

Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert material into the RECORD on the subject of Representative EMANUEL CLEAVER's retirement as chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. CURSON of Michigan. I, too, offer my congratulations to Representative CLEAVER for his service to all Americans as the CBC chair.

Millions of Americans are out of work through no fault of their own. Millions of Americans are relying on federally funded benefits to make ends meet as our Nation's struggling economy starts to recover. These unemployment benefits for the long-term unemployed will immediately and completely stop on December 29, 2012, unless we in Congress act. There is no phaseout. Every individual receiving those benefits now will be cut off cold.

The Department of Labor estimates that over 2 million Americans will lose their emergency benefits at the end of the year, including over 92,000 people in my home State of Michigan. Cutting off benefits for the long-term unemployed will have a devastating impact on middle class families who are struggling to stay out of poverty. They are critically important for necessities of life, rent, groceries, and utilities. Cutting off unemployment benefits will also hurt America's economic recovery, as economists predict that allowing the UC benefits to expire at the end of this year will reduce economic growth next year by \$58 billion.

Emergency unemployment benefits provide a particularly valuable economic contribution to the economy because financially stressed unemployed workers typically spend the benefits they receive quickly. Cutting off these benefits will hurt small businesses and add to the downward spiral of a failing economy. The Census Bureau reports that unemployment benefits, both State and Federal, reduced the number of Americans living in poverty last year by 2.3 million, including over 600,000 children. The Congressional Research Service estimates that in 2011, unemployment benefits reduced the poverty rate for families receiving them by 40 percent.

Cutting off unemployment benefits for too many Americans will only substantially increase hardship and poverty in our Nation. Now is not the time to deprive these Americans of a critical lifeline. Federally funded unemployment benefits should be extended by this Congress.

The best cure for unemployment is to create jobs. We can do this by investing in rebuilding our Nation's infrastructure, creating real jobs and real revenue by people working for a living.

STOP MILITARY RAPE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise to pay my respect and to honor Representative CLEAVER.

I am one of those many Members of the House who each week waits for that letter from Congressman CLEAVER. In each of these letters, he tells a life lesson, typically one to inspire us to be more hopeful, to be more willing to look at the issue from someone else's perspective, to be more compassionate, to be more loving. So I, too, share in his commitment to making this place a more responsive environment for all, and I thank Mr. CLEAVER for his great leadership as the chair of the CBC over the last year.

Mr. Speaker, I now would like to turn to my prepared remarks for this morning. I would like to read you some song lyrics that Air Force Technical Sergeant Jennifer Smith found on her government computer at Shaw Air Force Base. The lyrics of the song are called the "The S&M Man," and they go like this:

Who can take a machete, whack off all her limbs, Throw her in the ocean, and watch her try to swim?

The S&M Man.

Jennifer Smith reported this song and other sexually explicit documents to her superiors in the Air Force. "The S&M Man" is offensive, it's hostile, but to her male colleagues and superiors, the song is just tradition, a tradition that is alive and well, celebrated in song, patches, coins, offensive pictures, behavior, and the tacit approval of commanding officers.

A military tradition of demeaning women is not only sickening, but contrary to the fundamental principles of an institution founded in respect and honor and in discipline. It undermines our military's readiness and cohesion. Simply put, it gravely damages the military.

This is the 24th time that I have come to the floor to share the story of a servicemember, either man or woman, who has been raped, sexually assaulted, or harassed by fellow servicemembers. By the Department of Defense's own records and estimates, there are 19,000 rapes and sexual assaults each year in the military, and the VA reports that half a million veterans are affected by military sexual trauma.

□ 1050

Still, fewer than 14 percent of these victims actually report the crimes. And why is that? It is because so few are prosecuted—fewer than 9 percent—and a minuscule number end in conviction.

Air Force Sergeant Jennifer Smith has been subjected to this toxic culture for nearly two decades. She finally had enough. She filed a lawsuit; and in her lawsuit, she chronicles 17 years of abuse and a toxic culture—from 1995

until the present time—a culture that speaks of repulsive and destructive behavior by servicemembers and the tacit approval of their commanders.

