

It is a story of one of my bosses back home, a young lady, Alyssa Ferguson.

In sixth grade, Alyssa was told that she had cancer and that the cancer would likely take her young life. She was approached by the Sugar Land Make-a-Wish Foundation; but instead of wishing to meet a famous person and turning inward, Alyssa turned outward. Her wish was to have a water well built in rural Africa for people in need.

Last year, Alyssa's wish was granted; the well was dug. And this year, Alyssa's 29 rounds of chemotherapy and 30 days of radiation treatment will pay off as she goes to Africa and sips water out of her well.

I want to thank Alyssa for showing all of us that love and faith overcome all.

May God bless Alyssa Ferguson.

DHS SHUTDOWN

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

Ms. MENG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today urge my colleagues to pass a Department of Homeland Security funding bill without political strings attached.

This funding is especially relevant to us New Yorkers who, unfortunately, understand too well the consequences of terrorism. Just yesterday, three ISIS supporters were arrested in Brooklyn for their plans to travel abroad to join the terrorist group. Without adequate Homeland Security funding, we might not have caught these terrorists.

The Department of Homeland Security not only protects our borders and airports in ways we experience daily, but also works inconspicuously to guard our community by providing grants and training for law enforcement, transportation, and even local nonprofits.

Currently, DHS is unable to allocate these hundreds of millions of dollars in grants that directly assist our communities and basic infrastructure. These address the unique planning, training, organization, and exercise needs of high-threat urban areas, like New York City.

It is reckless to use Homeland Security funding as a bargaining chip. A mere political disagreement is no excuse to risk an attack on American lives.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the House bring up H.R. 861, the clean DHS funding bill that would keep the Department open so it can carry out its mission of keeping the American people safe.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YODER). As the Chair previously advised, that request cannot be entertained absent appropriate clearance.

NATIONAL FAIRYTALE DAY

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

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Speaker, today is national fairytale day, and my office has been having some fun with it on Twitter. I got together with the staff, and we came up with some hashtag liberal fairytales: “If you like your health insurance, you can keep it.” “Benghazi was caused by a YouTube video.”

But the biggest one seems to be happening right now. It is a liberal fairytale that House Republicans want to shut down the Department of Homeland Security. Weeks ago, we passed a bill fully funding it. It is the Democrats in the Senate who have refused to take up that bill and debate it and vote for closure that are going to close the Department of Homeland Security.

So on national fairytale day, we have got a whopper of a fairytale from the liberals. The fact that the Republicans want to shut down DHS is nothing but a hashtag liberal fairytale.

DHS SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to have a brief conversation. I spent the last 2 hours in the Committee on Armed Services, where General Keane was talking about sending the right message to our enemies, that America has to stand together as one.

So as we talk about the threats in Armed Services, we are 48 hours from shutting down Homeland Security. Let's say that again: 48 hours from shutting down the security at our airports, at our train stations, at our ports.

This is unthinkable.

I am usually not the guy that says “the sky is falling,” but unless we do this in 48 hours, we are sending a message to our enemies: it is open season in America.

We can't send that message.

Please, I am asking my colleagues here in the House and certainly on the other side of the aisle to have a full and open debate on this issue. Let's take the vote. Let's get this done. Let's pass the Homeland Security bill.

□ 1230

PENNSYLVANIA'S OIL AND NATURAL GAS PRODUCTION

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, Pennsylvania is the third-largest natural gas producer in the Nation and continues to drive record-breaking oil and natural gas production. According to new data released by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, last year shale gas production jumped 30 percent in Pennsylvania's Marcellus shale for a

total of 4 trillion cubic feet, which is roughly 16 percent of what the United States consumes on an annual basis.

Mr. Speaker, communities in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District have benefited greatly from the technological and the safety advancements that make natural gas readily available, and these benefits are not just limited to shale-producing areas.

Families and businesses all across the country are seeing the rewards of shale gas energy produced by hydraulic fracturing. American households are enjoying increases in disposable incomes due to lower costs for energy and energy-intensive products. Mr. Speaker, this success has been made possible due to regulations administered at the State level, not by adding the bureaucracy of the Federal Government.

As cochair of the bipartisan Congressional Natural Gas Caucus, I will continue to explore and promote best practices so that we can highlight the safety and positive economic impacts of natural gas.

DHS SHUTDOWN

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

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, the day after the election, Speaker BOEHNER and Senator MCCONNELL outlined an agenda for the so-called New American Congress, pledging to focus on the people's priorities. Well, they have obviously failed to deliver on this promise, instead allowing anti-immigrant, rightwing radicals to trump the safety of American families.

Mr. Speaker, recent events around the world provide a stark reminder of the threats we face. Yet amid the rising risks of terrorist attack, Republicans are holding critical Homeland Security funding hostage in a misguided attempt to undermine and roll back key protections for immigrant families.

To quote The Washington Post:

The fervor of Republic partisanship is immune to logic beyond an insistence on victory at any cost.

In this case, the cost is some 1,500 DHS personnel in Nevada who would be furloughed or forced to work without pay and nearly \$10 million in grant funding that Nevada counts on to protect the safety of our citizens and the over 40 million visitors who come to Las Vegas every year. Only 2 days remain until DHS shuts down. I call on Republicans: Stop holding it hostage and let's get to work.

