

and dignity. And may Your spirit, O God, be in all of our hearts and minds and encourage us to do the works of peace and justice, now and always.

May all that we do be done for Your greater honor and glory.

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 Virginia (Mr. FORBES) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. FORBES 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

MILITARY COMMISSARIES

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

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in opposition to media reports that have suggested the closure of military commissaries in the United States and that that may be under consideration by the Department of Defense.

Our national defense, and the men and women who volunteer to serve, are not the cause of our current financial fiscal crisis. Proposals that ask them to carry the weight of solving it are unacceptable.

Commissaries are a vital recruitment and retention tool essential to maintaining the all-volunteer force. President Obama recognized this fact earlier this year when he visited Camp Pendleton during a furlough day and said commissary closures are "not how a great Nation should be treating its military and military families."

Each year, commissaries provide an average 31 percent savings for military families. Additionally, by allowing the Defense Commissary Agency, based out of Fort Lee, Virginia, to purchase products at higher volumes, the 178 commissaries in the United States bring down costs across all our commissaries.

I urge my colleagues to oppose any effort to close our commissaries, a system that is highly valued by our servicemembers and part of the commitment we make to take care of them during and after their time volunteering in service to our Nation.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

(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, as a representative of the San Joaquin Valley of California, I know our economic recovery has been uneven at best. Unemployment remains unacceptably high in areas like my district.

Those on unemployment are not socking taxpayer dollars away for a rainy day. Today already is their rainy day. Their benefits go back into our economy immediately for basic needs, like food and rent, while they look for work.

After 27 years at an insurance company, Jacqueline of Atwater, California, was let go last May. Since then the 53-year-old has struggled to find work.

Another constituent of mine, Luis in Fresno, lost his unemployment insurance at the end of December. This father wrote:

If I don't find a job in the next couple of weeks, then I will not be able to pay my rent or pay for food for my family.

With all the talk about restoring certainty to our economy, we cannot forget that American families drive this economy.

Now is not the time to take money out of their pockets as they are also struggling to recover. Let's restore unemployment with a bipartisan effort.

TODAY'S ECONOMY

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, while home for Christmas, I reflected on the economic challenges America faces and the parallels today's economy has with the one Ronald Reagan inherited from Jimmy Carter in 1981. Both were characterized by high unemployment and low labor-force participation.

I will paraphrase some of what President Reagan said in first Inaugural address:

Idle industries have cast workers into unemployment, causing human misery and personal indignity. Those who do work are denied a fair return for their labor by a tax system which penalizes successful achievement and keeps us from maintaining full productivity.

For decades, we have piled deficit upon deficit, mortgaging our future and our children's future for the temporary convenience of present.

By the end of Ronald Reagan's Presidency, America's unemployment rate was 5.4 percent and our economy was the envy of the world. It is time we learn from history. As President Reagan said, Government is the problem. Individuals, free from the heavy hand of Big Government to pursue their dreams, they create prosperity. It is time we revisit the simple, sacred truth.

EXTEND UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

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

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, this past Monday was the first time in months that 1.3 million out-of-work Americans went to their mailboxes and did not find an unemployment check.

People like Kaitlyn Smith from my State of California, a Marine Corps vet and mother of two young children, she said that she had been searching for work for months but has not had success. California is starting to recover, but it still has 400,000 fewer jobs than it did before the downturn. It is especially hard to find jobs in the high desert where she lives; but the family can't move because her husband, a veteran of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, must remain near the combat center until he is discharged from the Marines in July.

The loss of her benefits will cut even more deeply into the couple's income. Kaitlyn says the family is already skimping on basics, including heat. She says:

I have to keep the house at 55 degrees, even though I have two little girls, ages 2½ and 1½.

For Kaitlyn and others like her, we must extend unemployment benefits, and we must extend them now.

VISIT TO CHARLIE NORWOOD VAMC

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

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, this week I went to Augusta, Georgia, to participate in an oversight hearing with Chairman JEFF MILLER of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. This visit was the result of multiple deaths and delays in care reported in the Augusta veterans hospital. We must find out what exactly went wrong.

As both a U.S. Marine and a current medical doctor in the Navy Reserves, I take reports of poor care for our veterans very seriously. I questioned hospital staff on how, when, and why these lapses in care occurred, and who is ultimately responsible.

While it appears that under new leadership the hospital is heading in a positive direction, this is just the beginning of a full investigation. We have made promises to our veterans. It is vital that we fulfill these promises.

I have pledged to work to hold those responsible and the VA accountable. I am fully committed to making sure that our veterans receive world-class health care in Augusta, as well as VA hospitals all across the country.

FULL FUNDING FOR CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, the Peace Bridge, located along the northern border of my western New York district, facilitates the transport of over \$30 billion in commerce annually. However, increasing wait times and delays pose a significant threat to our Nation's economy.

