

changed is that the need, if anything, is greater and the path forward is even easier.

I just completed a press conference with my good friend TOM PETRI and with President Ronald Reagan. President Reagan, in 1982, in his Thanksgiving Day radio address, explained why we needed to raise the gas tax.

He said: "One of our greatest material blessings is the outstanding network of roads and highways that spreads across this great continent. Freedom of travel and the romance of the road are vital parts of our heritage, and they help make America great.

"We simply cannot allow this magnificent system to deteriorate beyond repair. The time has come to preserve what Americans spent so much time and effort to create, and that means a nationwide conservation effort in the best sense of the word.

"So I am asking Congress when it reconvenes next week to approve a new highway program that will enable us to complete construction of the interstate system and at the same time get on with the job of renovating existing highways. The program will not increase the Federal deficit or add to the taxes that you and I pay on April 15. It will be paid for by those of us who use the system, and it will cost the average car owner only about \$30 a year. That is less than the cost of a couple of shock absorbers.

"So what we are proposing is to add the equivalent of 5 cents a gallon to the existing highway user fee, the gas tax, which hasn't been increased in the last 23 years. The cost to the average motorist will be small, but the benefit to our transportation system will be immense. The program will stimulate 170,000 jobs, not make-work projects, but in real, worthwhile work in hard-hit construction industries, and an additional 150,000 jobs in related industries.

"Perhaps most important, we will be preserving for future generations of Americans a highway system that has long been the envy of the world and has truly made the average American driver king of the road.

"Thanks for listening, and until next time, God bless you."

That is a speech that could be given by any of us or by President Obama—and should be. Congress did return after that holiday, and President Reagan and Tip O'Neill more than doubled the gas tax. What has not changed is that we haven't raised the gas tax in 22 years. It costs the average family \$377 per year in damage to their cars.

If we increase the gas tax according to my proposal, H.R. 3636, it won't create 300,000 jobs; it will create 1.5 million family-wage jobs across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I understand people don't like the gas tax. I don't like the gas tax. I want to raise it, index it, and then abolish it and replace it with something that is sustainable. But in the meantime, raising the gas tax is

the only viable approach, as verified by two Presidential commissions that reported to President Bush.

We have been asleep at the switch. It is time for us to step up. At a time of dramatically falling gas prices—23 cents on average in the last month, and they are projected to continue going down—now is the perfect time to step up, to raise the gas tax slowly over the next 3 years, rebuild and renew America, put family-wage jobs across the spectrum, and make our communities more livable, our families safer, healthier, and more economically secure.

All it takes is a little leadership and courage. Like Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill did 32 years ago, I think we can do that now, and we should.

RANGER CHAPLAIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on something very dear to my heart. The duty of a military chaplain is to help guide the hearts and minds of the soldiers that he serves with or she serves with, and that comes from a perspective of a background of their own faith, but also the respect of the faiths of others that they serve with, making sure that all feel a responsibility to not only do their job, their mission, but also to themselves, that they are being all that they can be in their own careers, in their own missions.

But just again, here we go again, as the old saying goes. Recently, in my district, an Army chaplain gave a suicide awareness and prevention brief as required by the Army and received a letter of concern in his official record. A letter of concern is a means to admonish a soldier's actions.

The chaplain did not infringe upon anyone's rights, did not receive any complaints from anyone being briefed that day; but after the chaplain's actions were reviewed, he was considered to have not violated any Army regulation or policy, yet his negative counseling remains, simply because at a time in which our society is dealing with soldiers and airmen who are struggling with depression and struggling with suicide rates, he had the audacity to share his own experience with depression and how his faith helped him.

What is a chaplain supposed to do except to share from his own heart in a way that is encouraging to others whether they have faith or no faith? I hope—no, I pray—this counseling record will reflect soon his innocence.

The Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers decided to characterize the chaplain's briefing as evangelism in mental health training. The MAAF goes on to say that receiving Christian doctrine as a way to combat depression and suicidal thoughts would increase

the amount of suicides in the military. This statement belittles the belief of soldiers who feel their faith may help them through difficult and troubling times.

Apparently, the MAAF feel only their systems of beliefs are worth propagating and any others are irrelevant, if not damaging, to a soldier's emotional health.

As a military chaplain, all I have to say to the MAAF is that if it protects and helps someone value life, keep their own life, then what they need to do is be reminded that they have an opinion, and so does everyone else.

