

Right now, I think House Republicans are at a crossroads. Many, including the Speaker, I think, want to get the immigration issue resolved before the 2016 elections. They know that the next few weeks offer the only chance Republicans have to both solve a tough American issue and get some of the credit for doing so.

Others are already crouching in their anti-Obama bunkers and want to play it safe this year, regardless of the consequences for the future. Conservative columnist Juan Williams calls this the “trap” Obama is setting for the Republican Party. Williams knows, as I do, that President Obama can act with or without Congress, given the latitude he already has under existing immigration law. Williams wrote in Roll Call:

The House’s lack of action could open the door for Obama to take unilateral action on immigration reform.

And I will tell you, he will take unilateral action.

He goes on to state:

The political result would be to make heroes of the President and his congressional allies while leaving Republicans to explain why the Tea Party element in the House refused to deal with the immigration crisis.

He further states:

Such an outcome would cement political loyalty between the growing Latino vote and Democrats. It would also stir the Democrats’ liberal debate for the 2014 midterms.

Williams is right. You have 18 legislative days to write the policy, whip the votes, and pass the bill. That is not a lot of time.

Let us work together to put my 200 Democrats together with 60, 70, or 80 Republicans that we can get on board to get a bill—or a series of bills—passed, and let’s get it done for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to the Republican majority that they do it for Abraham, they do it for George. Do it for any little boy or any little girl in America who wants to grow up to be a Republican President. But most of all, do it for our country.

BREAKFAST AT THE BELL

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Donna Lombardi, the director of nutrition for the Worcester Public Schools in my hometown of Worcester, Massachusetts, for receiving the Healthy Start Leadership Award. This award is being presented by the EOS Foundation, a Massachusetts-based foundation that is committed to expanding universal free breakfasts in the classroom across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

I want to thank Donna for her tireless work at the Worcester Public Schools. She is a leader in our efforts to provide quality, nutritious meals to all kids in our school system. She recognizes the critical importance of not

only providing nutritious meals to our kids, but also ensuring that every single child in our school system starts off the day with a healthy, nutritious meal.

The breakfast at the bell plan, where every child would receive a nutritious meal in the classroom after school starts, is an important part of the schoolday and should be implemented in every school across this country. There are two important reasons why universal free breakfasts, or breakfast at the bell, is the right policy for every school to implement.

First, we know that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Kids physically and mentally develop better when they eat healthy meals. That is a simple fact. But we also know that kids learn better on a full stomach than they do on empty ones. Hungry kids do not learn. And that breakfast each morning is as essential to their ability to learn as a textbook.

Second, universal breakfast served at the beginning of school ensures that every kid gets to eat and not just the ones who get to school early. It removes a stigma that adults may not recognize but that children feel: it is that feeling that a child is different, that because they are poor, they need to come in early to get the food that they don’t have at home.

Donna Lombardi is a leader in breakfast at the bell, and I am proud of the fact that she is leading Worcester Public Schools in this direction, and I am proud to call her my friend.

Now, unfortunately, not everyone is on the same page. Many school districts and employees are opposed to this idea. There are some who think that it is too onerous on schools, that it creates too much waste, and that it isn’t a good use of time in the morning. I think those are shortsighted excuses, and I am dismayed that there are those who continue to cling to these notions that have been disproven time and time again. We know what works, and we know what doesn’t work; and we know that breakfast at the bell is one of those policies and programs that works.

I want to congratulate the EOS Foundation for its hard work and dedication on this issue.

Most importantly, I want to say that Donna Lombardi is an incredible individual with the passion and talent for providing nutritionally balanced meals for the children of Worcester. Sadly, as in every community in our country, too many of our children go to bed hungry in Worcester. Donna has made it her mission to feed them, to reach them first thing in the morning with a nutritious school breakfast and throughout the day with school snacks, school lunch, after-school meal programs, and summer meals too—school by school, classroom by classroom, child by child. The magnitude of her impact on the lives of thousands of children inspires me and inspires all of us, and I am delighted to congratulate

Donna on this much-deserved recognition.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would say to my colleagues, let us learn from Donna’s example and replicate what works all over this country, and let us be inspired by those who work to end hunger in our country and make that our mission as well. We can end hunger now.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, in New Town, North Dakota, right in the heart of the Bakken oil patch, an elderly woman once told an FBI agent that she knew human trafficking was taking place in her community because she saw young girls taking different men back and forth to various rooms. And when the agent asked the woman for her name so they could investigate, she was too afraid to report it.

The horrific nature of this crime can shock individuals and communities to such a degree that they are unable to conceive such heinous crimes are even possible, much less taking place right in their rural communities.

All around the country, law enforcement and public citizens are encountering difficulties in identifying human trafficking victims, and our justice system is too often ill-equipped to assign the appropriate penalties for a fast-growing international crime, such as human trafficking. And what is worse, too often, the victims are treated as criminals, dropped into a judicial system not equipped to provide the health and protective services that these women and young girls often need.

