

pages on the inside were truly grotesque and horrifying examples of animal abuse.

A young cow had its head locked in a cagelike device to keep her immobile while she was repeatedly—you can only describe it as sexually tortured for hours by as many as six bulls being studied for their sexual libido. Her back legs were broken, her body—in the words of one of the observers—was “torn up,” and the cow understandably died from her injuries.

There were other experiments detailed, sheep and pigs, without consideration of animal health impact. It detailed horrifying and often unsuccessful results. At least 6,500 animals were known to have starved to death at this facility, and unknown numbers died from negligence from easily treatable infections, exposure to bad weather, or attacks by predators—all of this at a cost of almost \$200 million of taxpayer money over the last 10 years, resulting in this grotesque abuse of animals.

There is the ability to abuse, neglect, and even torture farm animals because there is no law that requires their protection. There is a loophole in the Animal Welfare Act which exempts farm animals used for research.

Think about it. If you are abusing, neglecting, or even torturing farm animals for agricultural research, you don’t have to obey the Animal Welfare Act. It is absolutely unjustified and outrageous.

This week, Congressman MICHAEL FITZPATRICK—my cochair of the Congressional Animal Protection Caucus—and I are introducing the AWARE Act which would require that in Federal facilities, farm animals used in agricultural research be included in the definition of “animal” under the Animal Welfare Act.

It seems rather simple. It would ensure that these animals are treated like other warmblooded animals in other Federal research facilities. It is time that we step up to stop this horrific abuse. There is no reason that the USDA agricultural research facilities experimenting on farm animals should not be held to the same standards as Federal research facilities that conduct lifesaving disease research with the same kinds of animals.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this AWARE Act, the Animal Welfare and Agricultural Research Endeavors. It is supported by The Humane Society, the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Humane Legislative Fund, and countless people across the country who deeply believe in animal welfare.

This is our job in Congress, and this is a small step that we can quickly make to show that we respond to animal abuse and that the Federal Government will lead by example.

I would urge my colleagues to join Congressman FITZPATRICK and me as members of the Congressional Animal Protection Caucus to work together on behalf of God’s creatures who cannot speak for themselves.

PUERTO RICO STATEHOOD ADMISSION PROCESS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the most forceful and ambitious statehood admission bill for Puerto Rico in U.S. history. The bill, fittingly, has 51 original cosponsors from both parties.

Before I describe the bill, let me explain its background. In 2012, the Puerto Rico government sponsored a referendum in which voters rejected Puerto Rico’s current territory status and expressed a clear preference for statehood.

In the 113th Congress, at my initiative, the President proposed and Congress approved an appropriation of \$2.5 million to fund the first federally sponsored status vote in Puerto Rico’s history. The funding will remain available until it is used by the Puerto Rico government.

While the law does not prescribe the exact format of the ballot, it does establish important conditions; namely, the law provides that the U.S. Department of Justice must certify that the ballot and voter education materials are consistent with U.S. law and polity.

The bipartisan bill I am introducing today flows from and builds upon the 2012 referendum and the Federal appropriation enacted in response to that referendum. In other words, this bill is being filed now because the strategic foundation is firmly in place.

Every action I take is designed to advance the statehood cause because it is beyond dispute that territory status is the main source of Puerto Rico’s grave economic and social problems. My constituents have no interest in symbolic gestures or empty rhetoric. They care only about concrete steps that bring Puerto Rico closer to equality.

My bill would authorize a vote to be held in Puerto Rico within 1 year of the bill’s enactment—that is, by no later than the end of 2017. The ballot would contain a single question: Shall Puerto Rico be admitted as a State of the United States?

To conduct this vote, the Puerto Rico government may use the \$2.5 million that Congress already approved since this format clearly satisfies the conditions of the appropriations law. If a majority of voters affirm their desire for admission, the bill provides for an automatic series of steps to occur.

First, by February 2018, the President would issue a proclamation to begin Puerto Rico’s transition to statehood.

