

used by Southern Prestige International and how they take advantage of industry innovations and develop proprietary advances of their own to give customers a competitive edge.

It is clear we need to stop Washington from telling employers every little jot and tittle of what to do and turn the American workforce loose to be productive and innovative, as it has been in the past.

The underlying philosophy of Southern Prestige International is that of customer service and high-quality products. It is clear that there is more wisdom in Iredell County than in Washington, D.C.

A PIECE OF HOME THIS CHRISTMAS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the United States has our military all over the world, and we have for a good number of years. In fact, the United States has been at war for a long, long time.

This year, as we approach Christmas, families across America will gather around to enjoy homemade apple pie and turkey and each other's company, but our men and women in uniform, those volunteers, are still all over the world, protecting and representing the United States. These are America's best. It is the best we have in our country.

In 2005, I had the opportunity to go over to Iraq and see our military during the Christmas season. But before I left, I decided I would ask local schoolchildren and their teachers to help make some homemade Christmas cards and holiday cards to give to our troops when I arrived in Iraq.

So that year, after I landed, I took about 5,000 handmade Christmas cards—made primarily by schoolchildren—to our servicemen and -women in Iraq and also in Kosovo. Since that time, children in southeast Texas have been making handmade Christmas cards and holiday cards for our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq and other parts of the world every year, and these cards are either taken overseas by me or they are shipped.

This year, the community in southeast Texas and the schools rallied, and the result is quite outstanding. I am proud to say that this holiday season we will be sending 96,000 handmade Christmas cards and holiday cards to our troops in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other parts of the world, primarily made by schoolkids in southeast Texas. Remember, Mr. Speaker, these are handmade cards. These are not store-bought cards.

These cards were received from various Texas residents. Just to name a few: Kingwood High School, Sterling Middle School, Timberwood Middle School, Goose Creek Memorial High School, Alamo Elementary, Horace Mann Junior High, the Hi Neighbor

Club in Kingwood, Houston Methodist Hospital, Baytown Chamber of Commerce, the Baytown school district, the Baytown Housing Authority, Victory Hospital, and Boy Scout and Girl Scout clubs in southeast Texas.

Mr. Speaker, 80,000 of these came from the city of Baytown alone. So a big "thank you" to Rikki Wheeler, the executive vice president of the Baytown Chamber of Commerce, as well as to the Baytown schools, hospitals, and organizations for their remarkable contribution and organizing and managing the collection of these cards.

The patriotic spirit of those folks in southeast Texas to me is quite heartwarming, and the outpouring of support from Texans, primarily schoolchildren, is quite exceptional.

I want to thank all of those who have taken the time to bring joy to our troops in lands that are far, far away, those troops who will be separated from their families this Christmas. It is because of the schools, the teachers, and the schoolchildren that this is all made possible every year.

This is a way that people in southeast Texas show appreciation to our troops who are separated from their families this time of the year. Remembering to thank them and send them special greetings is very important.

Many of these schoolchildren have family members overseas who are serving in the military, and this small gesture brings comfort and cheer to all of those involved. A piece of home will mean so much to those who are representing us overseas, and it is possible only because the community volunteers to do this each year.

The simple act of making a handmade card shows the connection between our warriors and our schoolchildren who are thinking about them this time of year. So this Christmas, as Americans celebrate, we remember to say a prayer for those who safeguard America's freedoms.

We thank our volunteers in uniform, and we thank our volunteers who made this season quite special for our military by making these cards.

And that is just the way it is.

Mr. Speaker, at this point, I will also include for the RECORD a list of other groups who have made holiday cards for our troops.

Advanced Aromatics/GCM High/Chevron Phillips
Aramark/Stuart Career Ctr.-Culinary Arts
Awards & Engraving/St. Joseph's/Byt
Draft'g/Staff'g
Bayer/Clark Elementary
Baytown GMC/Bowie Elem.
Baytown Sun/GCCISD Public Relations
Beacon FCU/Ashbel Smith Elem.
CenterPoint/Gentry Jr.
Chevron Phillips/Crockett Elem.
CRCU/Lamar Elem.
Community Toyota/Highlands Jr.
Crespo & Jirrels/Peter Hyland (ALP)
ExxonMobil/RE Lee High
ExxonMobil/Walker Elem.
ExxonMobil/Travis Elem.
ExxonMobil/San Jacinto Elem.
ExxonMobil/Baytown Jr.
ExxonMobil/Cedar Bayou Jr.

Highlands C of C/Hopper Primary
Highlands Rotary/Highlands Elementary
Houston Methodist San Jac Hosp/RS
Sterling High
Kiwanis Club/Alamo Elem.
LCY/Harlem Elem.
Legacy/Point Alternative
Rotary/DeZavala Elem.
Shine Dental/Impact Early College High School
SNC-GDS/Horace Mann Jr.
Solvay/Carver Elem.
Texas First/SF Austin Elem.
GCCISD Special Olympics
Stuart Career Ctr.
Woodforest/Banuelos Elem.
BCA 2nd Grade Class

AMERICA'S SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask for a moment that my colleagues imagine a situation. Imagine a few years down the road that a Republican President announces he has instructed the Justice Department to no longer enforce the Clean Air Act, that he has told the Justice Department to no longer prosecute violations of the Clean Air Act.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle would rise up with frustration and indignation. They would say the President has failed to faithfully execute the laws passed by Congress, as he has been constitutionally required to do, and they would be right to do so.

Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what is happening in our country today. President Obama has chosen unilaterally not to enforce our Nation's longstanding immigration laws. He has made this decision without any consultation with Congress and entirely on his own.

Think for a moment about the precedent this action sets: that a President can alter longstanding law simply through an executive memo and his words, a President can simply say that he is not going to enforce the law. That would be frightening to all Americans, regardless of political belief.

Let's be clear what this action is not. It is not prosecutorial discretion.

No one doubts that the President has prosecutorial discretion. But this goes far beyond that power and enters into new territory that, frankly, has never before been touched.

I believe this issue was settled long ago, before our country was even founded. You see, in the 17th century in Britain, during this big fight between the King of England and Parliament, the King said that he had prerogative powers, the ability to override Parliament. And there were battles. There were wars in Britain about how this was going to be settled. And the Parliament determined, in consultation with the courts, that the King couldn't, on his own, do that, that he couldn't just simply say, I am going to dispense with the laws or suspend their operations for a period of time.

Our Founding Fathers knew this history well, and when they put together the Constitution of our country, in article II, they had that in their minds when they gave to the President the obligation—not the option—to faithfully execute the laws, all the laws of the United States, regardless of whether the President agrees with those laws or not.

I would say that this type of executive action is clearly not what the Founders had in mind when they drafted our Constitution. The main overriding goal of our forefathers was to prevent the executive from becoming too powerful, and they went to great efforts to ensure a strong system of checks and balances.

President Obama's executive action runs in the face of how our government was designed to operate. Let's also remember that earlier this year, President Obama said his policies—all of them—would be on the ballot in the mid-term elections. And the American people went to the polls and soundly rejected the President's policies. They made clear they were not supportive of more unilateral executive action. They wanted us to work together.

□ 1230

As a Congress, we warned the President not to go forward with this executive action.

Mr. Speaker, we need a solution to our Nation's immigration problem, but by using executive action, the President has made finding common ground far more difficult.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this House should rise above the actions of the President, and early next year, we should send the President real border security legislation, much like the border security legislation we passed in this House this past summer, yet the Senate wouldn't even take up.

This House should pass legislation to update and fix the worker visa program. This House should pass legislation to put in place E-Verify for all employers. This House should pass legislation to tighten internal security. Then, and only then, when we go through all of those pieces of legislation, should we even begin to discuss what we are going to do about the millions of people who are in this country illegally.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the more the President acts outside the bounds of his powers, the harder it becomes to actually achieve a solution. It leads me to wonder: Does President Obama actually want a long-term, lasting solution to immigration? His actions imply otherwise.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the President to rethink his approach to the immigration debate. I urge him to abandon this ill-conceived executive action and, instead, to come to the table and work with the Republicans and Democrats in the Congress and both Houses to find together the commonsense solutions that we need to find for these problems.

We are capable of doing that. That is how our Founders intended our government to operate, and anything other than that is a disservice to the American people.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 8, 2014.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
*The Speaker, U.S. Capitol,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 8, 2014 at 10:37 a.m.:

That the Senate passed H.R. 2366
That the Senate passed H.R. 4812
That the Senate passed H.R. 5108
That the Senate passed H.R. 5462
That the Senate passed H.R. 5739
That the Senate passed H. Con. Res. 120
That the Senate passed H.J. Res. 105
That the Senate passed S. 1447
That the Senate passed S. 1683
That the Senate agreed to S.J. Res. 45

Appointments:
Katherine Tobin of Virginia, United States-China Economic Security Review Commission.

Tom Girardi of California, Library of Congress Trust Fund Board.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 32 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

Lieutenant Commander Robert Burns, Chaplain, United States Navy Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Plantation, Florida, offered the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, we praise You for You have blessed this land with a diverse multitude gathered from every nation, tribe, people, and language. You have bound us together with noble ideals of liberty, justice, equality, and yet we struggle to be one people, a unified Nation.

We pray for all the Members of this House, asking You to bless them with wisdom and discernment to lead our

people to reconciliation, to rebuild our Nation's confidence in justice, to restore our sense of equality. Free them from the divisive distractions of any lesser ideals that they may more powerfully serve the people as a House in one accord, making every effort to keep the unity of the people through the bond of peace.

Bless also our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines deployed overseas as they continue to bring peace to this troubled world. We pray in Your Holy Name.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO 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.

IMMIGRATION

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, on November 20, President Obama significantly overstepped the bounds of his constitutionally granted executive authority when he took steps to grant amnesty to millions of immigrants who are in the United States illegally.

Prior to his unilateral actions, the President himself acknowledged repeatedly that this is not how our democracy functions, and the way to reform this Nation's broken immigration system is legislatively. As they say in North Carolina, the President has "gone to meddling." It is absolutely critical that we go on record against his unparalleled power grab, and Congress must do everything it can to stop his destructive actions.

As the granddaughter of Italian immigrants, I am thankful America has always opened her arms to people looking to build a better way for themselves and their families legally. However, breaking the law to enter the United States should not be rewarded. It is wrong to short-circuit the American immigration process in this manner when there are so many individuals who have waited years for the opportunity to come to this country the right way, the legal way.