It is time that they lived up to their own thoughts, that thoughts matter, and that what this chaplain did should be reversed. It should not reflect on his record. When you have someone actually in the game trying to help, it is not the time for little people on the outside to criticize. They need to get a new direction and a new focus, and this chaplain needs to be restored and this letter removed.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 4924. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to enter into the Big Sandy River-Planet Ranch Water Rights Settlement Agreement and the Hualapai Tribe Bill Williams River Water Rights Settlement Agreement, to provide for the lease of certain land located within Planet Ranch on the Bill Williams River in the State of Arizona to benefit the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, and to provide for the settlement of specific water rights claims in the Bill Williams River watershed in the State of Arizona.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 2917. An act to expand the program of priority review to encourage treatments for tropical diseases.

SUPPORTING THE ABLE ACT

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

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, my intention this morning was to get up and try to be eloquent when talking about the ABLE Act, Achieving a Better Life Experience, which we will vote on later today, but since yesterday, I have received four emails from parents in North Dakota whose words are far more eloquent than mine could ever be.

I will submit all of their words into the RECORD, but I want to share a few of the highlights from these important emails from my constituents.

Roxane Romanick writes:

How exciting that we are at this point where the dreams of the act passing may come true in the next days.

After writing a bit about the legislation itself, she writes this about her 15-year-old daughter, Elizabeth:

Due to her diagnosis of Down syndrome, she has the support of an individual education plan at school. The school will start working on a transition plan for her within a few months. Passage of the ABLE Act will mean that we can start a savings account for her in much the same way that we did for her brother.

Jamie Christensen writes:

Every parent of a child with special needs has a unique journey, but one thing is universal. We try to do the best we can to ensure a life well-lived for our child. Our unique journeys have another similarity—many of us agonize about the future.

She talks about their journey with their 7-year-old son, Grady, who has crystal blue eyes and a full head of hair. She writes:

Like many families, we want to care for our children equally, doing what we can to give them tools to help them reach their full potential. Shortly after Grady was born, I opened a 529 College SAVE account for Grady's big sister. It was then that I realized I had no idea how to plan for Grady's future. The ABLE Act is a huge step forward in easing this anxiety.

Aaron and Rachel Schuler from Bismarck, who I know very well, have a 4-year-old daughter, Ella. Actually, Ella will turn 4 years old on Christmas Eve. Ella has two siblings, Isaac and Clara. They talk about Ella with great hope. They write:

She will be a crazy teenager, graduate and go to college, work a full-time job and have a real, meaningful relationship. We believe this for her. That is what makes the ABLE Act so important to Ella and to people all over our great country. It will help her reach and fulfill the goals she desires.

How awesome.

And just while I have been sitting here in the Chamber, Marijo Schwengler of Fargo writes about their journey, about their 2-year-old son, David, one of four sons, who is diagnosed with Down syndrome. She writes:

I pray that seven weekly therapy appointments with an early intervention teacher, physical therapist, occupational therapist, and speech therapist will help him be the best that he can be. We dream big for David. Why shouldn't we?

Indeed, why shouldn't they? But she cites this fact:

David must remain "poor" in order to receive the services he needs. The ABLE Act would mean that we could start saving for David's future today.

What an awesome promise that is.

My words would be inadequate, Mr. Speaker, but I submit these and the extended comments in these emails that I received in the last two days on behalf of Elizabeth and Grady and Ella and David and their peers, the thousands and thousands of families around our country who, in many respects, have a bias against them because they are disabled or have disabled children.

The ABLE Act that we will vote on this afternoon, Achieving a Better Life Experience Act, will go a long ways toward leveling that playing field, im-

proving their lives, and improving the lives of our entire country.

DESIGNER GENES,

A DOWN SYNDROME SUPPORT NETWORK,

December 2, 2014.

Hon. KEVIN CRAMER,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REP. CRAMER: Many thanks to you and everyone in your office for all of the work that you've done on the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act. How exciting that we are at this point where the dreams of the act passing may come true in the next days.

As you know, Designer Genes of North Dakota has been actively following the progress of the ABLE Act with many of our other Down syndrome association partners across the country. We believe that the opportunities that the ABLE Act affords to our individuals with Down syndrome will make a world of difference to their futures.

Last spring, my own daughter, Elizabeth, turned 15. Due to her diagnosis of Down syndrome, she has the support of an Individual Education Plan at school. Required by law, the school will start working on a transition plan for her within a few short months. Passage of the ABLE Act will mean that we can start a savings account for her in much the same way that we did for her brother. For too long we've treated individuals with significant disabilities with an institutional bias meaning that their need for support and care is based on old history of requiring institutionalization which included extreme poverty. Since birth, Elizabeth has had the opportunities afforded to her by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act and has been fully included in her community. These two laws establish support without impoverishment and help to equal the playing field for persons with disabilities. The ABLE Act will now do the same because it recognizes that needing support is inherent to persons with disabilities but does not require that they should live a life without realizing their hope and dreams.