Jennifer Smith joined the Air Force 17 years ago, when she was just 18 years of age. Her career has been filled with promotions and with medals and commendations by her commanding officers. She is one of the soldiers whom we so highly regard in the military. She has a record of astonishing accomplishments. In many of the commendations, she has been told that she is a "gifted mentor" who "goes above and beyond" and to "promote her now." Her career has also been filled with sexual harassment, assaults, and complacency—or worse—from her commanding officers.

During her five deployments in Iraq, Kuwait, Korea, and Germany, Sergeant Smith has endured assault by a master sergeant, who pushed her into a room, dropped his pants, and tried to force himself on her; harassment by a vice commander, who told her to relax and take her top off during a meeting; constant exposure to pornographic material and sexually explicit flight songs; and an attempted rape she was too scared to report.

Sergeant Smith endured sexual harassment and a hostile work environment for 13 years when she decided to speak up. It's time for all of us to speak up. It's time for all of us to expect from the military what we expect from the private sector—no hostile work environment.

She found pornographic materials in her squadron that included two "Doofer" books and magazines that were in her shared office. She reported them, but nothing was done.

Later that year, approximately two months after Technical Sergeant Smith had deployed to Iraq, she was assaulted outside of the gym. A man grabbed her from behind and physically dragged her to a dark place behind the building.

The man pushed her up against the wall and groped her. He had his arm under her neck, lifting her feet off the ground. He said, "I could kill you right now . . . and no one is going to miss you."

Technical Sergeant Smith was able to break free, and ran away as fast as she could. She went to work the next day and did not say anything about it because she feared retaliation and harassment.

This is happening now—in January 2012, Technical Sergeant Smith was back from Iraq at Shaw Air Base to manage pilot training. Whenever she checked her computer, she was bombarded with sexually hostile documents and videos. She reported the offensive material. Nothing was done.

In response to news coverage Sergeant Smith's formal complaint, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh ordered a service-wide sweep of workspaces and public areas for images, calendars and other materials that objectify women.

This sweep is inadequate, or worse. It appears to be a response to bad press rather than an aggressive tool to root out and expose this toxic culture.

The sweep which began on Wednesday, December 5th, provides a twelve-day window

for it to be completed after a very public notification.

This window and public notification intentionally or unintentionally provides service members the time to hide the content, and the opportunity for commanding officers to not find anything. Why did the Air Force tip off service members that the sweep was taking place? Commanding officers who performed the sweep also had an incentive not to find anything because it would reflect poorly on the command climate they are charged with maintaining.

This sweep also did not include individual desks, cabinet drawers, lockers, or military issued computer hard drives, where much of the content in the Smith complaint was stored.

Describing the need for a sweep, General Welsh explained, "In my view, all this stuff is connected.

If we're going to get serious about things like sexual assault, we have to get serious about an environment that could lead to sexual harassment. In some ways, this stuff can all be linked."

I agree with General Welsh. It's time to get serious about sexual assault in the military, but this must include credible and effective oversight actions to counter the culture that permits and fosters systemic harassment, assault, and rape.

And even with effective sweeps, it won't be as easy as taking down a calendar or deleting a computer file. Ending the epidemic of rape and sexual assault in the military will require a reboot of the military justice system, and addressing commander influence in these all too common cases. We owe Jennifer Smith and her many colleagues subjected to this gross harassment better. We don't tolerate it in the private sector.

MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING

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

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. While our Nation still grieves the loss of so many children and teachers and others in Connecticut, it is a time for Congress to begin a thoughtful dialogue on what we can do to deal with these mass-casualty incidences in our country. They have been going on for some time; but perhaps when we see the faces of children, principals, teachers and others, it will burn upon our hearts and motivate us to take further action. I want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that Congress takes the appropriate action in a thoughtful, willful, determined way and that it doesn't jump to quick conclusions as if simple fixes will prevent this from happening.