I held a roundtable with my friend and colleague, Representative ERIK PAULSEN from Minnesota, earlier this month in Williston, North Dakota. Along with being the fastest growing micropolitan in the Nation, Williston is newly dealing with an increase in human trafficking. It was encouraging to hear how local law enforcement and victims’ advocates in Williston are working hard with Federal agents and officers to reverse the trend and to prevent trafficking while restoring the lives of victims, but they are very much in need of a series of Federal laws designed to aid the very important work that they are doing.

To show our commitment, Congress will enact legislation like the Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Act, which ensures minors who are trafficked are treated as victims and not as defendants, and the SAVE Act of 2014, which helps address the root of the problem by making it a Federal crime to profit from knowingly advertising for the commercial exploitation of minors and trafficking victims.

Mr. Speaker, we know the most important work to stop human trafficking will be done on the ground by

our State and local law enforcement, Federal agents, community members, victims' advocates, the faith-based community, and others, but they need our help to make laws to better support their efforts. So I urge all of my colleagues to support the five bills that will be on the floor tonight to help get our criminal justice and victim support systems caught up with a rapidly evolving international crime.

THE INFANT AND TODDLER CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT

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

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, today, as a country, we face many economic challenges: income disparity, stagnant wages, and an alarming rise of children living in poverty. Luckily, all available research points to a solution. High-quality early childhood education and care is as close to a silver bullet as we are going to find. It supports working families, creates economic opportunities for women, and provides a great start for our youngest learners.

But today, hardworking families spend an extraordinary percentage of their income on child care. Even then, they are not always sure it meets the needs of their kids. Mr. Speaker, that is why I am introducing a bill today to help ensure quality care for infants and toddlers. As a mother of three, I understand that parents want nothing more than to make sure their kids are healthy, safe, and thriving.

More than 6 million children under the age of 3 will spend time in child care this week. At this tender age, when brain development is at its peak, when neuropathways are being formed every second by the millions, that is when quality child care matters most.

Today I encourage my colleagues to help these children and their families succeed by supporting the Infant and Toddler Care Improvement Act.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 26 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Charlie Martin, Bethel Baptist Church, Vilas, North Carolina, offered the following prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, today, Lord, we enter Your gates with thanksgiving and enter Your courts with praise. Thank You for Your blessings for America, our home. I call on You, O Lord, to bless our land again.

In the Bible, we read, "If My people which are called by My name shall humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from Heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Father, You know that I trust You and Your holy Word. I call on You this morning to place Your great hand upon this Congress and upon this people.

Please grant Your wisdom in their decisions and leadership on behalf of all Americans. For all of us who love this land and call America home, we call on You together today.

In Jesus' name, amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND CHARLIE MARTIN

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, Pastor Charlie Martin has preached the Gospel for 45 years.

Charlie Martin attended Trinity College of Florida and continues to serve as vice president of that institution. After college, he began working with youth at his home church in Arkansas.

In 1971, he was called to pastor First Baptist Church of Indian Rocks in Largo, Florida. The Lord blessed the 37 years he spent there, with the church growing from fewer than 100 to over 6,000 members under his care.

Largo is also where Pastor Martin met Stephanie, his wife of 38 years. Together, they have raised five children—Shannon, Christian, Somer, Samara, and Colt. All five children are grown and happily married, and the Martins delight in their 16 grandchildren.

For the past 7 years, Pastor Martin has led the good people of Bethel Baptist Church in Vilas, North Carolina. We are blessed to have this man of God

living and working in our community in the mountains of North Carolina, and I want to thank him for opening the House with a prayer today.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FLEISCHMANN). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

COMMEMORATING THE 239TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MECKLENBURG DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

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

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 239th anniversary of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence.

This date marks an important moment in our Nation's history, when brave North Carolinians, bound by their common pursuit of freedom, became the first Americans to declare independence from the tyrannical crown of Great Britain. This courageous act of defiance paved the way for our great experiment in democracy.

It is no wonder that, with these type of bold leaders, British commander General Cornwallis was unable to hold his occupation of the city of Charlotte and was, therefore, prompted to write that it was a "hornet's nest of rebellion."

Mr. Speaker, it is also worth noting that, on this very day today, the Charlotte Bobcats—excuse me, the Charlotte Hornets—finally and rightfully get their buzz back.

I am so proud of our heritage and for the leadership that the State of North Carolina continues to provide this great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, on this festive day, I want to congratulate the city of Charlotte and all North Carolinians, and I welcome each and every one of my colleagues to join me in celebrating this important moment in our history.

THE EPIDEMIC OF AUTISM

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to an epidemic in our country. We have seen rates of autism rising rapidly in the past two decades. Today, 1 in 68 children is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder.

This weekend, I attended the Autism Speaks walk in Chicago. I was inspired by the stories of young men and women and the realization that there are opportunities for all those living with autism.