Elizabeth is a go-getter. Every day she has a new dream and just yesterday she was googling recording equipment on the internet because she's decided she wants to own a recording studio. I have no idea where this dream has come from but it's very real. She's convinced she's moving out of the house when she's 18 and heading to college. I wish with all my might that the dream will come true for her (well maybe not the moving out of the house part). These dreams come because every day she walks, learns, and belongs beside her peers at Century High School, because someone fought for her right to do so.

Thank you for your work on this effort, Rep. Cramer!

ROXANE ROMANICK.

Every parent of a child with special needs has a unique journey, but one thing is universal. We try to do the best we can to ensure a life well-lived for our child. Our unique journeys have another similarity—many of us agonize about the future.

Our journey includes being blessed seven years ago with a beautiful baby boy with crystal blue eyes and a massive amount of blonde hair. His name is Grady and he has Down syndrome. Like many families, we want to care for our children equally, doing what we can to give them tools to help them reach their full potential. Shortly after Grady was born, I opened a 529 College SAVE account for Grady's big sister. It was then that I realized I had no idea how to plan for Grady's future.

After attending informational sessions, agonizing over it and meeting with a lawyer,

we learned that we really had little to no options to help ensure a life well-lived for Grady. A few years later I lost my dad who was just 56, and my anxiety heightened. Just what would Grady's future look like if my husband and I died?

The ABLE Act is a huge step forward in easing this anxiety. It comes down to simple things, like making sure there is enough money for things like his over-the-counter allergy medicine and expensive lotion that are not covered by insurance, and assistive technology if communication continues to be a struggle for him into adulthood. And it means really big things, too, such as allowing us to dream about a future that could include college, work and independence. This dream just became more real because we now have a vehicle to save for supports such as education, housing, a job coach and transportation.

And specifically for Grady, it allows him some of the same rights and opportunities to work and save for his own future, just like the rest of his peers. Doing so will help him to reach his full potential, ensuring a life well-lived that all parents want for their children.

JAMIE CHRISTENSEN.

Our daughter Ella was born on Christmas Eve just about 4 years ago. Her birth was both shocking and confusing as she was born with Down Syndrome. Quickly we began to realize what a blessing she is through her smile, laugh, and genuine love for others. While we understand that Ella's life will carry certain hardships, we know that she is an absolute gift and bright light to this entire world. Our lives have been fully enriched by Ella and we plan to give her every opportunity to grow and chase her dreams. She will be a crazy teenager, graduate and go to college, work a full-time job, and have real meaningful relationship. We believe this for her.

That is what makes the Able act so important to Ella and to people all over our great country. Our goal from the beginning is to provide every opportunity for Ella. The Able Act will help her to reach and fulfill the goals she desires to do. We must do everything we can to protect the benefits Ella and others with Down Syndrome will receive, while giving them every opportunity in life.

AARON SCHULER.

Last night at supper table, I told my family of 6, I am going to write a letter of support for the ABLE Act. They asked why so I told them. Without even considering that David's disability may limit his workability, my 8 and 10 year olds replied, "Well mom, if David can't save his own money when he is older [he is 2 years old now], can't he just give us his money and then we can save it for him. And when he needs his money we can give it back to him?" Hmmm. . . .

My name is Marijo Schwengler and I am mom of 4 wonderful boys ages 10, 8, 5, and 2. My youngest son David has Down syndrome. My husband and I were not expecting this diagnosis and we were not prepared. At first, we cried and mourned the loss of the dreams we had had for him. We did not understand what it means to have Down syndrome. We worried about how we would tell his older brothers. I worried about my older sons hating me because we have now burdened them with a 'special needs' brother. As scared as we were we promised to love David and give him the best of everything just like his older brothers.

In the days, weeks, months, following David's birth, we've learned he was just like our other boys he just does things on his schedule. He plays, he wrestles, he cries, he knows what he likes and doesn't like. He

loves books, balls, and super heroes. He knows over 30 sign language words. And just like my other children at his age, I do not know where his cognitive ability will be when he grows up. What I do know is all individuals with Down syndrome experience some kind of cognitive delay. I pray that 7 weekly therapy appointments with an early intervention teacher, physical therapist, occupational therapist and speech therapist will help him be the best that he can be. We dream BIG for David! Why shouldn't we?

