

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The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.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 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

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

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, our country is in the midst of a prescription drug epidemic. Fifty Americans die each day from prescription drug overdoses. The epidemic is also affecting our Nation's veterans, who, in some VA facilities, are being overprescribed medications.

To combat this growing problem, my home State of Indiana and others have created statewide databases that collect data on medications prescribed to patients. It requires doctors and nurses to check patient records in the database before prescribing painkillers.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, VA facilities are not required by law to participate and have been known to overprescribe powerful medications.

Today, I introduced legislation requiring all Veteran Administration Medical Centers to participate in their corresponding statewide drug monitoring program. Requiring VA facilities to comply will help ensure that veterans are not being overprescribed powerful pain medication.

As a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I take the well-being of each Hoosier veteran very seriously, and they deserve high-quality health care.

I also want to thank Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller for his commitment to fighting this epidemic in our State.

CALIFORNIA WATER LEGISLATION

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express the urgency to get California water legislation passed sooner

rather than later. After 4 consecutive dry years, drought conditions have become even more devastating. If you look at the NASA photos that have depicted, from outer space, the drought conditions, you see over 1 million acres that have laid fallow this year.

Many of us are fearful that if we receive the El Nino rains and snows that are predicted in the next 4 months, California will still not have the ability to move that water through the delta, where it is desperately needed, to other parts of the State; and many of our farm communities will continue to end up with another year of a zero—zero—water allocation, which would make the third year in a row. This would be devastating. It is both unacceptable, and it is avoidable.

Mr. Speaker, we in California can all retreat to our political corners and point fingers to lay blame, but that will not deliver an additional drop of water that is desperately needed, nor will it address the real harm done to the very people whose lives have been impacted and whose jobs have been lost.

The fact is we have to work together, and I will continue to work with multiple parties involved in the negotiations to try to bridge the gap and to get California water legislation passed. It is time to fix our broken water system, and it is long overdue.

WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, bipartisan majorities in the House and Senate, a majority of the States, and two Federal courts have rejected the administration's waters of the United States proposal by the EPA to reinterpret the Clean Water Act in order to seize authority over virtually every waterway, dry streambed, ditch, and puddle in the Nation. One Federal court found the proposal so excessive and so outside the President's authority that it issued a nationwide stay.

This week, the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office confirmed what we already knew: the administration not only violated Federal law when preparing this proposal, but also engaged in an illegal propaganda campaign to misinform the public, soliciting skewed comments in favor of their proposal using social media, even so far as using general comments on Twitter in order to skew their view.

Mr. Speaker, when is enough going to be enough? When the administration spends Americans' own tax dollars to solicit and persuade them to give up their rights, should that not be a wake-up call, that it has crossed a very bright ethical line?

It is time that the administration admit that the waters of the United States rule is an illegal power grab, an overreach, and withdraw it immediately.

PUERTO RICO

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I can't vote for the omnibus bill because it doesn't give the people of Puerto Rico some hope for a better future.

The omnibus bill does not provide a path forward amid budget cuts, cuts in services, growing unemployment, and the greedy banks and bondholders who demand more and more, even as the people of Puerto Rico have less and less.

Puerto Rico is a colony of the United States. Its sovereignty rests here in the Congress of the United States, and we will not do anything to help them.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

So tomorrow I tell the people of Puerto Rico, I will be with you.

I will vote against this omnibus budget because if there are no schools in Puerto Rico, if there is no law enforcement to protect the people on the streets, if there are no doctors or nurses healing the sick, there won't be a vote on this budget until there is justice for the people.

And I tell every Representative that votes in favor of this budget, you are denying a future for Puerto Rico and you are betraying the people of Puerto Rico.

Así que mañana le digo al pueblo de Puerto Rico, yo estaré con ustedes.

Votaré en contra de este presupuesto porque si no hay escuelas en Puerto Rico, si no hay policías para defender a la gente en la calle, si no hay doctoras o enfermeras para curar a los enfermos, tampoco habrá un voto para este presupuesto hasta que haya justicia para el pueblo.

Y le digo a todo Congresista que vota a favor de este presupuesto, que le niega un futuro a Puerto Rico y le traiciona al pueblo de Puerto Rico.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The gentleman from Illinois will provide a translation for the RECORD.

HONORING ARMY HELICOPTER PILOT KEVIN WEISS

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

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chief Warrant Officer Kevin Mose Weiss of McHenry County, a U.S. Army helicopter pilot who lost his life in service to our Nation. Returning to service just after Thanksgiving, Weiss and his copilot were flying a routine training exercise out of Fort Campbell in Kentucky on December 2 when the helicopter they were piloting went down, killing both men in the crash.

Mr. Speaker, Weiss dreamed of joining his World War II veteran grandfather in flying as a pilot for his country and was known by his grandfather's nickname, "Mose." Weiss was an avid outdoorsman and served our Nation overseas, flying a tour of duty in Afghanistan and earning numerous commendations and decorations.

