

THE DARRELL GWYNN
FOUNDATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Darrell Gwynn Foundation, a national organization that for almost 12 years has made its mission "to provide support for people with paralysis and prevent spinal cord injuries."

On Friday, May 9, this important foundation will be holding an event in my congressional district to assist in providing power wheelchairs to children and young adults with spinal cord injuries.

Darrell Gwynn, son of former NHRA drag racing world champion Jerry Gwynn, seemed destined to replicate his father's achievements when his life took a tragic turn at the young age of 28. While participating at a demonstration race in England, Darrell's car broke apart, then veered into a retaining wall at 240 miles an hour.

□ 1015

He sustained life-threatening injuries, but faith and determination allowed Darrell to survive this ordeal.

In response to his new circumstances, Darrell was motivated to help others who face similar challenges, and he founded the Darrell Gwynn Foundation. The Foundation's cornerstone, the Wheelchair Donation Program, provides the gift of mobility and independence to those living with paralysis.

Darrell's spirit and relentless efforts to offer support to people living with paralysis have earned him the respect and adulation of his colleagues. My good friend for many years—decades, actually—Angel Pardo, president of Spinal Cord Living-Assistance Development, said the following:

Mr. Gwynn is passionate about his work, and works hard to help others. Despite being quadriplegic and a partial arm amputee, he often works 7 days a week.

Thank you, Angel.

Mr. Speaker, the work that Darrell Gwynn and Angel Pardo do every day on behalf of individuals afflicted by this condition is very important. There are an estimated 12,000 new cases of spinal cord injury and paralysis each year. Over 36 percent are a result of car accidents.

I know from the many personal stories from my constituents and friends just how devastating these injuries can be. The toll is often not exclusively physical. The emotional and financial tolls can be substantial, both on the victims and their families.

The provision of a power wheelchair can return confidence, freedom, and independence to a victim. This life-changing piece of equipment, however, comes at the considerable cost of approximately \$25,000 a chair, and that is where the Darrell Gwynn Foundation comes in. They are committed to improving the victims' quality of life by

providing each with a power wheelchair.

I encourage all members of our south Florida community to attend the Darrell Gwynn Foundation event on Friday, May 9, at Casa Larios Restaurant in Miami.

Congratulations, Darrell and Angel. May you continue to help so many afflicted individuals.

OPTIMISM

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak of the optimism of this Nation and of her people. Frankly, we do live in the greatest Nation in the world. Sometimes we are questioned when we say that, but I say it proudly and with a spirit of humbleness. I know that because on faraway shores and lands there are men and women who wear the uniform proudly.

This morning, in our own House of Representatives, we held a reception for participants of the Wounded Warriors program. These individuals are in a number of Members' offices. Many of us look forward to that opportunity, and they continue to serve.

So I know as President Obama rises tonight to speak to the Nation, he will have a sense of optimism, which I will enjoy and support. He will note, however, that as we are optimistic, we must provide that optimism and economic opportunity for all of our brothers and sisters, citizens and persons, in the United States of America.

It is well known that we have made great strides. We no longer have the horrific mortgage collapse, though we are still working with homeowners. We don't have the debacle on Wall Street because, as Democrats, we worked hard to fix that problem, as Wall Street continues to thrive. Of course, we have taken ourselves out of the doldrums of a deep depression—or recession—in 2008 and 2009 with a powerful stimulus package which today, in Houston, Texas, has seen the retrofit of the Mickey Leland Federal Building. With \$90 million, they put people to work fixing a building where citizens come for services.

That is the American way of investing, and not handouts, as has been described by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. When are we going to recognize that the investment in human resources is really the answer?

Thank you, Mr. President, for understanding that.

Theodore Roosevelt said:

The man of great wealth owes a peculiar obligation to the State, because he derives special advantage from the mere existence of government.

That is true. Wealth inequality must be fixed, and it must be fixed now. In the U.S., income inequality has been rising steadily over the past four decades, reaching levels not seen since the late 1920s.

