

Last Tuesday, Sheriff St. Lawrence died after a long fight with cancer. He was 81 years old. He was a dedicated law enforcement professional for Chatham County for over 50 years, 23 of those years spent as sheriff.

A U.S. Air Force veteran, he joined the Chatham County Police Department in 1959, after leaving the service. He was appointed to the State Peace Officers Standards and Training Council twice. He was named Police Chief of the Year three times during his tenure.

In 1992, he ran for sheriff and won, being reelected five times. In his 20 years as sheriff, he oversaw numerous changes to the department, including the construction of a new jail.

He was a gentleman, a professional, and a mentor. He was a man of few words and believed in personal responsibility. He loved the Sheriff's Department, and he loved the people that worked there.

I commend Sheriff Al St. Lawrence for years of service to his country and to the Chatham County Sheriff Department. We should all strive to achieve the success and admiration that Sheriff St. Lawrence achieved through his years of service.

INJUSTICE FOR LAQUAN MCDONALD

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

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, we have seen an uproar over the death of Laquan McDonald, and rightfully so. But, sadly, the injustice for Laquan goes much deeper.

Laquan McDonald suffered more tragedy in his short life than anyone should have to bear. As a child, Laquan was abused at home. He was then handed over to the Department of Children and Family Services, where he was sexually molested, not just once but in two different foster homes.

At 17 years old, Laquan was shot 16 times by an on-duty police officer. Even after death, the injustice continued. It took 400 days before the officer who shot Laquan faced charges.

We should all be ashamed at how our society failed Laquan McDonald.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind my colleagues that Black lives matter, that Laquan McDonald's life matters, and justice matters. We should all be working to ensure that Laquan gets the justice that he has been denied for so long and to end the cycle of poverty, abuse, and injustice that shaped his life.

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MEDICAL DEVICE TAX

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

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to continue to lead the fight to

repeal the medical device tax. This is a tax on revenue rather than profit. It leads to some of the highest corporate tax rates in the world and creates undue harm to an industry that not only creates jobs, but also improves our health and well-being.

A company located in my district, NuMed, employs over 80 people and produces stents and other vascular equipment. The medical device tax prevents NuMed from increasing their budget on research and development by 15 percent.

AngioDynamics, another company in my district, employs 950 people and creates more than 100 different medical devices, including the AngioVac System used to treat blood clots. Recently, one of their executives said, "The \$1 million that AngioDynamics pays in Federal excise taxes on medical device company revenues could instead be used to employ another 10 to 15 people."

We must repeal this burdensome tax to help create jobs and improve patient outcomes.

THE FEDERAL BUDGET

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, the bipartisan budget agreement signed into law last month helped to avert another manufactured political crisis here in Washington. But our work is not done. If we don't pass a spending bill before December 11, working Americans and seniors will face another dangerous government shutdown.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, Republican leadership continues to threaten this process over radical policy riders like defunding Planned Parenthood. Unfortunately, in his first press conference, the new Speaker could not rule out another Republican government shutdown.

As we face tremendous threats to our national security, we need to set politics aside. Some things in this House have to be exempt from political gamesmanship, and we would certainly think that keeping government open and functioning would be one of the things that we take out of the political conversation.

Mr. Speaker, the American people want us to do our job. Our job is to make sure that this government runs, and we can't do that if we continue to use politics and the threat of a government shutdown to achieve what can't be achieved through the normal legislative process.

Mr. Speaker, we need to do our job.

HONORING JIM HOFFMAN OF WAYNE COUNTY, NEW YORK

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

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of Wayne County,

New York's most dedicated public servants, Jim Hoffman, and to send him off on a well-deserved retirement.

Jim's esteemed career in public service began when he enlisted in the U.S. Navy as a young man. It continued with his 30 years with the New York State Police, five terms serving as town supervisor in Williamson and 10 years as chairman of the Wayne County Board of Supervisors.

Jim has faithfully served the constituents in the Town of Williamson and all of Wayne County. Under his leadership, Wayne County is certainly a better place to live. He has lowered taxes in Williamson, kept taxes stable across the county, supported our region's vast community of growers and farmers, emerged as a leader in the fight against Plan 2014, and made the Town of Williamson the first in all of New York State to function 100 percent on solar power.

There is no question that Jim's lifetime of service deserves recognition. He has been a great friend, mentor, and confidant throughout my time representing the people of the 24th Congressional District in the House of Representatives. I am so very appreciative for all that he has done for me and for our community.

Jim, congratulations to you on a long and distinguished career. Enjoy your retirement with your children and grandchildren. God bless you.

THE AFGHANISTAN CODEL

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

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to discuss our country's ongoing efforts in Afghanistan.

Over Thanksgiving, I had the honor to join five of our other colleagues from the House Veterans' Affairs Committee for a trip to spend the holiday with our outstanding service men and women in Kabul, Kandahar, and Bagram Air Force base.

Additionally, we received numerous briefings from senior military, State Department, and intelligence officials. We heard about the multitude of challenges facing the young democracy in Afghanistan, ranging from hard security challenges emanating from the Taliban, al Qaeda, and even ISIL, to societal challenges in a country with 92 percent illiteracy.

