

should pass the Safe Schools Improvement Act and the Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act of 2011;

We must stand up for real family values and support the Every Child Deserves a Family Act. All parents who wish to adopt a foster child deserve the chance to do so no matter their sexual identities;

Finally, I strongly support amending the Immigration and Nationality Act to grant same-sex partnerships the same rights and privileges as any other partnership.

One of the most important milestones in this struggle was the endorsement recently by President Obama and Vice President BIDEN of marriage equality for all Americans. With renewed momentum and with continued hard work, we will not only achieve marriage equality for our LGBT friends and families, but equality and fairness in all aspects of life.

Make no mistake, we are not striving just for tolerance; we are striving to make this country more equitable, just, and fair so that every man, woman, and child has the opportunity to pursue their dreams in a safe and accepting environment. Such freedom is the very cornerstone on which a livable community is established, where families are safe, healthy, and economically secure.

IN HONOR OF BRANDON ELIZARES

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

Mr. REYES. As a parent and a grandparent, I rise today with a heavy heart to take time to remember Brandon Elizares, a young man who left us 2½ weeks ago.

In our community, he will always be remembered for his smile, for his personality, and for his desire to serve as an inspiration to others. Brandon, like over 11 million people in this country, was gay, and like so many of his peers was being harassed and bullied until he took his own life on June 2 after being threatened with being buried alive and shot.

His last message echoed his infinite love for his family and his apologies for not being strong enough to continue taking the abuse that he had faced for over 2 years. His final words read, "My name is Brandon Joseph Elizares, and I couldn't make it. I love you guys with all of my heart."

High school should be an exciting time with an array of new experiences and challenges, but one thing it should not be is an environment in which young people worry about being bullied. Children in high school should be focused on their education, pure and simple. The sad reality, though, is that for many students their primary concerns don't lie in textbooks or in the upcoming exams but in the fear that they will not be accepted by their peers, that they will be physically

abused, or, in the case of Brandon and in the cases of countless others like him, that they may consider taking their own lives to escape the terrible pain.

Brandon was a young man who exemplified our best in the El Paso community. He embodied what this Nation looks for in all its young people. He was a best friend, a loving son, an aspiring model and artist, an excellent student, and, to a teenage girl who had contemplated suicide herself due to bullying, Brandon was a superhero and an older brother.

Like so many El Pasoans, I feel a personal connection to Brandon, and his death reflects the unfortunate truth that many young people today in our community continue to suffer.

□ 1010

I stand here in the people's House to ask my colleagues to help me in ensuring that Brandon's death was not in vain. I ask my colleagues to join me in support of the Student Non-Discrimination Act, H.R. 998, and the Safe Schools Improvement Act, H.R. 1648, to protect LGBT students from discrimination and from bullying in the schools. I also ask that you stand with me in support of the "It Gets Better Campaign," a project whose goal is to prevent suicide among youth by having adults and allies convey the message that these teens' lives will ultimately improve.

In our country today, unfortunately, the facts are clear. Fifty-six percent of students have personally felt some sort of bullying at school. Between the fourth and eighth grade in particular, 90 percent of students report being the victims of bullying. Nine out of ten LGBT youth reported being verbally harassed in school in the past year because of their sexual orientation. A victim of bullying is twice as likely to take his or her life compared to someone who has not been victimized.

Every day, thousands of children wake up fearing for their well-being as they go to school. If the Student Non-Discrimination Act and the Safe Schools Improvement Act were enacted today, we could provide students a sense of relief and some reassurance that their government is working to improve their lives by increasing awareness about their daily struggles. We owe that to Brandon and so many others who are suffering from bullying in our schools.

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 at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Richard Haynes, Salem Missionary Baptist Church, Lilburn, Georgia, offered the following prayer:

Our Father in heaven, we thank You for a brand-new day and for all of the opportunities and possibilities that comes with this day.

We thank You for another opportunity to be better. Thank You for another blessed opportunity to do better. We thank You for yet another chance to correct mistakes and make critical legislative adjustments for the betterment of this country and the world.

With a heart of gratitude for the many possibilities that this day brings, we declare with the Psalmist David that we will rejoice and be glad in it. May our rejoicings manifest themselves in good works that others may see, that You may be glorified.

In the name of Your darling Son, we pray.

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 Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WOODALL 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 a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 3314. An act to specifically authorize certain funds for an intelligence or intelligence-related activity and for other purposes.

WELCOMING REVEREND RICHARD HAYNES

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, the House is fortunate today to have Reverend Dr. Richard Benjamin Haynes as

our guest chaplain. He's a life-long servant of the Lord, growing up as the son of a Baptist minister. He now pastors Salem Missionary Baptist Church in my home county of Gwinnett. He's an avid angler, a fisherman. But first and foremost, he's a fisher of men. In the 23-plus years that he's led Salem Missionary Baptist, his congregation has grown from 100 to over 4,500.

Beyond the pulpit, Reverend Haynes is active throughout our community. He is past chaplain for the Gwinnett County Sheriff's Department, past director of the Statewide Ministers Convention, and currently member of the Gwinnett County Board of Education Advisory Board, to name just a few.

