

The brutal method Dr. Gosnell used to ensure death from a botched abortion, severing the spinal cord of a baby born alive, is disgusting. I pray we are all shocked and disturbed by what has been revealed about abortion during this trial.

While Dr. Gosnell stands trial, there are more than a million babies who die from abortion each year in the United States. That's almost two times more deaths than caused by cancer in the U.S. every year and two times more than heart disease.

Abortion is taking an innocent life, and we have to stand against it. Life is precious. Children are precious. People talk about choice when we talk about abortion. I encourage more Americans to choose life and protect the most innocent in our Nation.

FAA SEQUESTER

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

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, the sequester is still hurting our constituents. And despite votes today, Congress is continuing to turn a blind eye to many communities affected by these draconian, across-the-board cuts.

Yes, we should not furlough air traffic controllers and other FAA employees. It's not smart, and I know as a Representative from Nevada that it is unnecessarily hurting tourism and local economies.

But House Republicans continue to ignore the impacts of the cuts on Head Start, on Title I schools, and on the Meals on Wheels program for our seniors. Why is that? Why are these students and seniors still on the chopping block? Do their interests not count in the Halls of Congress?

These mindless cuts are harming our kids' futures and our seniors' well-being, and this Congress is long overdue in paying attention to their needs. I've said before, Mr. Speaker, I'm willing to work with anyone from either side of the aisle to come up with solutions to replace the sequester, but we need to do it for all communities, not just one.

MEDICARE MARKET PRICING PROGRAM ACT OF 2013

(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, in the legislative process, effective communication can help bring attention to important issues and advance good policy. Unfortunately, all too often rhetoric doesn't match reality.

Take, for example, Medicare's so-called competitive bidding program for durable medical equipment. The program was intended to reduce Medicare costs and ensure that beneficiaries have access to quality services. In

practice, the system denies competition, which hurts small business providers, and worsens access to quality services, which harms seniors.

In fact, despite the program's catchy title, more than 240 market auction experts and economists have warned that the Medicare bidding program harms competition and will ultimately hurt patients.

Today I've joined in support of legislation, H.R. 1717, the Medicare Market Pricing Program Act of 2013, which would replace this program with one that's not just labeled competitive, but is competitive, and maintains beneficiary access to quality items and services.

I encourage my colleagues to join in support of the Medicare Market Pricing Program Act of 2013.

COMMENDING HIGH SCHOOL COMPETITION ON THE CONSTITUTION

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, there's an amazing collection of young people from around the country that are gathering in our Nation's Capital this weekend. They are part of the annual competition on the United States Constitution. It is my pleasure to visit with my constituents from Grant High School from Portland this morning, young people who have dug deep into the Constitution. They're passionately prepared to defend the principles, and are developing skills that'll last a lifetime.

It is unfortunate that Congress has failed to support the Classroom Law Project budgetarily. I would hope that there's an opportunity to reflect on what these young people are doing and what we could do in addition if we stepped back up and provided the resources so they could be available for more young people. At a time when America faces challenges and there is a breakdown in the other body not even being able to approve gun background checks something that 90 percent of the American people want, we ought to be supporting young people who are doing this important work of democracy.

I congratulate Grant High School, teacher David Lickey, and their coaches who are working with them. Regardless of the outcome, they are already winners.

□ 1300

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1461

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRADY) as a cosponsor of H.R. 1461.

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

There was no objection.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

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

Mr. LAMALFA. With the darkness and decay that has descended upon this country, we have a remedy, I'm glad to report here. This coming week, next Thursday, we can celebrate the 62nd Annual National Day of Prayer in the United States by official proclamation.

It's played a vital role, prayer, in the formation of this country by our Founders; and we have this opportunity, not just on this day, but every day, as we do at the beginning of the session in this body. I encourage everybody to take part.

I have artwork next to me here that hangs in my office here, and there's a prayer for guidance that George Washington once wrote and offered, and I would like to do an excerpt of that, given time.

That excerpt will be:

Increase my faith in the sweet promises of the gospel; give me repentance from dead works; pardon my wanderings, and direct my thoughts unto Thyself, the God of my salvation; teach me how to live in Thy fear, labor in Thy service, and ever to run in the ways of Thy commandments.

I'd advise read the rest, but please remember National Day of Prayer, May 2, next week.

THE EFFECTS OF THE SEQUESTER

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

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I have a one-sentence bill, H.R. 900, that repeals the sequester, and many of my colleagues have already begun talking about it and joining with me on it today.

These cuts are currently diminishing our Nation's education quality, our research output, leaving more with untreated mental illness, more hunger, more homelessness and fewer Federal criminal prosecutions. The sequester means that we'll have 2,100 less food inspectors for examining the safety of our food.

If Congress is unable to craft a bipartisan agreement that takes sequestration off the table, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 900, my one-sentence bill to repeal the sequester.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under guidelines consistently issued by successive Speakers, as recorded in section 956 of the House Rules and Manual, the Chair is constrained not to entertain the request until it has been cleared by the bipartisan floor and committee leaderships.

THE VETERANS BENEFITS CLAIMS FASTER FILING ACT

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

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Veterans Benefits Claims Faster Filing Act. This no-cost legislation will shorten the time that veterans must wait for their claims to be decided.