Growing up through McHenry public schools, home schooling, and then Christian Liberty Academy, Weiss met his wife, Beth, through the youth program, Awana.

Weiss leaves behind a wife and two children, Lucas and Susan, and extended family and friends. They remember him as brave from a young age, a shoulder to lean on in difficult times, and a caring, loving brother, husband, and father.

The family Christmas celebration will be muted this year, but we are forever grateful for Mose's service and sacrifice.

COACHELLA MOSQUE FIRE

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

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, on December 11, 2015, the Islamic Society of Coachella Valley mosque was firebombed, with four people praying inside, 9 days after the San Bernardino terrorist mass shooting. The perpetrator is being charged for a hate crime.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly condemn violence toward innocent people, whether they are victims of terrorism or victims of hate crimes, whether they are randomly chosen or targeted for being Muslim. I strongly condemn the hate speech from politicians who capitalize on the fear of the fearful and the hate of the hateful for political gain.

As Americans, we believe in justice, the rule of law, and freedom of religion. Destroying terrorists and protecting law-abiding Muslim Americans are not mutually exclusive, and we must do both because we believe in justice, sentencing the guilty, and protecting the innocent.

That is why I stand with my local priests, pastors, rabbis, imams, and law enforcement to denounce the violence, pursue justice, and strengthen our humanity.

MEALS ON WHEELS

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

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise during this Christmas season to speak about a public-private partnership that creates real impact in the communities I represent: Meals on Wheels.

Today, a national army of 2 million volunteers is preparing and delivering about 1 million meals to America's most vulnerable, hungry, and isolated seniors.

I am very proud of the Third District of South Carolina for many reasons, but I am especially proud of programs like Pickens County Meals on Wheels in Liberty, South Carolina. This is just one of thousands of Meals on Wheels programs across the country that provides more than just meals. Meals on

Wheels provides nutritious meals, safety checks, and friendly visits on a daily basis, which allow seniors to age in their own homes with the independence and dignity that they deserve.

The precious and powerful combination of nutrition and socialization has proven to improve health, reduce falls, avert unnecessary visits to the ER, and reduce hospital admissions and readmissions. This, in turn, saves billions of dollars in Medicaid and Medicare expenses. In fact, a Meals on Wheels program can provide a senior with meals for an entire year for less than the cost of 1 day in the hospital or a week in the nursing home.

I call on my colleagues to learn more about these vital programs, the seniors they serve, and the grave and growing and expensive problem of senior hunger, a problem that will undoubtedly worsen if left unaddressed.

Merry Christmas, America.

AMERICAN OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDIT

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

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the fact that the American opportunity tax credit is going to become a permanent law as part of the tax extenders package. I introduced, as the prime sponsor, this legislation many years ago as part of the economic recovery efforts.

It has provided well over \$20 billion to millions of families, a \$2,500 tax credit in which 40 percent is refundable. Over the next 10 years, the Congressional Research Service suggests that well over \$60 billion will be provided to families to help meet higher education costs.

So I want to just take a minute to pause and reflect on the fact that the work that we do here can, in fact, impact many, many lives. I want to thank my colleagues for their initial support of this program and for, today, our efforts that will be successful to make it permanent, along with the earned income tax credit and a number of other very important tax credits for American families.

□ 0915

HONORING VALOR CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL'S VARSITY GIRLS SOFTBALL TEAM

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

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the girls varsity softball team at Valor Christian High School in Highlands Ranch, Colorado, on winning the 2015 Colorado 4A State championship game on October 25, 2015.

The students and staff who are part of the winning Eagles team deserve to

be honored for finishing what had already been a fantastic season by winning the State championship for the second time in 2 years.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the season, the girls of Valor Christian High School's softball team proved that hard work, dedication, and perseverance are the recipe for champions. The team was led to the championship title through the tireless leadership of their head coach, Dave Atencio, and his staff.

It is with great pride that I join with the families of Highlands Ranch, Colorado, in congratulating the Valor Christian Eagles on their second straight championship.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 2029, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016; PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 19, 2015, THROUGH JANUARY 4, 2016; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 566 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 566

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2029) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendment thereto, and to consider in the House, without intervention of any point of order, a motion offered by the chair of the Committee on Appropriations or his designee that the House concur in the Senate amendment with each of the two amendments specified in section 3 of this resolution. The Senate amendment and the motion shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the motion to its adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question except as specified in section 2 of this resolution. Clause 5(b) of rule XXI shall not apply to the motion.

SEC. 2. (a) The question of adoption of the motion shall be divided between the two House amendments specified in section 3 of this resolution. The two portions of the divided question shall be considered in the order specified by the Chair. Either portion of the divided question may be subject to postponement as though under clause 8 of rule XX.

(b) The portion of the divided question comprising the amendment specified in section 3(a) of this resolution shall be debatable for one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. The portion of the divided question comprising the amendment specified in section 3(b) of this resolution shall be debatable for one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

SEC. 3. The amendments referred to in the first and second sections of this resolution are as follows: