

I am constantly amazed by how technology has the capacity to improve and even save lives. That is exactly what Tom Ardolf and his team demonstrated with this automation system. I applaud their ingenuity.

RECOGNIZING THE GREENFIELD VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

(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 in recognition of the Greenfield Volunteer Fire Department stationed in Erie County, which has been named Pennsylvania's EMS Agency of the Year.

I am proud to have these dedicated volunteers stationed in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District. Just 2 years ago, their department only had two active volunteers, two active members. Now they have a team of 25, with an additional 2 junior members.

Responders say 70 percent of their calls are for emergency services and that their department hasn't missed a call in 2 years. Department officials say that they are overjoyed with the support they have received from both the volunteers and their community.

At a time when many volunteer fire departments in my State and across the Nation are shrinking, it is great to see this kind of growth. Mr. Speaker, it is the dedicated men and women, like the volunteers of Greenfield Township, that make our communities across Pennsylvania safe and great places to call home.

Well done, Greenfield Volunteer Fire Department.

NOAA FEES

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

Mr. GUINTA. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will begin charging New England fishermen new fees—\$710 per fishing trip, to be exact—that could destroy an historic industry.

Granite State fishermen—just 10 remaining boat operators—are already struggling under regulations that severely limit their catch. Now fishermen like David Goethel will also be responsible for the cost of Federal contractors who monitor them at sea.

NOAA has always paid these associated costs. The agency has delayed implementation of new fees several times over the years, but somehow NOAA has always found the extra money in its \$6 billion budget. In my letter to the chief administrator, I asked where the money is going, and the agency can't account for much of it, nor can they appreciate nor understand the economic impact of its regulations.

The gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN) and I introduced legislation

to stop NOAA's new fees. An historic way of life and good jobs up and down the New England coast are at stake. I ask for your help.

WE MUST PROTECT OUR ANGELS ABROAD

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Peace Corps volunteers are America's angels abroad. These unique volunteers are some of our best diplomats. They travel to the ends of the Earth to spread the message of democracy in lands far, far away.

Sometimes they work alone, and they help in remote regions of the world, areas where most of us could not even locate with Google Maps. They help small villages with sanitation and lack of water, for instance, and they do it all with great passion.

These volunteers are called to serve. However, we must serve and protect these volunteers as well.

Sometimes bad things happen to Peace Corps volunteers overseas. If so, America must help with medical services. We must help with care and counseling if they are assaulted in a foreign country. That is why Congress passed the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011.

But Congress must continue to advocate for victims in the Peace Corps. We need to make sure that our volunteers with service-related medical conditions and injuries are cared for and compensated both in the field and when they return home to America.

We must protect these angels abroad. After all, Mr. Speaker, they are ambassadors to the world from America.

And that is just the way it is.

RECOGNIZING AMPLIVOX SOUND SYSTEMS

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize AmpliVox Sound Systems, a small business in Northbrook, Illinois.

The Northbrook Chamber of Commerce recently named AmpliVox Business of the Year for 2016. AmpliVox has been providing the community with innovative sound systems since the 1950s and has grown to become an industry leader. In the past 5 years, the company's revenue grew by over 60 percent.

Most admirably, throughout this growth, the company has not lost sight of the community it serves. CEO Don Roth sets an example for small businesses across the Nation through his integrity, vision, and emphasis on community involvement.

Small businesses like AmpliVox are truly the backbone of our economy and our communities. Unfortunately, back-

wards Federal regulations are making it harder and harder for small businesses to thrive and create more jobs.

I am committed to doing all that I can in this body to support small businesses and get more people back to work.

Congratulations, again, to AmpliVox Sound Systems and Don Roth. Thank you for representing the Northbrook community with passion and integrity.

SUPPORTING THE LIVE LIKE BELLA CHILDHOOD CANCER FOUNDATION

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge our south Florida community to attend the Live Like Bella Superhero 5K Run/Walk this Saturday, March 5, at 8 a.m. at Zoo Miami, as you can see here.

Bella Rodriguez-Torres was the oldest daughter of Shannah and Raymond, the founders of the Live Like Bella Childhood Cancer Foundation.

Bella was diagnosed with an aggressive type of cancer when she was only 4 years old. Doctors and medical experts only gave her a few months to live, but Bella miraculously lived and courageously fought cancer six times until her death in 2013. During that time, Bella never feared. Instead, Bella encouraged everyone around her to enjoy life and appreciate each moment.

By creating this wonderful organization, Bella's parents and all of their supporters fight pediatric cancer while offering much-needed support for families. I encourage everyone in our community to attend this organization's run on Saturday and help end the number one disease killer of children today.

Let's all support the Live Like Bella Foundation.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOSEPH "NORMAN" O'CLAIR

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

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, one of our brave American heroes is the late U.S. Army Corporal Joseph O'Clair of Ashland, Maine.

Corporal O'Clair fought for our freedom and was seriously wounded in the brutal month-long Battle of Heartbreak Ridge in Korea.

In November, our congressional office presented Corporal O'Clair with his long-overdue Purple Heart. Sadly, Norm passed away just 2 weeks ago.

Norm was a loving husband, father, and grandfather from a small town in Aroostook County, Maine. He and Lydia were married for more than 61 years and raised five terrific children. After the war, Norm worked alongside two of his three sons at the Fournier Logging and Pinkham Lumber companies. He was an avid outdoorsman, a

terrific woodworker, and a lifelong member of the VFW, Post 9699, in Ashland.

