

facing our Nation in the wake of the terrorist attacks in California.

Earlier this week, the President addressed the country to talk about the impact of the Islamic State and the attacks in California. From what I saw, he gave his usual very brief and very naive analysis of the threat of global terrorism. Yet, once again, he still failed to provide any actual plan or strategy.

He made very clear that he believes his plan is working. He talked a lot about how we would continue to do the same things we have been doing for months. Meanwhile, ISIS continues to grow, expanding their influence, and hitting targets far from their home in Syria.

It is unfortunate that very few people I have spoken to feel surprised by the lack of focus and direction coming from the White House. This is the same President that has been dismantling our military piece by piece. He has continued to push for unsustainably low funding for our military in favor of social programs, while making dangerous deals that jeopardize the safety and security of our Nation and our allies overseas.

All the while, he claims to be putting the safety and security of the American people first. It seems abundantly clear to me and the rest of the country that the most important thing to this President is his personal legacy of instituting social change and other liberal wish-list items.

During the same address, where he claimed all of his plans were working and we should continue along the same course, he also argued that part of the solution to Muslim extremism was more gun control here in America. Obviously, the President's memory is pretty weak. The Boston bombers did unthinkable harm with household items. The San Bernardino terrorists—yes, terrorists—had a dozen pipe bombs in their residence. These people are dedicated to destroying the West and instituting a caliphate. Do you really think that telling them that they can't buy an AR-15 is going to stop them from hurting people?

Let me be clear: this is not a gun issue. This is a terrorism issue. To combine the two is a blatant attempt to capitalize on a tragedy that should be looked at with disdain. But you never know. It wasn't too long ago that Rahm Emanuel, former chief of staff to President Obama, would always remind his party to "never let a good crisis go to waste."

This isn't the first time though. Last week, while everyone was talking about the terrorist attack in California—and despite pleas from the Marine Corps to make exemptions to certain military occupational specialties—the Secretary of Defense made the historic, but unbelievably dangerous, decision to open all combat jobs to women.

But if there is one thing the President loves to do, it is to ignore his sen-

ior military leadership. Many people believe that the emergence of ISIS is directly related to his premature withdrawal from Iraq, and I agree.

These are just a few examples of the AWOL nature of this President. But in this case, AWOL stands for "absent without leadership."

What happened in Paris and here in California was a brutal reminder of just how dedicated our enemy is in fighting this war against us. Yet, the President only acknowledges it as a setback, similar to how he refused to acknowledge ISIS at all over a year ago. And when he finally did, he brushed it off, calling them the JV team. The night before the Paris attacks, he stated that ISIS had been contained.

This President is either delusional or unbelievably misinformed. Either way, it does not inspire confidence for the next year of his Presidency. Now here we are. He was wrong then, and he is wrong now.

Mr. Speaker, while the President held his annual holiday ball on Monday night, I held a tele-town hall with my constituents. When asked if they felt more safe or less safe under this administration's handling of our national security and foreign affairs, 92 percent of my constituents said they felt less safe, and 73 percent said that we should do anything in our power to destroy ISIS. I have got to say, this is a clear message that I think would resonate nationwide.

Time and again, the President, our Commander in Chief, has proven to be oblivious to the real threat that ISIS poses to our national security. He said that what we are doing is working, when it is clearly not.

Folks, we are under attack, and we cannot be afraid to call it what it is: This enemy is radical Muslim extremism.

The American people don't feel safe under this President's failed policies. The time has come to change course in this new war against ISIS, secure our borders, halt the Syrian refugee program, and start listening to the American people.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded not to engage in personalities toward the President.

REMOVE ESSURE FROM THE MARKET

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell the story of Angie Firmalino of Tannersville, New York, one of the tens of thousands of women harmed by the permanent sterilization device, Essure.

Essure is a nickel-based coil that is designed to be inserted into the fallopian tube and cause tissue scarring, leading to blockage of the tube. However, tens of thousands of women have

complained of terrible side effects and excruciating pain. Women have died. And when the device has failed and women have become pregnant, this device has killed their unborn child. Yet, despite its failings, this device remains on the market with the full support of the Food and Drug Administration and industry.

In 2009, 3 months after the birth of Angie and her husband's last child, she underwent the Essure procedure. While the procedure itself was extremely painful, the pain didn't stop when she went home, as she began having side effects immediately thereafter.

For almost 2 years, Angie suffered from a sharp, stabbing pain in her lower left side, back pain, heavy and constant bleeding, joint pains, fevers, fatigue, and depression. Her doctor reassured her that it was just her body recovering from the pregnancy, C-section, and Essure procedure, and that she would eventually get back to her old self. That did not happen.

In 2011, after nearly 2 years of pain and complications, Angie's doctor ordered an ultrasound to try to determine a cause. What was discovered was shocking. An Essure coil had dislodged itself from her right fallopian tube and had become embedded in the wall of her uterus. Meanwhile, the left coil was almost completely expelled, but twisted and coiled. These were the causes of her pain.

Overwhelmed and alone, Angie tried to comprehend the situation. She was never told that the coils could expel, migrate, or embed in other organs. She wondered how this could happen. Searching online for answers, she found little information and little comfort.

