

Jon has been engaged in two career paths: he has served as both a pastor and a nationwide motivational speaker. He began pastoring the first of his four churches as a college sophomore at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas. He has a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and did doctorate studies in ancient Roman history at Texas Tech University.

He served as Director of Evangelism at the Baptist General Convention of Texas. In 2010, as a contractor for the U.S. Air Force, he crafted a program for senior officers to mentor members of the junior force.

In 2013, after 20 years as an evangelist and a motivational speaker, he returned to pastoring and is currently the senior pastor at Victory Life Baptist Church in Lubbock, Texas.

In all of his endeavors, Jon has encouraged excellence and character. But most of all, Jon has impacted countless lives by his witness and testimony of Jesus Christ.

Jon has the heart of a lion and a tremendous amount of faith. As he battles pancreatic cancer, he is an amazing example to all of us how to run the race God has set out for each of us.

May God bless Jon Randles, and may He continue to bless the United States of America.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE WEEK

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

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of National Agriculture Week.

If you look around this great building, you will find countless references to our early economy, which depended largely on our Nation's abundant farmland. This vital industry impacts every person in this country, from the food we place before our family to the businesses that keep our citizens gainfully employed.

My home State of Minnesota is the fourth largest agricultural exporter in the country, and Stearns County, which is in my district, is the largest dairy producing county in Minnesota. We are the Land of 10,000 Lakes and 80,000 farms.

As a member of the Agriculture Committee, I am proud to work on behalf of both farmers and consumers to ensure this vibrant industry continues to thrive. Please join me this week in thanking a farmer.

THE GOP'S "WORK HARDER FOR LESS" BUDGET

(Mr. ISRAEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, the Republican budget that has been released today should be called "Work Harder for Less." It squeezes hardworking Americans, making it harder for them to buy a home, harder to send their kids to college, and harder to enjoy a secure retirement.

How does it do these things, Mr. Speaker?

If you want to buy a home, it makes it harder because it continues to stagnate paychecks. If you want to send your kids to college, it makes it harder by slashing tuition assistance and student loans. If you want to save some money for a secure and enjoyable retirement, it privatizes Medicare—again—after all these years of attempts.

Mr. Speaker, this Republican budget takes the tools of opportunity away from hardworking Americans all in order to provide bigger and deeper tax cuts for the superwealthy. It is the same old-same old spiced up with another repeal of the Affordable Care Act, and the American people will understand what the Republican priorities are versus ours.

AMBASSADOR GERARD ARAUD VISITS SOUTH CAROLINA

(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, yesterday, as cochairman of the French Caucus, I had the opportunity to escort French Ambassador Gerard Araud across South Carolina, where he met enthusiastic citizens of French heritage along with business leaders who appreciate our valued alliance.

South Carolina's association with France was highlighted by the arrival of the Marquis de Lafayette at Georgetown to support the American Revolution. His portrait is one of only two here in the House Chamber.

Today, French investments are extraordinary with the joint Michelin plants in Lexington, providing over 2,000 jobs at a nearly 2-million-square-foot facility. At the Savannah River site in Aiken, the Ambassador toured the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication facility using AREVA advanced technology to convert weapons-grade plutonium into green fuel. These investments produce jobs for Americans and profits for France.

In between tours, the Ambassador was honored to speak to the Columbia Rotary Club, South Carolina's largest civic organization, led by President John Hunston, with introduction by French Huguenot, Rusty DePass.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and may the President by his actions never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

THE GOP'S "WORK HARDER FOR LESS" BUDGET

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, well, today the Republicans are unveiling yet another Republican budget that would ensure hardworking Americans have to continue to work harder and get less.

Our country deserves a budget that puts these hardworking families first, not this damaging budget that guts middle class priorities making it harder to buy a home, harder to send your kids to college, and harder to have a secure retirement. It is all at the expense of handouts to special interests.

This "work harder, get less" budget continues to squeeze the middle class by keeping wages stagnant, cutting student loans, and privatizing Medicare. House Democrats stand ready to pass a budget that invests in our families so that they can take home bigger paychecks, send their kids to school, and save for retirement.

The Republican budget takes the tools that build the American Dream away from hardworking Americans to give bigger tax cuts and bigger tax breaks to the superwealthy.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that my Republican colleagues will work with us in a bipartisan fashion to fashion a budget that works for all Americans.

CELEBRATING THE ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE IN SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to celebrate the 191st occasion of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Savannah, Georgia. Among the largest Irish celebrations in the Nation, the St. Patrick's Day Parade is held in the downtown historic district and is always a meaningful occasion for the citizens of Chatham County and the State of Georgia.

In 1824, the Hibernian Society of Savannah, which was formed to aid the early Irish immigrants, began what would become the second largest St. Patrick's Day Parade in the Nation. Peak years have estimated up to 400,000 visitors to the area for St. Patrick's Day festivities. Georgia is proud to welcome visitors from all across the Nation, and it continues to be successful due to the hard work and dedication of those working in Savannah, Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize and honor the members of the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, including Chairman Kevin Halligan and the Grand Marshal, Mr. Hugh Coleman, for their tireless efforts and outstanding commitment in organizing this year's parade. Thank you all for all you do in our community and the State of Georgia. I wish you much success in today's event.

