLING EPA MUST BE STOPPED

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Madam Speaker, President Obama's job-killing EPA is at it again. Last year, the EPA proposed a rule on manganese alloy production that would close down the last two manganese alloy production facilities in America, costing over 500 direct American jobs and thousands of indirect jobs. One of the facilities is in my hometown of Marietta, Ohio.

These manganese alloys are vital raw components to the steel industry and are used in a wide variety of industries, including defense and the automotive industry, just to name two.

The proposed EPA rule would require scientifically unproven and costly process controls to be installed on the two facilities, and the EPA has ignored the warnings that if the proposed rule is finalized it will not be economically feasible for these plants to continue to operate.

Furthermore, if this rule is finalized, American steel companies will be forced to import this vital raw material from China or other foreign sources.

Today I will begin work with my House colleagues to ensure the EPA does not go forward with this job-killing rule.

STAND BEHIND OUR VETERANS

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

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise today to bring an important concern to my colleagues. Every one of us here has a sacred commitment to care for those warriors who are willing to serve us overseas, and one of our major concerns is making sure they're employed when they return back home.

What's alarming is the Department of Defense recently issued a change in their policy that will undermine our ability to do that. I'm referring to the Department of Defense Post-Deployment Mobilization Respite Account. This important policy is designed to give our brave warriors sufficient time to transition back into the private sector. PDMRA, as it's called, is an important tool that gives them that opportunity.

The change by the DOD reduces the number of paid transition days that were promised to our men and women after they deploy to the war zone. Halfway through, for many of them, their third or fourth deployment, DOD is now taking that back when their plans were set this spring when they returned home. While they're in Iraq and Afghanistan, that is certainly not the right thing to do.

Every single one of us wants to balance the budget and must focus us on that, simply not on the backs of veterans and warriors serving this Nation.

I ask my colleagues to join me in asking the Department of Defense to reverse course on this policy, hire our veterans, and keep our moral commitment to them.

□ 1210

HONORING DR. JEROL SWAIM FOR 48 YEARS OF SERVICE TO WIL- LIAMS BAPTIST COLLEGE

(Mr. CRAWFORD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)