The President has signed an executive order, which I congratulate him on, understanding that you cannot live on less than \$10 an hour. It needs to be more. That is investing in the American way. That is generating the jobs so that individuals can then spend their dollars and then more jobs are created.

So tonight I don't want there to be a retrenching. I don't want us to be overwhelmed with this myth of debt and deficit so much so that we cannot invest in the education of our children and we can't fix the horrible situation of individuals not having access to higher education.

Who in their right mind would continue to allow those who are chronically unemployed and need unemployment insurance to suffer, as they are doing? Who would allow four out of five beneficiaries who have at least one adult that they are taking care of, children that they are taking care of, or multiple adults, who would allow 50 percent of those who have a college education and 36 percent who have a high school education and are not able to get jobs, and not extend the unemployment benefits on an emergency basis? Who would allow the over 9 in 10 that live in households with a total income under \$75,000 that need this extension of unemployment benefits so they can pay their rent or mortgage, who would allow such a crisis?

We are doing it right here, and we should be optimistic.

I have introduced legislation to extend unemployment for a whole year. It is an emergency. Then I introduced H.R. 3888, which indicates that those who are on unemployment benefits can get training to redirect their career with a stipend—their unemployment benefits do not cease—so that they can come back to what they want—the very stories that I listened to as I went to career recovery and resources fairs.

Mr. Speaker, tonight, I will be optimistic. I will be optimistic for Maggie, a 25-year-old Army veteran who has to get food stamps. She makes \$10 an hour, 6 days a week, in order to save for paramedic training. She is the very example of someone that we can provide that training for so she can invest in the community, even though she tried nursing but did not have the money to finish. Or, maybe I can speak of Ms. Aguilar, who lives in my State of Texas, which refuses to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.

Where is the optimism, Mr. Speaker?

So tonight, Mr. President, you do what is necessary for the optimism of this Nation. It is the greatest Nation in the world. We will stand with you as you invest in human resources, create jobs, provide unemployment extension, and raise the minimum wage to cure wealth inequality.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of an important week for my community, but also for our Nation as a whole.

This is the 40th annual Catholic Schools Week, and it is a time to recognize the importance of parochial education on the fabric of our community and our country. This year's theme truly encapsulates the critical mission of Catholic schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge, and Service. These are important things to teach our children.

Yesterday, I was happy to be able to stop by St. Mark's School in historic Bristol, Bucks County, and meet with schoolchildren there. St. Mark's School has been providing a top-rate education for Bucks County families for over 125 years, and, like all Catholic schools, their connection to their community is deep and vital.

Parents are involved at the school. They were there at the school when I arrived, running a book fair for the students. The teachers sacrifice greatly for the children, as do the families make sacrifices to send their children to St. Mark's and to other Catholic schools throughout our country.

As a Catholic school graduate, the husband of a Catholic school teacher, and a parent also, I understand how important it is to draw attention to the academic, the faith development, and the community service excellence performed year-round in Catholic schools.

Mr. Speaker, there are few things more important to a parent than the success of our children in and out of the classroom. One of the most important decisions a parent makes is the school that will educate their children.

National Catholic Schools Week is a time to recognize the importance of school choice for families looking to increase access to opportunity and the American Dream for future generations, and also to say thank you to the parishes and schools that serve our children this week and every week.

HONORING FALLEN TOLEDO FIREFIGHTERS

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, tonight, the President will deliver his State of the Union address to the Nation. Our Nation is great because of the patriotism, strength, and self-sacrifice of our people.

In that spirit, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give honor to two fallen Toledo firefighters, Stephen Machcinski and James Dickman.

Mr. Machcinski is survived by his parents, sister, and brother. Mr. Dickman is survived by his wife, 3-year-old daughter, 1-month-old son, and parents.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of these brave men. These

heroes responded to a two-story apartment building fire where people were reported inside. Toledo Mayor Michael Collins said it best:

The average person would run in the opposite direction than they do, but that is their profession.