Second, the President would appoint a commission to prepare a report that describes the Federal laws that treat the territory of Puerto Rico differently than the States. The commission would complete the report by July 2018. The congressional committees of jurisdiction could then enact legislation to phase in equal treatment of Puerto

Rico during the transition period so the admission process is structured and orderly.

Third, in November 2020, the American citizens of Puerto Rico would vote for President and Vice President, two U.S. Senators, and voting Members of the U.S. House.

Finally, on January 1, 2021, the President would proclaim Puerto Rico to be a State. Puerto Rico’s congressional Representatives would be sworn into office, and Puerto Rico would be treated on equal footing with all other States.

My bill is modeled on the legislation enacted by Congress with respect to Alaska and Hawaii. When Alaska and Hawaii were territories, they each held votes sponsored by their local governments in which voters expressed a desire for statehood. This is also what occurred in Puerto Rico in 2012.

Ultimately, Congress enacted an admission act for Alaska in 1958 and an admission act for Hawaii in 1959. Those acts of Congress provided for admission to occur once a majority of voters in each territory affirmed in a federally sponsored vote that they desired statehood. That is precisely what my bill would do with respect to Puerto Rico.

Every Member of Congress who cosponsors this bill is standing up for a powerful, powerful principle, which is this: the people of Puerto Rico are U.S. citizens, they have enriched the life of this Nation for generations, and they have fought and died to defend her.

If a majority of Puerto Rico’s voters affirm their desire in a federally sponsored vote to become a full and equal part of the American family, the will of the people should be honored. Democracy requires no less.

SERVICEMEMBER ASSISTANCE FOR LAWFUL UNDERSTANDING, TREATMENT, AND EDUCATION ACT

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

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last week, my fellow Chester County Congressman, PATRICK MEEHAN, introduced the Servicemember Assistance for Lawful Understanding, Treatment, and Education Act, otherwise known as the SALUTE Act.

I want to praise Congressman MEEHAN for his leadership on this issue and speak a little bit about it in support of the SALUTE Act.

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It is going to help veterans overcome addictions and PTSD by providing yearly Federal funding for Veterans Treatment Courts. This is an opportunity for all of us to help troubled veterans break free of the cycle and get the help that they need.

It is estimated that one in five veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq will experience a stress-related

mental illness. Veterans Treatment Courts assist soldiers who are charged with nonviolent crimes and who are struggling with certain addictions or mental illnesses. Veterans Treatment Courts provide an opportunity for them to get their lives back on the right track and to not spiral down a track of addiction.

Pennsylvania, as you may know, is a hub of veterans courts, as 18 counties have them. In fact, three counties that I represent—Chester, Montgomery, and Berks—have Veterans Treatment Courts, and I have seen firsthand as the Chester County commissioner how impactful and effective they can be. I have witnessed firsthand how important it is to the lives of returning veterans. So I share with you a quote that I received from Chester County District Attorney Tom Hogan:

These brave men and women have sacrificed so much to serve our country and protect our freedom. We owe it to them to help them when they return home. Veterans court provides the structure and support to address the unique needs of combat veterans who find themselves in the criminal justice system. It is our duty to thank our veterans by offering help as they readjust to civilian life.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the SALUTE Act, and I want to thank, again, Congressman MEEHAN for introducing it. When the time comes, I encourage my colleagues to full-heartedly support the SALUTE Act. It is commonsense legislation that will help our Nation's heroes.

IN SUPPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S FISCAL YEAR 2016 BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in full support of President Obama's fiscal year 2016 budget.

It is a budget that is firmly rooted in middle class economics, designed to benefit working families and middle-income Americans. It is a budget that will facilitate access to quality, affordable child care and will dramatically expand prekindergarten education in a way that will allow the children of middle class Americans to get off to a faster start in life.

President Obama's budget, with the full support of House Democrats, will also address wage stagnation. It is designed to put more income—more money—in the pockets of middle class Americans and of those who aspire to be part of the middle class. It will address the fact that, since the early 1970s, the productivity of the American worker has increased consistently, yet middle class wages have remained stagnant. That is a systematic problem that President Obama, Leader PELOSI, and House Democrats are determined to address on behalf of the middle class.

