

But I'm wondering if the gentleman has any thoughts on any one of those four bills.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I'll try and be brief. On the farm bill, the gentleman is correct. We're going to face some very dire consequences if we don't act on the issue prior to leaving here. And part of what I had indicated last week is that is something we are focused on and know we've got to deal with the issue prior to the end of the year.

On the issue of VAWA, as the gentleman and I have discussed many times on the floor, he knows that we can't go to conference with the Senate bill. The Senate bill has a blue slip problem.

I am speaking with the Vice President and his office and trying to resolve the issue of the differences surrounding the VAWA bill. This week I've actually been encouraged to see that we could very well see agreement on VAWA, and I'm very hopeful that that comes about. But I am encouraged about the discussions that my office is having with the Vice President's office right now, that bill being a high priority of Vice President BIDEN.

□ 1230

On the issue of the supplemental, I imagine, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman has seen the press reports that I have that the White House is anticipating sending up a \$60 billion supplemental request for damages related to Sandy, and I think tomorrow would be that day, at least according to press reports. As the gentleman may know, the FEMA Director testified to the House yesterday that the agency can meet its needs associated with the disaster through the spring. Approximately \$2 billion has been delivered, with about \$5 billion remaining in the disaster relief fund.

So, again, no one is here saying that we don't want to deliver the necessary aid to the victims, because that is a priority. But we're looking forward to receiving that request and taking a look at the numbers and the need to make sure we can move forward on that as well.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, postal reform. The gentleman and I have, yes, talked about this a lot and know that the issue has to do with the obligations of the Postal Service and how we can address those to create a more balanced prospect for the future to allow for its continuance, so we're looking at that as well. And the gentleman knows there's a lot of discussions, both bipartisan and bicameral, on that issue as well.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

Obviously, we are coming here to meet and we're focused on the fiscal cliff, but there are other things that we could be, hopefully, resolving in the time that we have available to us between now and the end of the year, and I would hope that we would do that.

I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT TO FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2012

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 11 a.m. on Friday, December 7, 2012, and further when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at noon on Tuesday, December 11, 2012, for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BERG). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

CONGRATULATING RYAN DEVLIN ON RECEIVING 2013 PENNSYLVANIA TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

(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 today to congratulate Ryan Devlin of Brockway, Pennsylvania, on receiving the 2013 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year Award. Ryan is the youngest educator to receive this esteemed award. His recognition also marks the 2nd consecutive year in which the recipient is from the Fifth District of Pennsylvania, which I'm proud to represent.

In 2009, Ryan completed his master's degree in education at California University of Pennsylvania. The following year he was hired by the English Department at Brockway Area School District. Today, he teaches British literature, creative writing, digital media, and computer science, and also serves as the adviser to the senior high gifted program.

Ryan is a teacher that goes above and beyond, a characteristic he has demonstrated year after year. For example, he's played an active role in introducing new technology to both students and staff and has worked to develop 21st century learning skills in a classroom environment that fosters creativity, innovation, and critical thinking. Most importantly, Ryan works tirelessly to help his students achieve success in the classroom.

Ryan Devlin, thank you for your commitment to the teaching profession. Congratulations.

TRIBUTE TO CONGRESSMAN JACK BROOKS

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as announced earlier by Congressman RALPH HALL, we lost a memorable Texas legislator, Congressman Jack Brooks, who proudly served his

southeast Texas district for 42 years after he was first elected in 1952, ultimately serving as dean of this House of Representatives and dean of our congressional delegation.

I knew Jack Brooks from my days in the State legislature, and he was one of my mentors when I first came to the House of Representatives. Representative Brooks was known for his tough persona and for chewing on his cigar while commanding a room. But he had a heart of gold. I remember sitting down with him when I first came to the House of Representatives. When he asked me what committee I wanted to serve on, I thought, well, I'll get what I need. I told him I wanted Energy and Commerce. He chewed on his cigar and said, You'll get Ed and Labor and like it.

But Jack was a great leader and a role model. He supported civil rights bills, refused to sign the segregationist Southern Manifesto in 1956, and helped write the historic Civil Rights Act of 1964 that banned racial segregation.

May we always remember Congressman Jack Brooks. He was a great man, political figure, U.S. Marines veteran, and a friend that I'll never forget.

PULSE OF TEXAS: GLENN FROM SPRING, TEXAS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Glenn from Spring, Texas, wrote me this:

Starting at the age of 15, I worked any job I could to help support myself through college—manually dug ditches, construction work, plant work. After college, I found an entry-level position in the field I studied. With hard work, I have been constantly employed for 36 years and now nearing retirement. I have never requested or received any Federal financial assistance. I enjoy contributing to my community and church. This is my American Dream.

Now the administration wants to increase the taxes I pay for being successful. As my grandmother would say, "If you can work, do so, and never let your pride or laziness get in your way to earn an honest living, and you will be rewarded in life."

Mr. Speaker, this administration wants to punish those who have lived the American Dream. During a recession, no one's taxes should be increased. This administration cannot tax and spend America into prosperity.

And that's just the way it is.

THREE YEARS OF CAPTIVITY FOR CUBAN HOSTAGE ALAN GROSS

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

Mr. RIVERA. This week marked the 3-year anniversary that a United States citizen, Alan Gross, has been held hostage in Cuba. He was arrested on December 3, 2009, for engaging in humanitarian activities to help the oppressed Cuban people.

Once again, the specter of a swap for Cuban spies being held in prison here has been raised. I would continue to encourage the administration to reject that notion, particularly when these Cuban spies are being held for participating in a murder conspiracy against other American citizens that were shot down over international water.

I would remind the administration that Cuba remains on the list of terrorist nations—nations that are specific enemies of this country and want to do harm to this country; a country that is harboring fugitives from U.S. justice, and a country where, just this week, peaceful dissidents in Cuba were attacked once again, according to reports from Cuba, by relatives of a political police captain on the island that attacked supporters of the peaceful group the Ladies in White.

Once again, I would urge, as I have done so many times, that the international community continue to denounce the atrocious human rights abuses on the island nation of Cuba.

FOREST SERVICE IN TOMBSTONE, ARIZONA

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

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. How many of us have heard of a little town called Tombstone? It's popped up in movies, American folklore. Guess what? The Forest Service seems hell-bent on ending its existence. This town is older than my State. Its water rights are older than my State. Yet the Forest Service is restricting the town from 87 percent of its water supply because there's Forest Service land around Tombstone.

This picture isn't a picture of a bunch of cowboys out having fun. They're not allowed to take a little Bobcat up the mountainside to get the springs to fix their water, so you have to go up by hand up a mountainside to remove the boulders.

Is there an adult in the Forest Service who has a lick of sense?

REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF COLD SPRING OFFICER TOM DECKER

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to lend my voice to the chorus of Minnesotans that are grieving at the loss of one of our finest, Cold Spring Police Officer Tom Decker, who was senselessly murdered while responding to a call for help.

A 6-year veteran of the force and a father of four, Officer Decker exemplified what it means to serve and protect. He loved his job and the community that he served, and those he served admired and respected him in return. He was absolutely one of the good guys: a dedicated husband, father, and police officer.

So today, Mr. Speaker, let us honor Officer Decker's life and the incredible devotion he gave to his community. He was a hero. But more importantly, he was an incredible human being. He and his service will be absolutely and deeply missed. Let us all keep Officer Decker and his loved ones, fellow officers, and community in our prayers.

THE 147TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an important day in American history. Tomorrow, we will celebrate the 147th anniversary of the abolition of that regrettable institution of slavery. On 6 December 1865, the State of Georgia became the 27th State to ratify the 13th Amendment, marking the three-fourths supermajority necessary to amend the Constitution. The 13th Amendment accomplished something that the Emancipation Proclamation did not and perhaps could not do. It declared the non-existence of slavery in the whole of the "United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

The triumph the 13th Amendment represents not just for African Americans but for all Americans should be celebrated every December 6.