As we all go about our busy lives every day, we often fail to recognize that we likely owe our way of life to someone else because of their sacrifice. Firefighters, police officers, and other emergency and law enforcement personnel put their lives on the line for us every single day. We should all take a moment every now and then to say thank you to these extraordinary citizens.

Our hearts go out to the families who lost such brave and generous loved ones. May they be comforted with the knowledge that Stephen and James died in a noble profession founded to protect and serve our people and our Republic. They accomplished their mission for our city. We are forever indebted to them, and are flying flags over this Capitol today in their memory.

CALLING FOR AN END TO VIOLENCE IN UKRAINE

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I want to reference as well this morning the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which reads:

Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Sixty-five years after the ratification of this most important document, police in Ukraine continue to brutally fend off protesters and journalists, who have been demonstrating for over 2 months in the bitter cold for their human rights and democratic freedoms. We know there have been countless injuries, and now, sadly, there have been five deaths.

Kiev, a beautiful and historic city, now resembles a war zone, covered with ash and burning fires. The situation in Ukraine grows more dire everyday, and we in Congress have the responsibility to stand with Ukraine's freedom marchers.

I call on our fellow Members to support the passage of H. Res. 447, which supports the democratic aspirations of the people of Ukraine and calls for condemnation of the regime's undemocratic practices. We implore President Yanukovich and the opposition leaders to advance the cause of freedom for all the people of Ukraine.

Last evening, Ukraine's parliament rightly repealed its early passage of the anti-free assembly laws, and its prime minister resigned. These are hopeful signs to calm the unrest.

As we gather this evening to learn about the state of our own Union, let us not forget the state of our trusted allies around the world. I ask President Obama to please draw attention to the economic and political crisis in Ukraine here tonight.

No more blood should be shed in Ukraine. The world community looks to Ukraine to live up to the magnifi-

cent nation she can be, linking East and West, North and South. Her potential is unlimited.

Ukraine's people, who have suffered so much, not just currently, but over the last century, are owed their most deserved day in the sun. History's clock is ticking. May God be with them.

□ 1030

MASSACHUSETTS SNAP RECIPIENTS WILL BE HARMED BY FARM BILL HEAT AND EAT CUTS

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we will be voting on a 950-page-plus bill that no one has read. This is a bill, the farm bill, which was first made available to us late last evening.

To make matters even worse, Mr. Speaker, we are told that we will only have 1 hour of debate on this bill, and we are not even to have a rule on the bill. We are going to have a rule that incorporates the farm bill with an abortion bill. What they have to do with one another, I have no idea.

But it is clear what is going on here, and that is that the leadership of this House does not want anyone to know what is in that bill. One of the things that is in that bill, which I find reprehensible, is an \$8.6 billion cut in the SNAP program.

The SNAP program exists to make sure that people in this country do not go hungry. On November 1, last November 1, a cut of \$11 billion went into effect. The recovery moneys ran out. Congress did not renew them, so everybody on SNAP, all 47 million people, received a cut.

Food prices didn't go down. The economy hasn't gotten much better, but their food benefit went down. And their benefit is, on average, about \$1.40 a meal per day. So those who think that this is some sort of generous benefit have no idea what they are talking about.

So we cut their benefit; and they are now ending up spending more time at food banks and food pantries, looking for ways to put food on their table so that their kids don't go hungry; and we bring a farm bill to the floor that cuts that program by another \$8.6 billion.

Now, supporters of the farm bill say, well, really it could have been a lot worse. You should just be happy it is \$8.6 billion. You should declare victory.

Well, those people who are going to be adversely impacted by that \$8.6 billion cut don't feel a lot of victory.

Yes, it is targeted. It is targeted at those individuals who are on this so-called "Heat and Eat" program. These are poor people who get a little bump up in their benefit to put food on their table, mostly elderly people, mostly disabled people.

So we are going to go tell them that they are going to get significantly less