Nationally, the average wait time for a claim is nearly 300 days. In El Paso, Texas, the veterans I represent wait an average of 439 days. We must do better.

My legislation will require the VA to report and post processing times and award rates for claims filed in a variety of ways, from the fastest way, which is a fully developed claim filed online, to the slowest way, which is filing an underdeveloped claim on a non-standardized piece of paper.

Informing veterans that they will wait the least amount of time if they file fully developed claims online will create an incentive to do so. Fully developed claims are consistently turned around in 100 days or fewer. Imagine a veteran in your district saving months of waiting unnecessarily for a decision on their claim.

We owe a lot to our veterans, and we can uphold our end of the bargain to them by ensuring that they receive the benefits they have earned and depend on in a timely manner.

I urge all of my colleagues to support the Faster Filing Act.

SAVE THE CHILDREN OF THE NORTH FOREST INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, over the past couple of weeks, in my district, we've been working with a very small school district by the name of North Forest Independent School District, of about 7,000 young people, bright, energetic and prepared to reach and fulfill their future.

Unfortunately, the State of Texas chooses to close that school, not because they are not meeting the Leave No Child Behind, but because one high school did not meet the threshold by two students. Over the next couple of days, we expect to hear from the State to ask this district to terminate all employees.

We offered to the State a collaborative response of having them to work with public charters and work with the public school system, keeping it a public school system. We again ask the State of Texas, the Governor of the State of Texas, who has refused to give Federal funds for education back to the districts, you know why? Maybe it's because of sequester.

But more importantly, I want to save those students, I want to save those employees, and I believe we can do it by eliminating the sequester.

I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 900, a one-sentence bill to eliminate the sequester. These children at the North Forest Independent School District deserve to be able to graduate

from a public school. It is shameful that they will be getting a notice of their beloved teachers, fire them all.

I will go home to the district and stand against it. I ask for relief from the U.S. Department of Education and all of those who believe in educating our children and being responsible to our teachers who teach them and love them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. As the Chair previously advised, that request cannot be entertained absent appropriate clearance.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DEMETRIO RODRIGUEZ

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

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Today I'd like to take a moment to honor the life of Demetrio P. Rodriguez, a great American we lost earlier this week in my hometown of San Antonio. Demetrio passed away at the age of 87 after a long and rewarding life, a life that literally transformed public education in Texas and across the Nation.

Demetrio, like many of the folks who grew up on the west side of San Antonio, was a humble man. Born into a migrant farm-working family, he served in the Navy and later in the Air Force Reserve, and he worked for years at Kelly Air Force Base.

In 1968, with 15 other parents, he led the charge to change the way we do school finance, not only in Texas, but in the United States of America. He objected to the fact that property-poor districts were so far outspent and given much more money than property-rich districts in Texas. He led that charge.

In 1973, the Supreme Court said that education wasn't a fundamental right, but he didn't give up the fight. And in 1989, the Texas Supreme Court ruled that the children of Texas should have an equal education, no matter their income.

He was a great man. He'll be sorely missed. He was a fighter and a champion of people.

THE SEQUESTER HAS REAL CONSEQUENCES

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Some of my Republican colleagues were raging that air traffic was slowed by a so-called political manipulation of the sequester. I joined most of my House colleagues in voting to make a special exception for the FAA because we do want traffic to flow.

But I have a news flash: cutting billions of dollars from the budget in a sequester in a meat-ax way does have real consequences.

Furloughs are also occurring at the Departments of Defense and Agriculture, at the U.S. Customs and Bor-

der Protection. Head Start is cutting 70,000 slots for early childhood education. In my neighboring Indiana, there's a raffle being held to decide which children are going to be kicked out of the Head Start program.

Four million Meals on Wheels are going to be cut for seniors who are depending on them.

The Medicare Anti-Fraud Division is being cut. That makes no sense. And the sequester is projected to cost 750,000 American jobs this year.

So, Mr. Speaker, I too ask unanimous consent to bring H.R. 900 to the floor that would repeal the sequester.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. As the Chair previously advised, that request cannot be entertained absent appropriate clearance.

□ 1310

CORRECTING THE ENGROSSMENT OF H.R. 1765, REDUCING FLIGHT DELAYS ACT OF 2013

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that in the engrossment of H.R. 1765, the Clerk strike "account" on page 2, line 14, and insert "accounts."

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

There was no objection.

REMEMBERING MAXINE SMITH

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, today, in Memphis, Tennessee, a great lady passed away—a lady who is as fierce, as brave, and as courageous a woman who's ever lived in this country: a lady by the name of Maxine Smith.

Maxine Smith was the executive secretary of the NAACP from 1962 up to around 2000. She served on the Memphis City School Board from 1971 to 1995 and was on the National Board of the NAACP. She helped take Memphis beyond Jim Crow and beyond segregation into a great city in America and America's mainstream.

Because the scourge of discrimination and desegregation stained this country, she was not allowed to enroll at Memphis State University. So she went to Spelman and then to Middlebury and got a master's degree. She went to work to help others and spent her life fighting against discrimination in all ways and all manners.

She served on the State Board of Education in Tennessee and made sure people got a good education, whether they were White or Black; and she overcame all of the hate and discrimination that she faced. She was a beautiful woman who lived Dr. King's dream—seeing people and judging them by the content of their character and not the color of their skin.

She was a person to be emulated, honored, and remembered. She had a