While I am encouraged by the start of the preinspection pilot at the Peace Bridge for commercial vehicles, which would allow trucks entering the United States to be prescreened on the Canadian side of the border, I am concerned about staffing levels with Customs agents at the border.

I have called on Customs and Border Protection to increase staffing levels at the bridge to facilitate easier accessibility at northern border crossings and also encouraged the FY 2014 Homeland Security appropriations budget to include full funding for Customs and Border Protection officer staffing requests.

The streamlined flow of people and goods across the border is critical to the western New York economy and to the Nation's economy. I am committed to fighting to preserve and improve our relationship with Canada and our economic relationship.

OBAMACARE SECURITY

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

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate enough that ObamaCare has increased the cost of health care for families across the country. On top of the skyrocketing premiums, limited choices for doctors and coverage, and regulatory burdens on small business, it is worrisome that people's personal information is now being subjected to potential fraud in the ObamaCare exchanges.

The security problems with healthcare.gov go far beyond error messages and connection issues. In many cases, the people in charge of collecting and processing our most sensitive information haven't been fully trained or vetted; and although the administration knew the Web site hadn't been properly tested, they launched it anyway, leaving the American people vulnerable.

That is why I introduced H.R. 3652, the No Identity Theft in Health Care Act, which would increase penalties for those who abuse their access to personal information that Americans are forced to submit when signing up for ObamaCare to commit identity theft. I also look forward to supporting the Health Exchange Security and Transparency Act later this week.

Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable that people's personal information is at

risk. The administration needs to address this.

REPEAL OF CUT TO COLA FOR MILITARY RETIREES UNDER 62

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

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, on December 23, I introduced H.R. 3804, legislation to repeal an ill-conceived provision of the budget bill that reduced the cost-of-living adjustment for military retirees.

As a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I believe our servicemembers, veterans, and their families must receive the benefits they have so honorably earned and deserve. These benefits are owed to them without equivocation.

We should not balance the budget on the backs of military retirees who served our country so bravely for decades. They should not be punished because of Congress' failure to get our fiscal house in order. That is why I urge Speaker BOEHNER to allow a vote today on my bill, H.R. 3804, and repeal this egregious provision.

Clearly, there is substantial bipartisan support to correct this. Let's vote on H.R. 3804 for our military retirees today.

OBAMACARE'S SECURITY RISKS

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last October, a constituent living in Columbia received a frightening phone call from a gentleman in North Carolina. It appeared the constituent's security information was obtained by a stranger while enrolling for health insurance under the government health care Web site.

The American people should not have to worry about personal information being compromised due to the government's inability to keep a Web site secure. Had the gentleman from North Carolina not contacted this South Carolinian, he may have never realized his information was being breached.

ObamaCare is flawed and must be repealed. Because the President and Senate refuse to join us in these efforts, the House continues to act. Tomorrow, the House will vote on a bill that requires Health and Human Services to notify individuals when their personal information is stolen or unlawfully accessed.

We must continue to work to repeal ObamaCare by replacing it with a plan to preserve the doctor-patient relationship, as long proposed by Congressman TOM PRICE.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

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CLIMATE CHANGE DENIERS

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I urge my Republican colleagues to recognize the devastating consequences of air pollution, which is causing, or at least contributing to greatly, the drastic changes in the Earth's climate.

Last year we experienced severe record-setting weather across the country, yet Republicans and climate deniers argue that no single weather event can be proven to have been caused by climate change. Paradoxically, climate deniers are now using the extreme cold snap as evidence to support their cause, which is to do away with all laws and regulations that protect our precious air quality.

The maddening denial of the link between air quality and climate change is reckless, and it is a denial of scientific fact. Our posterity deserves more. We know, and 95 percent of scientists agree, that climate change leads to more severe weather overall, and the evidence is overwhelming.

Now is the time for a real debate on climate change before another devastating year of extreme weather that takes lives, destroys communities, and wreaks havoc on our society and our economy.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of January 2014 being National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month.

Human trafficking victims suffer repeatedly with no apparent way out. An estimated between 100,000 and 300,000 children each year become victims in America of this abhorrent practice.

Many runaway children become victims of human trafficking within 48 hours of leaving home, and it is crucial that we, as Americans, are aware of our surroundings and immediately contact authorities when we see anything suspicious around children. Traffickers can be found at airports, parking lots, schools, malls, and other places where they search for young victims.

Two years ago, I authored a bill which this House passed, the Senate passed, and the President signed at the end of 2012 eliminating trafficking on our military bases around the world and our State Department facilities around the world.

We, as Americans, believe every person has value. Every person has rights that are given to them by their creator. Mr. Speaker, I would encourage every American, if they come into contact with someone that they suspect is a victim of human trafficking, to contact the National Human Trafficking