President Obama's budget is also designed to increase the affordability of a

college education. We know that Americans right now are burdened with more than \$1 trillion in student loan debt. That type of debt limits the ability of younger Americans to purchase a home, to start a family, to open up a new business, to take a chance. It limits their ability to robustly access the American Dream. President Obama's budget is designed to allow the sons and daughters of the middle class to pursue their dreams in a more meaningful fashion.

When President Obama took office, he inherited an economic train wreck as a result of the Great Recession that was handed to him by the policies of the previous Republican administration. Through the leadership of President Obama, working closely with Democrats in the House and the Senate, we have turned the economy around. We have gotten it back on the right track.

So the question that we in this Congress face today is: Will we continue the policies of middle class economics, which are designed to benefit working families and moderate income Americans, or are we going to regress to the policies of trickle-down economics, which have failed middle class Americans time and time again?

I am in my second term. When I first got to the Congress, I assumed that trickle-down economics was dead, doomed by the fact that it has failed over and over again. Apparently, it has been revived.

In its most recent incarnation, House Republicans would like to drop the top tax rate from 39.6 percent on the wealthiest Americans all the way down to 25 percent. Their argument is: "Don't worry, everybody is going to benefit." But that hasn't worked in the past. In fact, I am convinced that middle class economics is far more preferable to trickle-down economics, which, as it relates to the middle class, simply means you may be lucky to get a trickle, but you are guaranteed to stay down. That is what the record says.

Bill Clinton inherited a recession. The top tax rate on high-income earners was 31 percent. He raised it to 39.6 percent, and the purveyors of trickle-down economics predicted economic doom and gloom. What happened when President Clinton focused on the middle class? More than 20 million jobs were created. He then handed over a budget surplus to President Bush and his coconspirators in the Congress, and like drunken sailors, they blew that budget surplus on failed wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and on a tax cut that disproportionately benefited the wealthy and the well off. Did trickle-down economics work when they dropped the top tax rate to 35 percent? No. During the Bush Presidency, 650,000-plus jobs were lost.

President Obama inherited this economic mess, and in partnership with Democrats in the House and in the Senate, he renewed his focus on the

middle class. He even raised the top tax rate back up to 39.6 percent. Doom and gloom was predicted, but what happened? The economy is humming. The stock market is way up. Gas prices are way down. The unemployment rate has come down. Economic growth is exceeding all of the competitors across the world.

There is more to be done, but for us to be successful, we have got to abandon the focus on the wealthy and the well off and pursue middle class economics.

JOHN TEDORE, A HERO

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

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a native Iowan—John Tedore from West Des Moines—for his service to our great country.

Mr. Tedore was a member of the elite First Special Service Force that became renowned for their missions in Italy and southern France in World War II.

Mr. Tedore was in Washington, D.C., yesterday—in the great Capitol Building here—along with nearly 40 of his fellow veterans, known as the Devil's Brigade, to receive the prestigious Congressional Gold Medal, which is the highest honor Congress can bestow upon civilians. For the men of the Devil's Brigade, this is an honor highly deserved. John Tedore—this hero, this Iowan—stood for all of those who could not be here so that they may never be forgotten for their selfless and heroic service.

We must never forget those who answered the call to serve to protect our rights and our liberties and to make this a safer world for this Nation and the cause of freedom.

To John Tedore and your fellow members of the Devil's Brigade, from a grateful nation and from this grateful Iowan, congratulations on this highest of honors, and God bless you.

THE NEXT AMERICAN CENTURY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak briefly about two aspects of the President's budget that really struck me and a number of my constituents in Philadelphia and Montgomery County as so important.

As a new Member, it has been a special honor to be serving in this Chamber, and I have had a few incredibly special moments that all Americans can identify with. One is the swearing-in of a new Congress, something that dates back to right after our First Congress was sworn in right after the U.S. Constitution was signed in Philadelphia. One of those other moments—a constitutionally mandated moment—is