For 240 years, patriotic Americans from small towns across this great country have fought for our freedoms and our way of life. Corporal Joe O'Clair of Ashland, Maine, was among 66,000 courageous veterans throughout Maine's Second Congressional District.

Thank you, Norm, for what you have given us. Your gift will last forever.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY PO- LICE OFFICER ASHLEY GUINDON

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

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the life of Prince William County Police Officer Ashley Guindon.

Ashley was 28 years old. She was shot and killed while responding to a domestic disturbance in Woodbridge, Virginia, on her first day on the job. She had just been sworn in the previous day, and the incident occurred only 90 minutes into her first training shift. She also had been serving her country and community as a member of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve.

She was a gifted and skilled officer, and this great sense of service that she had to her country and her community will be so missed by her family, friends, and colleagues on the force.

Twenty-eight years old. She represented the best of our youth, and her tragic murder is a reminder of the sacrifices that law enforcement in my district, in all of Virginia, and throughout our country make every day. We honor her service and her sacrifice and that of all of our dedicated, selfless law enforcement officers. They deserve our honor and respect every day.

I also ask that we continue to pray for her fellow officers, Jesse Hempen and David McKeown, who were also shot during this incident, and we pray for their full recovery.

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SUPREME COURT VACANCY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor and a privilege for me to once again stand on the floor of the House of Representatives along with my distinguished colleague from Ohio, Representative JOYCE BEATTY, coanchor of this CBC Special Order hour, this hour of power where, for the next 60 minutes, we will have an opportunity to speak directly to the American people about an issue of grave importance to the integrity of our democracy, and that is making sure that the United

States Senate fulfills their constitutional obligation to advise and consent as it relates to considering any Supreme Court nomination that President Obama sends up to that body.

We know that Justice Antonin Scalia has moved on after a long and distinguished career. Though I disagree with almost every single judicial opinion that he has issued, he served this Nation well.

Now that he has moved on, the Supreme Court, which is contained in Article III of the United States Constitution, has a vacancy. It is the obligation of the United States Senate to fill that vacancy by considering whatever nominee President Barack Obama sends forward.

Members of the United States Senate take an oath of office to faithfully discharge their responsibilities. When you look at Article II, section 2, of the United States Constitution, which gives the President the power to nominate someone to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court, it is the Senate that must consider that nominee.

Since the early part of the 20th century, there have been eight different Supreme Court nominees who have been voted on in an election year. Six of them actually were confirmed, but all eight of them received a hearing.

So, for the life of me, I can't figure out why Senator MITCH MCCONNELL thinks that he can get away with holding a nomination up without even the slightest bit of consideration. So we are going to explore that here today.

We will be joined by any number of distinguished Members of the House of Representatives and the Congressional Black Caucus, but let me proceed by yielding to my good friend and colleague from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY), my dynamic coanchor who does such a tremendous job on behalf of the people of the great State of Ohio and the city of Columbus.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you so much, Congressman JEFFRIES. It is certainly an honor and a privilege for me to join you this evening as coanchor for this Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour.

Congressman JEFFRIES' scholarship and distinguished talents as a member of the Judiciary Committee have not gone unnoticed. I thank him for leading by example in challenging us to initiate and follow through in sending a message on Senate Republicans' refusal to act on the Supreme Court vacancy.

In part, tonight's Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour, Senate Republicans: Do Your Job, does just that.

As you reflected in your opening statement, Article II, section 2, of the Constitution expressly designates that the President has a duty to name and the Senate has a responsibility to advise and consent a nominee to fill the seat.

President Obama takes this very seriously. He has stated: "It's a decision to which I devote considerable time,

deep reflection, careful deliberation, and serious consultation with legal experts, members of both political parties, and people across the political spectrum."

But Republicans have made a decision to completely refuse consideration of anyone that President Obama nominates to the Supreme Court. In fact, they have stated that they won't hold a hearing or a vote before the full Senate.

Senate Democrats never acted so recklessly when faced with this situation in 1988, when there was a vote to confirm Justice Kennedy. There was no talk of doing nothing until after that year's election because it was unthinkable then to leave the Court short-handed for that long. And it remains so now.

The power of the Court, Mr. Speaker, is reflected in the work it does. Its decisions often shape the policy as profoundly as any law passed by Congress or any action taken by the President of these United States.

When we look back to our history, especially as African Americans, the importance of the decisions handed down by the Supreme Court cannot be overstated.

For example, most of us are familiar with *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, which reversed *Plessy v. Ferguson* and its "separate but equal" ruling.

Striking down segregation in our Nation's public schools provided a major catalyst for the civil rights movement and made advances in desegregating housing, public accommodations, and institutions of higher education possible.

After *Brown*, the Nation made some great strides towards opening the doors of education to all students. Unfortunately, the promise of the *Brown* decision remains unfulfilled in many ways.

More than 2 million Black students attend schools where 90 percent of the student body is made up of minority students. On average, schools serving more minority populations have less experienced, lower paid teachers who are less likely to be certified.

A report from the Center for American Progress found that a 10 percent point increase in students of color at a school is associated with a decrease in per-pupil spending of \$75.

In many ways, more than 60 years after *Brown v. Board of Education* school systems in the United States are still separate and unequal. And we are just not witnessing educational disparities at the elementary and secondary education level. College enrollment is racially polarized.

White students are overrepresented in selective colleges, which have more resources to educate and to support them, while African American students are overrepresented in less selective institutions.

Mr. Speaker and Congressman JEFFRIES, you see where I am going with that.