It took Angie weeks after identifying the problem to find a doctor she felt comfortable with for the removal surgery. With no information available about Essure removal, Angie located a doctor who seemed to know what they were doing and seemed to have a plan for the device's removal. Unfortunately, during the procedure, the Essure coils broke as they were removed, sending metal fragments, like shrapnel, further into her body.

In the years since, Angie has undergone four surgeries directly resulting from Essure, and eventually lost her fallopian tubes, uterus, cervix, and one ovary. And as her joints mysteriously began deteriorating, she has undergone an additional three surgeries on her joints.

Today, after a hysterectomy and surgery after surgery, Angie still lives with daily, chronic pain, joint issues, and debilitating headaches. And while some of her pain may be gone, the emotional scars have stayed with her.

At the age of 43, the mother of four, Angie says she is still not, nor will she ever be, her old self. But as a result of all this pain and suffering, she was able to do something pretty incredible: Angie started a Facebook group called the Essure Problems Group—something to fill the void that she found. It was a

place to tell her story and to see if others had been impacted the same way that she had.

Mr. Speaker, in the years since, this online community has surged to more than 24,000 members. Sadly, Angie now knows that she was not alone. Every day, this group connects women living through their own Essure nightmares; and every day, Angie is brought to tears at seeing the stories, many so similar to her own, of thousands of women around the country. Together with her Essure sisters, they now work toward one common goal: to remove this dangerous device from the market so that no more women are harmed.

I am proud to rise today as a voice for these women, to tell the Chamber that their stories are real, their pain is real, their fight is real. If the manufacturer or the regulatory industry tasked with oversight won't act, then we, as representatives of the thousands of harmed women, must act.

That is why I rise in support of the E-Free Act, a one-page bill to remove Essure from the market by forcing the Food and Drug Administration to revoke the pre-market approval that let this product into the public back in 2002.

Mr. Speaker, the E-Free Act can halt this tragedy. I urge my colleagues to join this fight because stories like Angie's are too important to ignore.

HOLY ANGELS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. McHENRY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. McHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize two fine institutions in my home community that I grew up in: Gaston County, North Carolina. I grew up in that community and spent most of my life living in Gaston County, and there is an incredible story.

Beginning in 1955, a newborn baby named Maria Morrow was brought to the Sisters of Mercy's motherhouse in Belmont, North Carolina.

□ 1045

Maria was born with severe physical disabilities, and her mother was overwhelmed and unable to care for her. The Sisters of Mercy nuns took Maria in, and, thus, Holy Angels was born.

As word about Maria spread throughout the community, State—and country, in fact—more children with special needs began arriving at Holy Angels. As each new child arrived, the Sisters of Mercy worked to meet their needs. Funds were raised, and the necessary facilities were built. Over time, more professional nursing and medical staff were hired. Today, Holy Angels provides full-time resident care as well as physical therapy, day programs, and vocational programs through their Cherubs Cafe and Life Choices locations.

Holy Angels' CEO, Dr. Regina Moody, and her dedicated team of professionals

continue to fulfill the promise that the Sisters of Mercy made when they took Maria in 60 years ago. That promise is now enshrined in Holy Angels' motto: Loving, living, and learning for the differently able.

Holy Angels has been serving those in need for 60 years, and their timeless spirit will be around forever in the families they have touched, in the lives they have touched, and in how they have helped shape our community in Gaston County. I honor Holy Angels, and I thank them for their service, not just for those people in their midst for whom they are providing care, but for what they mean to our community.

TONY'S ICE CREAM

Mr. McHENRY. Mr. Speaker, we also hear stories of small businesses being around for 10 or 20 or 30 years, and it is amazing, in and of itself, that a small business can survive that long. In my hometown of Gastonia, North Carolina, Tony's Ice Cream has been a landmark for over 100 years. In fact, this year marks its 100th anniversary.

In 1915, an Italian immigrant named Carmine Coletta began Tony's as a horse-drawn wagon that served ice cream to those in Gastonia's Loray Mill Village. Eventually, the first store was opened and took the name "Tony's" in honor of Carmine's brother-in-law, who managed the store. The current location was built in the 1930s and now is run by Carmine Coletta's grandson and his children. Generations of Gaston County kids—me included—have grown up knowing there is no better milkshake than one from Tony's. In fact, my favorite is chocolate.

To the Coletta family, I thank them for their service to our community. Really, building an enduring institution for a century is such a significant achievement, especially given the challenges that we face as a country and with the economy. They have meant a lot to their employees. They have also meant so much to generations of children, like me and so many others, in what they have provided.

I thank the Coletta family, and I honor them on their 100th anniversary. I also thank Holy Angels, on their 60th anniversary, for their significant contribution.

Mr. Speaker, it is an amazing place in which to grow up, Gaston County. It has such great values and also wonderful institutions there that I learned so much from as a child, growing up there with my two brothers and two sisters and my parents, from whom I learned so much. So I take this moment to recognize these fine institutions in Gaston County.

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 48 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOST) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Merciful God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Recent events and current international tensions have many living in fear. Continue to be "God With Us" through these days of contentious debate around the issue of our security.

As true statesmen and -women, may the Members of this assembly find the fortitude to make judgments to benefit all Americans at this time, and protect those who are vulnerable from those who would do them harm.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. 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 pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Maine (Ms. PINGREE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. PINGREE 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.

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.