This is now primarily an Afghan fight with just over 9,800 American troops remaining in the country. However, the threat of international terrorism and the need to ensure that the country never again becomes a haven for those seeking to target the United States means that we will need to have a presence in Afghanistan for some time to come.

Mr. Speaker, I was encouraged by the dedication of the men and women in uniform who continue to demonstrate their commitment to our mission. I was also encouraged by the resolve

demonstrated by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to reduce corruption and rebuild the economy.

Make no mistake, Afghanistan faces many challenges in the years ahead. But with the help of the United States of America, the international community, the tenacity of the Afghan leaders, and some good luck, the Afghan people can hope for peace and greater prosperity in the future.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT: NO CLIMATE CASUALTIES

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, bullet holes are still visible in the walls of cafes, and the graves are fresh for those lives that were stolen by ISIS fighters in the streets of Paris. Meanwhile, the President is in Paris talking about his priority—the real threat—climate change.

While America has been unable or unwilling to defeat ISIS, it has been front and center in the war on climate change. Former CIA Director Mike Morrell said: “And we didn’t go after oil wells—actually hitting oil wells that ISIS controls because we didn’t want to do environmental damage. . . .”

The President has decided that the threat to the environment is more serious to him than the threat of ISIS terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, oil funds ISIS’ murderous reign of terror, but the President’s new limited war doctrine has one rule of engagement: no climate casualties.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for bombs to rain down over the ISIS war chest. Stop the flow of the blood oil. Not one more life should be lost because of a negligent and backwards strategy of a limited war based on climate change, an environmental-waged war that promotes not harming the environment over harming people.

And that is just the way it is.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday this House rose once again to observe a moment of silence for victims of gun violence, this time for the police officer, the veteran, and the mother of two who were gunned down in Colorado Springs nearly 3 years after 20 schoolchildren and 6 brave educators were shot to death at Sandy Hook Elementary School in my district. It is time for moments of silence to end. It is time for action.

Gun violence is a public health crisis that deserves this House to take action now. That is why we should establish a select committee on gun violence prevention.

We are all understandably concerned about terrorism; yet, this House just yesterday blocked action to prevent terrorists, those on the Terrorist Watchlist, from acquiring deadly weapons to kill Americans.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for this House to truly honor victims of gun violence. I invite my colleagues to join us next week for the 3rd Annual National Vigil to Prevent Gun Violence on Wednesday, December 9. The vigil will be held at St. Mark’s Church on Capitol Hill.

Please come and join me. Stand with the families and the victims of gun violence from my district and across the country.

RECIPROCAL DEPOSITS

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

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, to realize their American Dream, many Minnesotans rely on access to financial products like business loans and mortgages. Not only do these financial instruments benefit individuals and families, but they help build healthy communities.

Unfortunately, in some rural and urban areas, outdated regulations threaten the ability of our community banks to offer these important financial products.

Together with Congresswoman GWEN MOORE, I have introduced legislation that will address this problem. H.R. 4116 allows certain community banks to trade large bank deposits over a secure network.

This will enable depositors to do business with local community banks while still maintaining FDIC insurance instead of seeing important and necessary financial capital that could be used for local projects, purchases, and investment leave local communities.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is good for Minnesota. And please forgive my bias, but I happen to believe what is good for Minnesota is good for our country.

FIGHTING FOR WORKING AMERICANS

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

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, Republicans are willing to shut down government in a battle to protect riders that hurt working-class Americans.

During these budget and appropriation debates, Republicans have fought tooth and nail to cut investments in important programs for working families, yet they are willing to spend billions on tax expenditures for wealthy corporations.

On top of that, Mr. Speaker, they want to add riders that gut consumer protections, labor rights, environmental protections, and a woman’s right to choose.

A recent poll found that nearly seven in ten Americans agree with the fol-

lowing statement: “I feel angry because our political system seems to only be working for the insiders with money and power.”

As Members of Congress, I urge colleagues on all sides to come together and heed the American people’s wishes and to put their interests up front. We need to make sure that we can pass a budget bill that isn’t loaded up with policy riders and more things that would confuse the basic issues.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot abide proposals attacking the National Labor Relations Board and a worker’s right to organize. We cannot abide efforts to undermine the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which is helping Americans meet their financial needs.

Mr. Speaker, we must stand up for the American consumer. I urge all parties to come together to reach these important goals.

RETIREMENT OF CHARLOTTE DIETRICH, POTTER COUNTY PLANNING DIRECTOR

(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, I rise today to congratulate Charlotte Dietrich on her upcoming retirement as planning director of Potter County, located in Pennsylvania’s Fifth Congressional District.

Charlotte was promoted to that position in April of 2001 and had previously served as a secretary for Potter County.

In her more than 14 years as planning director, Potter County became the only county in Pennsylvania to have a Wellhead Protection Plan in place for each water authority in the county, mapping each source of water, which is perhaps our most important natural resource.

Additionally, under Charlotte’s leadership, the county’s planning department worked to address issues surrounding the development of wind power in the county, along with a huge expansion of gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale formation.

A Potter County commissioner recently called Charlotte a born planner. I know those skills have been a great asset for the county in the past decade with so many big changes.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Charlotte the best of luck in retirement.

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the University of Houston, one of our Nation’s leading public research universities, on its recent string of success inside and outside the classroom.