First, to the parents of children across America who are asking questions, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to offer some of this advice, and also in my background as a psychologist, it's important for people to remember this:

Parents should be asking their children what they have heard about the incident. We should listen to their concerns and their emotions. We should answer their questions with age-appropriate information. We should support

and comfort and reassure them of their safety at home and at school. We should observe and watch for symptoms of problems, such as changes in appetite, such as sleep issues, worries, aggression, anger, and sadness. We should protect our children from other media exposure and information that creates more fear and problems;

It is important for parents to call for professional help for their children if they are showing some concerns and symptoms of this beyond simple adjustment. For parents who have children who also have anger disorders, it is important for parents to review with school personnel locally how their schools are handling security and providing counseling assistance at school;

It is important for parents to pay attention to their own concerns and worries and to, over time, keep watch as concerns and symptoms may come later—even for those who are far distant from the location where this occurred.

For my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, I recommend that we remove the stigma surrounding mental illness in our talk about it and that we, first and foremost, address this as a mental health issue. We must commit to expanding access for those who are unable to receive treatment. If parents are not sure what to do, we need to provide them with information and assistance to get their children help. We have to review a wide range of things, such as television violence and video games in relation to violent behavior. We have to make sure that we are reviewing research that is being done with the National Institutes of Health, the National Institute of Mental Health, and our universities across the country. What we do not yet have is an answer to understanding how we can accurately predict those who will perform violent acts.

It is also important to understand that, for mentally ill persons, it is a diagnosable and treatable condition, that in the vast majority of cases there is no violence involved, and that, as a matter of fact, those with mental illness are 11 times more likely to be the victims of aggression rather than the sources of aggression. We can understand some of the risks: these often times are people between the ages of 15 and 25, and they generally tend to be males, intelligent; but we need to make sure we are identifying and providing resources for care for the families.

At the Federal Government level, I also recommend that Congress use a thoughtful approach in reviewing every single mental health program that we fund. In the Department of Justice, the Department of Education, Health and Human Services, the Department of Defense, we need a thorough and thoughtful review of what we spend and how it is spent even if it gets down to the level of family and community.

Understand, for example, in the Children's Mental Health Services program, it was funded at \$117 million in

fiscal year 2012. The President has proposed a cut of nearly \$29 million of this; and with sequestration, it will be cut by a further \$8 million. Should we make those cuts? Is that a program that is using this money effectively and efficiently? Let's talk about these in a candid and honest way with Members of Congress and the community.

Let's also understand that about 58 million Americans suffer from a mental disorder in a given year. About one in four people will have some diagnosable illness; and if one seeks treatment, one can get help. We also need to understand that, with psychotropic medication, over 70 percent of the time it is prescribed by a non-psychiatrist. With persons who have other problems with that—drug interactions—or who have other problems not quite dealt with, it is important to make sure that insurance plans funded by the Federal Government, State governments, and private insurers are appropriately allowing people to be treated for this.

We have many directions in which we need to go on this. Let's make sure we don't go in the wrong direction.

HONORING THE REVEREND EMANUEL CLEAVER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE of California. I rise in honor of our outgoing Congressional Black Caucus chairman, Congressman Reverend EMANUEL CLEAVER.

Chairman CLEAVER has been a truly outstanding leader of the Congressional Black Caucus during the 112th Congress. We were fortunate to have his wisdom and steady—mind you, steady—leadership as we have navigated through some of the most contentious debates that I have witnessed during my time in Congress.

Faced with a job crisis unlike any that we have seen in recent history, Chairman CLEAVER instituted a very successful job initiative. With unemployment at record levels, with three to four unemployed persons for every single job opening, with 50 million in poverty, and with unemployment disparities like none we have ever seen, he understood that it was extremely important not only to talk about the need for jobs but to take action to bring jobs to the people, and that's exactly what Chairman CLEAVER and the Congressional Black Caucus did with last year's jobs tour, by launching jobs fairs in districts across the country, and we actually connected people with real jobs.

Chairman CLEAVER also helped lead the fight against the efforts to disenfranchise millions of voters. He has been a strong advocate for protecting the most vulnerable among us in ensuring that the social safety net stays in place and in pushing for a budget that is balanced and fair.

Now, as we are all trying to make sense of this so-called "fiscal cliff," I