A STRONG MIDDLE CLASS IS A STRONG AMERICA

(Mrs. DINGELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, the Republican budget released today would deny working families the opportunity to earn a fair living that used to ensure a strong middle class in this country.

Their budget would hurt seniors, as Republicans have proposed four times before, by ending Medicare as we know it. It would place the burden of balancing the budget on the poor and keep arbitrary spending caps that hurt young and old alike by decimating Head Start and denying homebound seniors access to meals. It would cut Pell grants, hurting students seeking higher education, and it would leave our military lacking the critical resources we need to defend our country.

Mr. Speaker, our Democratic budget will honor our promises to seniors and will give someone who worked hard the opportunity to earn a fair wage so that they can raise their family. It will keep health care affordable and help students seeking to better themselves attain an affordable education, and it will invest in our future by repairing our crumbling roads and bridges that are vital to a growing economy.

Our budget stands for protecting Medicare, earning a fair wage, and rebuilding our infrastructure, because a strong middle class is a strong America.

THE JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT

(Mrs. WAGNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to express my outrage that Senate Democrats have refused to allow consideration of desperately needed sex trafficking legislation.

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act would strengthen punishments for perpetrators and increase Federal funding for the victims of human trafficking. But instead of supporting this vitally important legislation, Senate Democrats are playing political games. They have refused to support the legislation despite its having a bipartisan group of cosponsors and unanimous approval from the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Mr. Speaker, trafficking is a real problem in every State in the United States of America. Right now, almost 300,000 American children are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation. Children are being sold into sexual slavery right now while some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have been holding up this critical legislation for 2 weeks.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for Senate Democrats to drop their protests, support the thousands of vulnerable

women and children this legislation would protect, and join Republicans in the fight against human trafficking.

THERE THEY GO AGAIN

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

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I never thought I would be quoting Ronald Reagan but, "There you go again," another Republican budget that kicks the poor, the hungry, and the disabled to the curb, that strangles the middle class and deserts hardworking families.

"There you go again," another Republican budget that stymies research and development, abandons essential infrastructure, and stifles access to education.

"There you go again," another Republican budget that robs senior citizens, degrades the environment, and devastates our cultural institutions.

"There you go again," another so-called Republican path to prosperity that is really a road map for distress and decline for all but big corporations and the megawealthy.

So I urge folks, call those Republican Representatives and tell them that the American people don't want to and don't deserve to go that way again.

□ 1215

HONORING CONESTOGA HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

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

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Conestoga High School Music Department and their great success in this year's music festivals.

In 2015, Conestoga High School sent an impressive 32 students to the district chorus, band, and orchestra festivals; 19 students to the region chorus, band, and orchestra festivals; six students to the all-State chorus, band, and orchestra festivals; one student to All-Eastern Orchestra; and one student to All-National Orchestra.

In addition, sophomore Jason Bassiliou's music composition has been selected as the winner at the high school level in the 2015 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association Composition Program.

Under the dedicated leadership of department head Sue Dickinger, Conestoga High School Music Department represents among the best of Pennsylvania's Sixth District in the musical arts.

Music is, in fact, an integral part of a student's curriculum, and I commend the students, their teachers, and Conestoga High School on an exceptional year in music.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARCH IN SELMA

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, what an occasion and privilege it was to mark the 50th anniversary of the march in Selma. As my friend and hero Congressman JOHN LEWIS said: "Selma is more than a place, it is the realization of an idea."

Selma showed us that true empowerment begins with voting rights. After 50 years of progress, the Supreme Court has rolled back the Voting Rights Act, one of the most effective laws ever passed. Now, House leadership is saying parts of the VRA are "not necessary." Literacy tests may be relics of the past but only because of the VRA.

Some States have replaced old overt forms of voter disenfranchisement with more subtle forms of voter suppression through registration, through redistricting, and voting itself. States need to stop holding people back from voting, and Congress must hold States accountable. The Court may not have done the right thing, but surely Congress can.

Let's restore the VRA and better the voting process for all voters.

NORTHERN LONG-EARED BAT RULE

(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, last Friday, I, along with 15 fellow House colleagues, called upon the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to provide flexibility with the agency's proposal to list the northern long-eared bat under the Endangered Species Act.

Back in December, the Fish and Wildlife Service proposed listing the northern long-eared bat as threatened under the Endangered Species Act through a special 4(d) rule, which would provide exemptions for certain activities if they met prescribed conservation activities.

Apart from forest management, the initial rule did not specify which activities would be granted exemptions. Because this species of bat can be found in 38 States, including all of Pennsylvania, a broad Endangered Species Act listing would have far-reaching impacts upon the States and permissible land uses.

Mr. Speaker, listing the northern long-eared bat as endangered has never been warranted. Since day one, the Fish and Wildlife Service has repeatedly acknowledged the underlying cause of population decline is a disease—white-nose syndrome—not habitat loss through human activity.

Rather than limiting commerce and land use activities—impacting jobs and local economies—the Fish and Wildlife