FREE DOM RIDERS

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

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, from time to time in our history, people

have stepped forward to call this Nation to something greater. Today as we continue to celebrate Black History Month, I want to recognize three inspirational women from my district in Pennsylvania: Dorothy James, Ruby Golding, and Mary Wilson. In the 1960s they traveled down South to fight racial injustice and to join the struggle for equal rights.

Ruby Golding recalls what inspired her to join the Freedom Riders. She remembers segregated movie theaters and not being allowed to try on shoes at the local store in town. She remembers the March on Washington and hearing Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King talk about a dream he had, a dream that one day his children would not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

Ms. Golding said everyone was shocked by the size of the crowd that day and how peaceful it was. She said it was like being in one big family of all colors joining together to bring a better day to America.

Today let's recognize the legacy of Ms. James, Ms. Golding, and Ms. Wilson, and all those who joined the civil rights movement, for we have a freer nation because they had the courage to take a stand.

DHS SHUTDOWN

(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, we have less than 2 days—2 days—to fund the Department of Homeland Security before they run out of money. It is a dangerous world we live in. We know that. The tragic events recently in Paris and Copenhagen and, most recently, the arrests of three alleged terrorists yesterday in New York demonstrate that Americans are at risk from a terrorist attack every day. The Senate finally realized that funding Homeland Security is more important than jeopardizing the safety of our country.

Mr. Speaker, if you need Democratic support to pass a clean—clean—Department of Homeland Security funding bill, you have my vote, and you have the overwhelming votes of the majority of Democrats.

Congress should be focusing on protecting our families. Our constitutional oath that we take when we are sworn into office every 2 years requires us to first “support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic.”

Let us not put Americans at risk because of partisan politics. It is not only irresponsible, it is immoral. Let us do the job that we were sent here to do.

MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA

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

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I am an original cosponsor of H.R. 642, a bill that would help the men and women in our armed services who are victims of sexual assault get access to the care that they need.

Sexual assault is not acceptable anywhere in our society. It is not something many people like to talk about, but it is a very real problem. According to the Department of Defense, 20,000 servicemembers said they had experienced at least one incident of unwanted sexual contact in 2014.

In my time as an emergency medicine physician, I have seen the deep, longstanding, and brutal psychological trauma that results from sexual assault, and I know how critical it is that victims receive the treatment they need and perpetrators are brought to justice.

Mr. Speaker, this bill takes much-needed steps to ensure that treatment options are more accessible for our veterans who were victims of sexual assault by helping to pay for travel expenses for those who need to seek care outside of the VA system.

Mr. Speaker, this is a medical need and a moral imperative. I urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 642 and ensure servicemembers who are victims of sexual trauma receive the care they need.

DHS SHUTDOWN

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

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, last week Speaker BOEHNER stated that the Republicans were certainly prepared to shut down the Department of Homeland Security—a shutdown that would force thousands of TSA, Customs, Border Patrol, and Secret Service agents to work without pay.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am going to tell you, I come back and forth every week from Orange County, California. I usually go up to Los Angeles, to LAX. I was talking to my TSA guys as I went through the line, taking off my shoes. They said: Really, Ms. SANCHEZ, are they really going to do that to us? Are they really going to put our security at stake—America's security at stake? I said: They have done it before, and they are going to do it again.

I believe that it is time to pass a clean Homeland Security bill.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the House bring up H.R. 861, the clean Department of Homeland Security funding bill that would keep the Department open so it can carry out its mission of keeping America and Americans safe.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. As the Chair previously advised, that request cannot be entertained absent appropriate clearance.

RURAL HOSPITALS

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

Ms. GRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to bring attention to rural hospitals and the important service they provide to communities across north Florida.

Last week I had the honor of touring Doctors Memorial Hospital in Bonifay, Florida. I was so inspired by the hard work of the doctors, nurses, administrators, and volunteers who treat patients who otherwise would have to drive hours for care.

Mr. Speaker, these hospitals are providing outstanding care but face unique new challenges from government regulation. In Congress, we need to make sure rural hospitals are not overburdened by regulation that can cause more harm than good at smaller facilities.

Rural hospitals are vital to north Florida, and I am ready to work with Democrats and Republicans to make sure that we protect them.

LOOMING DHS SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, with only hours remaining before Department of Homeland Security funding is terminated, and following a 98–2 Senate vote to restore some sanity here and proceed with consideration of that funding, House Republicans are still engaged in what amounts to a family feud among Republicans that threatens all American families. American shopping malls on heightened alert, arrest of ISIS suspects, and growing global crises—all of them are apparently not enough to spur these House Republicans into action.

Mr. Speaker, House inaction is not vigilance. Your fear of immigrants and your disdain for President Obama ought not to come between us and a secure nation. Our enemies are watching. So are the front-line DHS employees and law enforcement operations who could lose. It is long past time to approve the dollars that we need to secure our American families and secure our homeland. It ought to be the top priority. There is no reason why Homeland Security should be the only Department in the entire Federal Government that is not fully funded.

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, February 26, 2015.
Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of rule II of