[From the Raleigh News & Observer, Dec. 5, 2012]

THE DAY SLAVERY OFFICIALLY ENDED (By James A. Wynn Jr.)

The movie "Lincoln" highlights the struggle over the passage and ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, the historic proviso that officially ended slavery in America. The triumph that the Thirteenth Amendment represents—not just for African-Americans but for all Americans—should be celebrated, and we should celebrate it tomorrow, December 6.

No amendment has a greater or simpler declarative force than the Thirteenth. It states uncompromisingly that "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude . . . shall exist within the United States." The amendment also empowered Congress to enact laws to enforce its substantive protections.

The significance of the Thirteenth Amendment cannot be overstated. Among other things, it extended the phrase "We the People" in the Preamble to the Constitution to all Americans, it ended the implicit sanctioning of slavery in the original Constitution and it made clear that abolishing slavery was the sovereign will of the people.

The U.S. Supreme Court, with its notorious 1857 Dred Scott decision, left no doubt that the phrase "We the People" in the Preamble did not include slaves. According to the court, African-Americans were not intended to be included in "We the People" because "[t]hey had for more than a century before been regarded as an inferior order . . . and so far inferior, that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the Negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit."

The Thirteenth Amendment repudiated and effectively overruled Dred Scott and all it stood for, making clear that neither African-Americans, nor anyone else, could "just-

ly and lawfully" be enslaved in this great country.

Further, the Thirteenth Amendment ended the original Constitution's implicit sanctioning of slavery. Although the word "slave" appears nowhere in the original Constitution, the document tacitly accepted slavery. For example, as a result of an infamous compromise between Northern and Southern states, Article I of the Constitution based political representation in the House of Representatives on the population of "free Persons" and three-fifths "of all other Persons" in each State.

Thus, despite the Declaration of Independence's majestic pronouncement that "all men are created equal," the original Constitution indicated otherwise. With the Thirteenth Amendment, the Constitution expressly rejected slavery.

Finally, the Thirteenth Amendment, "ratified by the Legislatures of three-fourths of the several states," as required by Article V of the Constitution, abolished slavery through the sovereign will of the people and the democratic process. By contrast, the Emancipation Proclamation, an 1863 declaration freeing slaves in Confederate territory, was a wartime measure issued unilaterally by Lincoln.

The Thirteenth Amendment has been the subject of far less litigation than the Fourteenth. As a result, it has suffered unjust obscurity. And to the extent we celebrate it at all, we do so on the wrong day, February 1—the anniversary of the day President Abraham Lincoln signed a joint resolution submitting the proposed amendment to the states for ratification.

Addressing a crowd outside the White House after he signed the joint resolution, Lincoln remarked that the occasion was one "of congratulation to the country and to the whole world." In 1948, President Harry Truman declared February 1 "National Freedom Day."

Yet despite the symbolic significance of Lincoln's act, the Thirteenth Amendment had no legal effect until the states adopted it. Indeed, Lincoln's signature was unnecessary, and no other proposed amendment has been submitted to a president for signature.

The Thirteenth Amendment was put to all 36 states, including those formerly part of the Confederacy. Georgia became the 27th state to ratify the amendment, on Dec. 6, 1865, marking the achievement of the three-fourths supermajority necessary to amend the Constitution. The Supreme Court has held that constitutional amendments take legal effect when ratified. Thus, Dec. 6, 1865, marks the arguably most significant, and yet perhaps most unrecognized, date in African-American history.

Sadly, Lincoln never lived to see the Thirteenth Amendment ratified: He was assassinated on April 15, 1865, nearly eight months before Georgia provided the decisive vote in favor of ratification. No doubt Lincoln would have celebrated the day our nation constitutionally enshrined an abhorrence of slavery, the evil institution against which Lincoln had fought so hard.

No longer should the Thirteenth Amendment rest in silence. We should begin our holiday season by celebrating on Thursday the 147th anniversary of the Thirteenth Amendment's ratification. It is a day not just for African-Americans, but for all Americans, to commemorate our bettering our Constitution by spelling out the truth that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. rightly called self-evident: "All men are created equal."