My son is young and only time will tell what services and programs he may or may not need when he is an adult. But one message is clear: David must remain 'poor' in order to receive the services. Even if the services may not provide for all his needs adequately. We can't save for David in the same way we can for his brothers. We can't teach David to save his money. As child, I grew up in family that lived paycheck to paycheck, I promised myself to change that for my kids. I am in a position to do that but David's little extra chromosome prevents me from saving in a 529 for him or letting him have his own little savings account at the local bank.

The ABLE Act would mean that we could start saving for David's future today. We could teach David the importance of saving. We could make sure that David's brothers do not have to feel financially burdened by the cost of taking care of their littlest brother. The fear of my son's hating me because of David's Down syndrome was silly, his brothers love him to pieces and they would do anything for him. David and everyone with Down syndrome or any other special need deserves the right to save money for their future. Even my 8 and 10 year old boys get it! Please pass the ABLE Act.

MARLJO, JASON, JACOB,
ANDREW, SIMON AND
DAVID SCHWENGLER,
Fargo, ND.

CONGRATULATING ROBERT CASHELL ON HIS RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of Georgia). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. AMODEI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AMODEI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the retirement of a member of Nevada's public service varsity team, Reno mayor Bob Cashell. Bob was not a native of Nevada, but like most people in Nevada, he got there as quick as he could.

He has been there for a long time and has had various titles during his public service career: chairman of the board of regents of the university system, Lieutenant Governor of the State of Nevada, and finally—maybe finally—the mayor of the city of Reno.

Bob is one of those folks who is blessed with vision that does not have many shades of gray. It is pretty black and white with the mayor when you talk to him, whether formally, informally, or whatever.

Words like "gosh" and "gee whiz" are not used in his vocabulary much. He possesses an incredible volume to his voice, uses it often, and is happy to share with you his thoughts.

Bob also has the support of an outstanding family: his wife and partner in life, Nancy, and his sons. His family has been key in terms of the fabric of the community of Truckee Meadows in

northern Nevada for half a century or more.

In the resort hospitality industry, Bob was involved with properties, ownership-management—whatever—in Reno, Winnemucca, Carson City, and that little town where they do a little bit of the gaming business in the south known as Las Vegas. He was an outstanding participant in all of those.

A native of the Lone Star State, we were lucky to have Mayor Cashell come and make Nevada his home for all of his adult life and raise his family. Mr. Speaker, I thank Bob Cashell very much for his public service.

We appreciate it, and I look forward to hopefully being able to speak about him not here on the floor of the House of Representatives, but in a roast in the Truckee Meadows some time where I can pay him back for when he spoke at my roast upon my retirement from the legislature.

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 11 o'clock and 14 minutes p.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 Eung Yul David Ryoo, Korean Central Presbyterian Church, Centreville, Virginia, offered the following prayer:

Merciful God, we give our thanksgiving and praise to You, the triune God and the Creator of the universe, for offering salvation through Jesus Christ and guidance through the Holy Spirit.

We pray that humankind would be united in mutual brotherhood under Your love. We pray for Your blessing upon the United States of America, so that it would live according to Your Word as one Nation under God.

Bless the Members of the House of Representatives who have gathered here today. Etch within their hearts a fierce calling towards their motherland, within their heads the wisdom to complete their tasks with integrity, and within their lives the courage to sacrifice for the people of our country.

We pray that all here would experience the glorious joy of serving this country and its people with all that You have bestowed upon them.

We pray in the name of Jesus.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's pro-

ceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PAYNE 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 EUNG YUL DAVID RYOO

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join you in welcoming our pastor, Pastor Ryoo, from the Korean Central Presbyterian Church, located in Centreville, Virginia, and the 11th Congressional District, for today's invocation.

This church has been active in our community since it was founded 41 years ago in Vienna. Prior to my election to Congress, I served as chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, where I had the opportunity to collaborate with the congregation on the construction of its new sanctuary and on many of its activities throughout our community.

Within its many outreach ministries, the church founded a senior center 20 years ago, offering meals, recreation, skills training, and computerization for our senior population.

Under the direction of Heisung Lee, the center is now independently run and has been recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Republic of Korea as an outstanding volunteer organization.

This and the many other activities of the congregation exemplify the tremendous contributions the Korean American community are making throughout the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent one of the most vibrant Korean American communities in the United States and to continue our partnership here in Congress as cochair of the Korea Caucus.