

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

when the President comes to Congress to give a report on the state of the Union from time to time, as the Constitution says.

Sitting right here in this Chamber and hearing President Obama speak about the state of our Union would be exciting in any year, in any circumstance, but it was especially this year because, for the first time in 6 years—after the deepest and darkest recession in almost a century—we have turned the page. After 6 rather difficult years of digging our way out of a ditch, we now can build a foundation to move forward. With that, there were two areas specifically that the President focused on.

One was a universal college education. As the first of my family to go to college, I know I wouldn't have had the opportunities that I have had in life without having a higher education. I needed a combination of scholarships and student loans and every sort of work-study job imaginable to get there, as well as help from parents and even grandparents. That is a story similar to so many working and middle class Americans, but for too many Americans today the cost of a higher education is simply unaffordable.

The question is: Do you go without it at all even though two-thirds of the jobs by the end of this decade will require some form of a higher education? Do you just forgo a higher education altogether, or do you take on tens of thousands in student loans and then be burdened with paying back that debt upon graduation? Either scenario is far from ideal.

What the President said—and I completely agree—is let's make 2 years of community college universal and free in this country. Now, that may be unthinkable today. 100 years ago, it was unthinkable that a free, fully funded high school education would be universal. Yet, for us, that is the reality today. It would be unthinkable for Americans of my age and even of an older age to imagine a time in which high school was not universal. Let's get there with 2 years of a college education.

The second area the President focused on was the child care tax credit. For so many working families and young families, affording child care is simply unaffordable. We have an opportunity through this budget to change that, to build on the successes of the last 6 years and to finally prepare to make this century the second American Century. Ensuring that we have good, high-quality, affordable child care is vital to this middle class.

The reason the last century was the American Century was that we had the largest and most productive middle class in the world. Access to higher education and access to child care are two necessary ingredients in making sure we have a strong and vibrant middle class in the 21st century.

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 28 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 Dean Curry, Life Center Church, Tacoma, Washington, offered the following prayer:

Father, what an honor it is to be in Your presence here today. We celebrate this morning what You have done through the United States of America.

We acknowledge the hand of Providence in our history and the force of inspiration for our future.

Be with us here now most significantly in our present that we could see what others do not see, that we could do what others fear to do, so that we could change what others are afraid to change.

We are reminded that we are so small and You are so big. Our problems are daunting, and our responsibilities are many. But we look to You today, to Your principles and to Your goodness, that we could be everything You designed for us to be, that we could do everything You planned for us to do, that others may be free.

Today, may every decision made, every plan contemplated, be sprinkled with Your grace and be inspired from Heaven. Change us; change our minds and our hearts that we may change our destiny and the destiny of others both here and around the world.

I pray all of this with respect to all faiths in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. WALORSKI 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 REVEREND DEAN CURRY

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

There was no objection.

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor today's guest chaplain, Reverend Dean Curry, from Tacoma, Washington.

We are blessed to have such a remarkable pastor with us today who is a leading figure in the region that I represent. Reverend Curry's Life Center Church in Tacoma is a vibrant place where folks young and old come for worship.

He knows what it means to give back to your community. Each month, he brings together civic and elected leaders in Tacoma for a faith breakfast, and volunteers from his church are always helping out those going through hard times.

The motto of his church sums up his work pretty remarkably: "It's all about the people." That is why it is fitting to have Reverend Curry here today. Like the United States House of Representatives, his mission is to serve the people.

Reverend Curry is an example of how we should do more to listen, respect, and understand one another better so we can leave a place for future generations where opportunities are available for everyone.

Reverend Curry has also led humanitarian missions to troubled regions like Iraq and Afghanistan to offer assistance and hope to those suffering through tragedies. He is someone who "walks the walk" when it comes to fighting for equality, religious freedom, and social justice both in his community and around the world.

Whether he is listening to stories in refugee settlements or helping out with a national prayer breakfast, his passion for others shines through, and it is an honor to welcome him today.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FLEISCHMANN) 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 4, 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 the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on February 4, 2015 at 9:22 a.m.:

Appointment:

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki).

United States Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control.