

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support a clear path forward. The American people deserve as much.

BLACK LUNG BENEFITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. JENKINS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor today to introduce my first bill, a resolution to protect black lung benefits.

Miners work hard to keep the lights on, to power our homes and businesses, and to provide for their own families.

In West Virginia alone, over 18,000 men and women work in the coal mines. It is good work, it is important work, work that puts food on the table and provides a better life for their families.

While great strides have been made in mine safety, some miners will still develop black lung disease.

The Federal Government made a promise decades ago to help coal miners and their families if miners develop black lung. Since 1973, miners have known that if they get black lung, the Federal Government will be there and stand up for them. More than 100,000 miners from West Virginia have filed for black lung benefits. And today, almost 5,000 miners and their families depend on these benefits for care for their families when they are no longer able to work.

Congress must uphold, protect, and secure these crucial benefits for our hardworking miners and their families. As we in Congress work on health care reform, we must remember the miners who toil above ground and underground to power our Nation. Any reforms must secure the black lung benefits program and ensure that these critical benefits will be available for our miners and their families. We made them a promise. We must keep that promise.

REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS WANT A STRONG U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, 4 years ago, amid concerns of hostile treatment against Israel at the United Nations, I launched an initiative where I wrote letters to dozens of foreign ambassadors to the United Nations and explained why it was important that they stood against anti-Israel actions at the U.N.

I am saddened, Mr. Speaker, that the United States is apparently now in need of such a letter. Recent public reports indicate that President Obama warned Prime Minister Netanyahu, fresh off of his democratic election by the Israeli people, that the U.S. will reassess our options at the U.N.

Think about that for a second, Mr. Speaker. President Obama has left ev-

eryone with the impression that the United States could change its course and abandon Israel at the U.N. I can't think of a worse message to send to our friends in Israel and a better gift to the anti-Israel factions of the international community.

The delegitimization efforts of Israel are on the rise around the world and in the United Nations. Israel needs its friends in the United States now more than ever before.

These are bipartisan concerns, Mr. Speaker. Republicans and Democrats alike want a strong U.S.-Israel relationship, and the days of this administration challenging and undercutting Israel's Prime Minister, regardless of who that Prime Minister may be, must stop. The stakes are far too high. The challenges are amongst us.

We have to stand and speak with one united voice, Republicans and Democrats alike, that we will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our one true ally. This is not right versus left; this is right versus wrong.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 194th anniversary of Greek independence.

Citizens of Greece have always been a proud people, in body, mind, and spirit. From Pericles, the Greek statesman and general, dubbed “the first citizen of Athens”; to Plato, who laid a groundwork in philosophy so vast that the entirety of European philosophical tradition is said to simply be a footnote to his work; to Count Ioannis Kapodistrias, the first head of state of an independent Greece, Greeks have been exceptional.

I am almost certain that Thomas Jefferson cast an eye across the Atlantic towards Greece when he uttered these words in 1821:

“The flames kindled on the 4th of July 1776 have spread over too much of the globe to be extinguished by the feeble engines of despotism. On the contrary, they will consume these engines and all who work them.”

It is no coincidence that the Feast of Annunciation—Evangelismos—a commemoration of the conception of Jesus Christ, is also celebrated on March 25, just as Greek Independence Day is celebrated.

I am blessed to be of two cultures that have been beacons of freedom for all of civilization: the place of my birth, the land of the free and the home of the brave, the United States of America; and the land of my ancestors, the birthplace of democracy, the Hellenic Republic.

Many Greeks fought for years, holding on to their heritage, culture, and faith. Bishop Germanos of Patras raised the emblem of freedom for Hellenes, the flag bearing a white cross and nine blue and white stripes rep-

resenting the nine letters in Eleftheria, meaning freedom.

Eight years of bloodshed and battle led to the Treaty of Adrianople, the formal declaration of a free and independent Greece.

Greece was the world's first advanced civilization, one that provided a cultural heritage that has influenced the world. Firsts in philosophy, mathematics, politics, sports, and art all stemmed from a free Greece.

Liberty and justice, freedom to determine the path of one's own life, these are human desires, and they were embodied by Greece throughout their fight for independence.

Those unyielding Hellenes paid life and limb for those desires, and generations of Greeks for decades to come owe their ancestors thanks.

As George Washington once said:

“Liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth.”

This held true in Greece in 1821, as it did in America in 1776.

“Freedom or Death” was the battle cry of the revolutionaries nearly 200 years ago. It rings true today. Freedom is a powerful and beautiful notion.