I'm honored to have him in Washington, D.C., with me today. His wife, Beverly, is with us today, as is his daughter Sheena, and his two grandsons, Benjamin and VaShon.

Reverend, thank you for your prayer today and thank you for your ministry every day.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. ROSELEHTINEN). The Chair will entertain 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

JOB AVAILABILITY IS NOT IMPROVING

(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. Madam Speaker, the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced yesterday that the number of job openings is at its lowest point in 5 months. The number of available jobs dropped from 3.7 million in March to 3.4 million in April. This fact shows that the President's failed policies are destroying jobs across our Nation and undermining families.

Unemployment has been above 8 percent for 40 months, not including the millions who are underemployed or who have lost hope and are no longer looking for a job. And yet the President still believes our private sector is doing fine. In fact, sadly, now the President is offering work permits to illegal aliens to take jobs from hard-working Americans.

It is past the time for the President and his liberal colleagues in the other Chamber to pass the dozens of bipartisan job-creation bills which are stalled in the Senate graveyard.

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

NATIONAL DAIRY MONTH

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

Ms. HOCHUL. Did any of you wake up to a nice bowl of cereal or an instant breakfast drink, like I did? Did you give any thought to the effort that went into bringing that fresh, wholesome milk to your table? Well, I sure do.

Just this past week, I was visiting the Koener farm in Wyoming County, the largest dairy-producing county in New York State, which is the fourth largest producer in this great country. But I didn't go just to have their milk; I went to listen to their concerns. And I saw a mother, father, brother, sister getting up before any of us see the light of day to do their work, tremendously hard work; but there's a lot of pride in what they do.

So as we proudly salute the millions of families across this country, in particular the dairy-farming families during National Dairy Month, we need to do more for these stewards of our national food security. We can give out proclamations and pay lip service to the 51,000 families across this Nation who supply us with these products, or we can actually listen to them and do something to help.

First of all, they want a farm bill. They want certainty to know what the deal's going to be, not later, not later this year, but right now.

Secondly, they need labor. That's the number one issue I hear when I'm visiting the Nobles and the other family farmers, the Zubers, the Coyne. Let's give them what they need.

LIFE OF A CHAMPION—RICHARD SCHOENSTADT

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

Mr. DOLD. Madam Speaker, I join with many others in the greater Chicago area in recognizing the life and recent passing of a tremendously respected, selfless, and inspirational leader in our community—Richard Schoenstadt.

Richard, no doubt, made a difference in this world with his tireless dedication to strengthening the U.S.-Israel relationship. His sweeping passion and energy for pro-Israel advocacy set a very high bar, which both elevated and advanced the commitment of so many good people to pro-Israel causes.

Richard believed in engagement and activism, and he lived his life knowing there was only one way to do things—the right way. He served his community as an outstanding example of leadership and earned a reputation as a brilliant and committed mentor to many, many people.

Like so many who were lucky to know him, I feel I was given a special gift in Richard's friendship. My thoughts and prayers go out to his family—his wife, Cindy, his daughters, Carly and Kate, and the entire extended Schoenstadt family.

May his memory continue to inspire us all to action, and may we in this

Congress now and forever remain dedicated to advancing the principles that Richard Schoenstadt so proudly stood and fought for throughout his life.

□ 1210

STUDENT LOAN RATES

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

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, access to affordable higher education is one of the reasons that our country is so great. As someone who lives in the gateway to America, I have seen firsthand the transformational power of education. However, access to higher education is now being threatened.

In less than 2 weeks, the interest rate for student loans is scheduled to double from 3.4 to 6.8 percent. This will make it extremely burdensome for students and families with limited financial resources to attend college. Just in the past 10 years, college tuition has increased by 28 percent. Middle class families are struggling to send their sons and daughters to school.

For many Americans, a college education is essential to future success. Over a lifetime, it is estimated that a college graduate makes an average of \$2.27 million. In contrast, those with only a high school diploma are estimated to make \$1.3 million.

The clock is ticking and we must act now. Congress should not block access to affordable education. Let us work together to keep student loan interest rates low.

WEST VIRGINIA DAY

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

Mr. MCKINLEY. Madam Speaker, the State of West Virginia is celebrating its 149th birthday today. Celebrations are being held as we speak throughout the State. I'm a proud seventh-generation West Virginian and honored to serve the State that I love.

Being a West Virginian comes with great honor, tradition, and pride. In concert with the restored State of Virginia, President Lincoln, on April 20, 1863, proclaimed that West Virginia would be admitted to the United States as a separate State. Sixty-one days later, on June 20, 1863, West Virginia became a member of the Union, the only State created during the War Between the States.

Every year, millions of people travel the country roads of our great State and view the beautiful scenic mountains, from the Shenandoah River to everything in between. Madam Speaker, I hope everyone enjoys this time-honored tradition of West Virginia Day and celebrates our wild and wonderful State.

Happy birthday, West Virginia.