

memorable and usually ended with broad smiles as you parted company. One thing that Charlie and I did have in common is that we played college football, and we were both defensive linemen. And at least in our own minds, the older we got, the better we had been.

Charlie Wilson was an honorable man, a trusted ally, and a worthy opponent. I ask my colleagues to join in wishing his four sons and nine grandchildren our condolences. His 14 years of government service in Ohio and in Washington, D.C., is a legacy they should always cherish and be proud of. God bless Charlie Wilson.

NOAA PROPOSES FURLOUGHS

(Ms. EDWARDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, like many Americans, I began my morning this morning with a check of the local weather forecast. It actually helps me answer questions, important questions, such as what should I wear, do I need an umbrella, or is a storm approaching that's going to tie up traffic.

The weather forecast is really important, but too often it's taken for granted. And, unfortunately, thanks to the Republican insistence that sequester cuts take effect, our access to these timely and reliable weather forecasts may be impacted negatively.

On Monday, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency, which includes the National Weather Service, proposed 4 furlough days, with a potential for 10. The cash-strapped Weather Service provides predictions for the ever-more-frequent extreme weather events, such as Superstorm Sandy, the historic drought impacting our agricultural sector last year, and the tornados that ravished the South in 2011.

On a daily basis, it impacts the lives of Americans across the country. Even today, severe storms are ravaging the midsection of the country. The Weather Service is already understaffed. Sequestration could further deteriorate forecasting abilities. So, once again, they've made indiscriminate spending cuts our top priority. We need to stop this and protect our economic safety and our national security.

IN RECOGNITION OF FIRST RESPONDERS

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

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, our hearts and prayers go out to those in Boston and Massachusetts and all the States where people came from to participate in the marathon.

I, in particular, Mr. Speaker, wanted to stand and thank those first responders. They're firemen and they're police

officers and they're paramedics and they're doctors and nurses, and sometimes they're just somebody who never expected to be in that situation at that time. And yet, our fellow countrymen respond; they're there.

And right now we have people responding in the Senate. They've put themselves out there. They've run to the challenges. It is the American spirit. They touch the heart of all of us.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say God bless them, and God bless the United States of America.

SUPPORT BACKGROUND CHECKS ON GUN SALES

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, this is what my constituent, Barbara Kelty, wrote to the Louisville Courier-Journal this morning:

While polls continue to say that a majority of NRA members and a sizable majority of the American people support background checks and a majority of citizens support limiting magazine size, a majority in Congress at this point apparently does not favor either.

How can that be? To me, it is evident that these Members of Congress do not feel obligated to us, the people who elected them, whom they represent. Rather, they feel beholden to the gun lobby which fattens their campaign chests. And it is obvious that the gun-making industry, which does not condone or support gun violence, benefits from the emotional rush of citizens exercising the right to buy protection for their families after these tragedies.

We, the citizens, must do our bit to lobby Congress and remind them that our will takes precedence.

Ms. Kelty is right. In Kentucky, three out of four people support background checks for every gun sale. More than 90 percent of the American people, and three-quarters of NRA members, support background checks, which have stopped nearly 2 million people from illegally buying guns. Still, 40 percent of guns are purchased without a background check.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in the Senate to listen to the vast majority of Kentuckians and the American people and support background checks.

SENATE IMMIGRATION BILL WORSE THAN WE THOUGHT

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it's hard to believe, but the Senate immigration bill is worse than we thought.

Despite assurances, the border is not secured before almost everyone in the country illegally is given amnesty. So the bill guarantees there will be a rush across the border to take advantage of massive amnesty.

And the bill offers amnesty to far more illegal immigrants than we

thought. In addition to most of the 11 million illegal immigrants already in the country, it offers to legalize their relatives outside the country and even others who have already been deported home. So current immigration laws are shredded.

The good news is that the House Judiciary Committee will come up with a better plan.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

(Mr. GALLEG0 asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GALLEG0. Mr. Speaker, I rise today encouraged that comprehensive immigration reform is moving now that a framework has been released by our colleagues in the Senate.

The 23rd Congressional District, which I represent, runs some 800 miles along the Texas-Mexico border and includes five ports of entry. No other congressional district shares a larger border with Mexico.

After more than two decades, I'm encouraged that our friends in the Senate are taking steps and we finally have this framework. I look forward to working in a bipartisan and bicameral way to get it done this way.

Our values teach us that our families should stick together and that hard work, not circumstance, should shape our future. I believe that our Nation becomes stronger as more people pledge allegiance to our flag and commit themselves fully to our Nation and to our economy.

Last week I asked the Senate Gang of Eight to give special consideration to members of the armed services who risk their lives every day for our country and our families—it's particularly important to folks and families at Joint Base Lackland in San Antonio, Laughlin Air Force Base in Del Rio, and Fort Bliss in El Paso—and requested that comprehensive immigration reform eliminate the 3- and 10-year bar on spouses for spouses, prevent the termination of petitions of spouses and children of fallen heroes, and streamline the naturalization process for those deployed overseas.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to getting it done this year.

TAXES

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

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, as you all know, Monday was tax day, so it's an appropriate time to talk about the need for tax reform. We need a simpler, more competitive Tax Code that's flatter and fairer so that we can create jobs and put Americans back to work.

We need a simpler code. In fact, the code, when you include all its regulations, annotations, and explanations, totals 74,000 pages. And according to

the latest estimate from the United States Treasury, Americans spent 6.1 billion hours complying with the Tax Code. We also need a more competitive Tax Code. The United States has the highest corporate tax rate in the world.

Simplifying our Tax Code and closing loopholes for everyone will help create an environment that encourages job growth and increases wages. The Ryan budget is based on such reforms. These reforms can help get Americans back to work.

RECOGNIZING THE MERCED COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION TASK FORCE

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, in Boston, we were reminded how vulnerable we all are as Americans and how important it is that we stay together.

Today, I rise to recognize the Merced Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Task Force. This hardworking organization in the San Joaquin Valley that I represent is the 2013 recipient of the Lois Haight Award of Excellence and Innovation from the Victims' Rights Caucus, of which I am a cochair.

The task force is an innovative collaboration of local leaders that was formed in 2006 in response to gang-related violence throughout the Merced community. The task force makes Merced a safer place by educating the community about violence, promoting character development, and providing information to families and, most importantly, our youth.

From gang awareness workshops to Merced County's first anonymous "text a tip" line, the task force has contributed greatly to our Merced community and throughout the area.

On behalf of the Victims' Rights Caucus, congratulations and thank you to the Merced Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Task Force.

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TAX REFORM

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

Mr. STEWART. Like all Americans, my heart and prayers go out to the people of Boston.

Mr. Speaker, I'm grateful for the opportunity to stand and speak on a very important issue today. It may not be as interesting, it may not grab as much attention as any other issue, but I'm not aware of any other thing that we could talk about that has the potential to invigorate our economy, to expand personal freedoms, and restore faith in our government and, frankly, in our future like this issue could. Of course I'm

talking about meaningful, strategic tax reform.

I was a business owner and CEO for 12 years. Because of that, I understand in a very personal way that the current tax system is rife with waste. It invites abuse. Worst of all, it creates so much uncertainty as to make it difficult, if not impossible, to make good decisions about our future.

Again and again, we read stories and we see examples where the current Tax Code punishes success while ignoring the economic impacts of poor government policy. We can do better than this. We have an opportunity to do better than this. We must do better. Everyone will benefit.

Let's do this now.

REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS IN BOSTON

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, last Monday, men and women from around the world traveled to the beautiful city of Boston to take part in the 117th running of the Boston Marathon.

But this longstanding American tradition, this celebration of athletic achievement was shattered at 2:50 eastern time when two bombs went off along the finish line, killing three spectators, including an 8-year-old child, and injuring nearly 200 more.

At times like this, words fail to capture the sense of our disbelief, the pain in our hearts, and the anger we feel towards anyone who would do such great harm to so many innocent lives.

Although we do not yet know the identity of the perpetrators, what we do know is that our country will not rest until they are brought to justice. The American people will emerge from this horrific incident stronger and more united than ever before.

Like all Rhode Islanders since last Monday, my thoughts have remained with the people of Boston and all of the victims of this vicious act of violence and their loved ones, and I pray that the passage of time might bring them some level of comfort.

TAX REFORM

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

Mr. DESJARLAIS. Mr. Speaker, this week, many of my constituents filed tax returns. Unfortunately, their taxes weren't the only thing that they had to pay. Hardworking Americans will spend \$168 billion completing their taxes under our country's 4-million-word Tax Code.

America's tax system is broken and simply doesn't meet the needs of the 21st century economy. It is time for a simpler, fairer, flatter code, one that eliminates special interest loopholes to ensure that everyone pays what they

owe. But what we don't need is higher taxes.

The government is already poised to take in record revenues this year, yet the President insists on calling for another \$1.1 trillion in new taxes. Levying more taxes on families and businesses won't create jobs and won't lead to economic prosperity. Rather, we need to cut spending, balance the budget, and rein in excessive government.

Comprehensive tax reform is something that the American people overwhelmingly support and something that House Republicans remain committed to addressing.

GUN REFORM

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

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, background checks may not have changed what happened at Sandy Hook, but I hope Sandy Hook changes what happens here.

Ninety percent of the American people agree that expanding background checks for gun sales is the right thing to do. These checks will help keep guns out of the hands of the mentally unstable, convicted felons, and domestic abusers who threaten the safety of our families and our communities.

It's time for Congress to listen to common sense and the voices of the American people.

I say to my Senate colleagues: You came here to work for the American people, not just to work for your reelection. We're here to do a job, not just keep our jobs.

I support Senators MANCHIN and TOOMEY for coming together in a bipartisan way to push forward this legislation for expanded background checks. All we need is 60 Senators who have the courage to stand up and do the right thing.

Commonsense measures to fight tragedy shouldn't be a heavy lift. This should be an easy vote.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor here to announce that the Senate released their Gang of Eight immigration bill sometime around 2:45 a.m. this morning. It didn't take very long for the secret group in the House to release their support for the bill. They had time, apparently, to analyze the 844 pages that are in this bill.

I've had time to analyze a little bit of it. Mr. Speaker, what it says is this: they want to instantaneously legalize everybody that's here in America illegally, with a few exceptions, in case they decide to enforce the law against them.