The Greek people achieved that for themselves 194 years ago, and I am proud to celebrate in memory of those who fought bravely to shed the shackles of the Ottoman Empire.

We celebrate Greek independence to reaffirm the common democratic heritage we share. And, as Americans, we must continue to pursue the spirit of freedom and liberty, which characterizes both of our great nations.

God bless America. Long live Greece—Zito i Ellas.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida will provide the Clerk a translation of his remarks for the RECORD.

DENY AMNESTY CREDITS ACT OF 2015

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

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to speak on the recent introduction of my bill, H.R. 1332, the Deny Amnesty Credits Act of 2015, in order to put our country and our Americans first.

As a response to the President's unauthorized and illegal actions granting amnesty, my bill will prevent those who are granted deferred action under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, and the Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents, or DAPA, from qualifying for the earned income tax credit and the child tax credit.

As it stands, the President's illegal executive amnesty would allow illegal aliens to obtain Social Security numbers and the ability to receive as much as \$35,000 of hardworking taxpayer moneys on their tax returns from the United States Treasury. The money that is from our hardworking taxpayers, don't they deserve to be put first?

□ 1030

According to the Congressional Budget Office, this would cost American taxpayers \$10.2 billion because of an illegal executive program never authorized by Congress.

America can no longer be the world's ATM. This President has trampled upon our Constitution and has circumvented Congress to ensure his political legacy far too many times, and it must stop. Instead of working with Congress to secure our borders and to uphold the law of the land, this administration is offering executive amnesty and tax credits to illegal aliens.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to put America first. We must hold this administration accountable for actions that circumvent Congress' constitutional power of the purse, costing billions of taxpayer dollars—our taxpayers.

My bill, the Deny Amnesty Credits Act of 2015, will do just that. It will put America first. It will help put us on that path. It will help our hard-working Americans to be first and foremost in the hearts of us—of our Congress, the elected Representatives—who are quite frankly, charged with putting Americans first.

Mr. Speaker, did I mention? It is time to put America first.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

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 10 o'clock and 31 minutes a.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 Dennis Fountain, Moses Lake Baptist Church, Moses Lake, Washington, offered the following prayer:

Dear God and Heavenly Father, we come before You today humbling ourselves and seeking Your help. I want to thank You, first of all, for who You are.

Thank You for Your goodness, mercy, and grace in each of our lives, and thank You for the blessings You give to us every day.

Lord, I want to thank You for each and every Representative and all they do to direct our great country. I pray today that You would have your hand of grace and guidance upon them. I pray, God, that You would give them the wisdom they need on a daily basis to fulfill the office You have appointed them to.

I also ask that You would guide, encourage, and protect them in their per-

sonal lives, as well as their families and loved ones.

I pray for Your blessings upon our Nation and upon our day. I love You, Lord. It is in the name of Jesus Christ I pray.

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.

Mr. KILDEE. 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.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HILL 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 PASTOR DENNIS FOUNTAIN

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

There was no objection.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise with the honor to welcome today's guest chaplain, Pastor Dennis Fountain, the pastor of Moses Lake Baptist Church in Moses Lake, Washington.

Pastor Fountain has crossed the Cascade Mountain divide to serve common needs on both sides of Washington State. Pastor Fountain began his ministry in 2006 as a youth pastor in Lakewood, in western Washington. He headed east across the Cascades to plant Moses Lake Baptist Church, which first opened its doors 4 years ago this month. Pastor Fountain also currently serves as the chaplain for the Grant County Sheriff's Office. I would like to thank him for his faithfulness and commitment to serve the needs of the people of our State, particularly first responders and the law enforcement community.

It is my privilege to welcome Pastor Fountain and his wife, Hannah, to the House of Representatives as fellow Washingtonians. I extend the thanks of

this body for his delivering the morning prayer, and I ask my colleagues to join me in making Pastor Fountain's time in our Nation's Capital warm and inviting.

RESIGNATIONS AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES AND COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Nebraska) laid before the House the following resignations as a member of the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Homeland Security:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 23, 2015.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives, The Capitol,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER: I write to offer my official resignation as a member of the House Armed Services Committee and the House Committee on Homeland Security, effective today, March 23, 2015. Both committees are vital to ensuring our nation is secure at home and abroad, and it has been and honor and a privilege to serve on these two committees over the last four years.

Sincerely,

STEVEN M. PALAZZO,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignations are accepted.

There was no objection.

ELECTING MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Republican Conference, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 165

Resolved, That the following named Members be, and are hereby, elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS: Mr. Palazzo.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES: Mr. Russell.

Ms. FOXX (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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.