

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENTS OF REPRESENTATIVES JOE PITTS AND MIKE FITZPATRICK

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize two friends, two Members of the Pennsylvania delegation, here in the House, Representative JOE PITTS and Representative MIKE FITZPATRICK, on their upcoming retirements and for their service to this Nation and to their constituents. It has been an honor to serve with both of these gentlemen over the past 8 years.

Representative PITTS' retirement caps a long career of service to his Nation. His career started as an educator, teaching math, science, English, physical education, along with coaching basketball.

He also served 5½ years in the United States Air Force with three tours in Vietnam. After being commissioned as a second lieutenant, he was promoted to the rank of captain by the time he left the service.

After settling in Pennsylvania, Representative PITTS continued to teach until he felt the call of public service, launching a 24-year career as a Pennsylvania State representative, and serving as chairman of the Committee on Labor Relations and later of the Appropriations Committee.

JOE was sworn in as a United States Representative in January of 1997, the beginning of a 20-year career here in Washington, D.C., and in serving the residents of Pennsylvania's 16th Congressional District. His ten terms here in the House of Representatives have included time spent chairing multiple subcommittees, including the Health Subcommittee for his last two terms here in Congress.

I have greatly enjoyed time spent with JOE during our weekly Bible studies, and I wish him and his wife, Ginny, the best of luck in retirement.

I also want to recognize the retirement of my friend and colleague, Representative MIKE FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania's Eighth Congressional District.

Like Representative PITTS, MIKE has dedicated much of his life to public service and was first elected in 1995 as a Bucks County commissioner, a position he served in for 10 years. During that time, he showed a commitment to bringing jobs to Bucks County, Pennsylvania, creating the county's first enterprise zone, which eventually created thousands of local jobs.

MIKE arrived in Washington, D.C., as the representative of the Commonwealth's Eighth Congressional District in January of 2005 and later worked to bring the national veterans' cemetery to Bucks County. More recently, he has served as the chairman of the Task Force to Investigate Terrorism Financing.

Personally, I have bonded with MIKE over our shared ties to the Boy Scouts

of America. We are both longtime Boy Scouts and fellow Eagle Scouts. MIKE's service to scouting includes time spent as president of the Bucks County Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

I wish Representative MIKE FITZPATRICK a great retirement, along with his wife, Kathy, and their children.

Congratulations, JOE and MIKE. It has been an honor serving with you.

MIDNIGHT RULES RELIEF ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Midnight Rules Relief Act, which would halt President Obama's ability to rush through politically motivated regulations during the remainder of his term.

It is clear that this administration will do everything possible to stop President-elect Donald Trump by jamming through as many backdoor regulations as possible before the clock runs out.

Last week, the American people spoke. They made it clear that they want to get our economy moving again. President-elect Trump must have the opportunity to enact policies without regulatory hindrance from the previous administration.

Mr. Speaker, since taking office, the President has ignored Article I of the Constitution and the will of the American people. For the past 8 years, the President has used his pen and phone to create a fourth branch of government, imposing executive orders and Federal rules and regulations to benefit his own radical political agenda.

In 2015 alone, the Federal Government implemented 3,400 regulations on Americans that cost us \$1.89 trillion in lost productivity and growth—a cost that averages nearly \$15,000 per American household. These regulations from unelected, unaccountable government bureaucrats are unfair and unjust.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents in Missouri are desperate for greater security and economic opportunity. This comes with elevating, not undermining, the spirit of self-governance for which our Nation was founded.

As a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives—the people's House—we must pass the Midnight Rules Relief Act to ensure that we are protecting the American people from reckless regulations that will continue to cripple our economy and target the pocketbooks of all Americans.

Transparency is critical when we pass important legislation that will directly affect our constituents. If the President has the ability to impose major regulations without the necessary time for congressional scrutiny and oversight, we are not doing our jobs to represent and protect our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I have spent my time in Congress fighting for our families,

fighting to repeal regulations that are hindering business growth, and fighting to provide a voice for the voiceless. It is our duty to pass this legislation and continue to fight against the President's irresponsible agenda and give our new President, Donald Trump, the support that he has earned.

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 39 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

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Thank You, O God, for giving us another day. Bless the Members of the people's House with focus and purpose as they gather these days before Thanksgiving. May their efforts give true cause for Americans to gather to give thanks.

In our world there are many places where peace is lacking and cause for thanksgiving rare. Send Your spirit of peace upon our world. Help us all see in those we view as enemies our brothers and sisters.

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

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 gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CICILLINE 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.

PASS MENTAL HEALTH REFORM BEFORE THIS SESSION ENDS

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

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, at noon today, back in my district in Pennsylvania, there is a funeral service for Scott Bashium, a brave policeman who died last week. His partner, James Saieva, was critically injured. Ultimately, the shooter died of suicide.

Had we had a functional mental health system, lives could have been saved. Families could have been spared the mourning.

The shooter's background is all too familiar: prior criminal convictions, mental health issues, and not taking medications.

How many more lives will be lost before we act?

This broken Federal and State approach to treating mental illness will not fix itself. It must be overhauled with the leadership of a new office of Assistant Secretary of Mental Health and Substance Use; changes to HIPAA laws that currently block families from helping, and fixing the crisis shortage of providers and hospitals.

Waiting will not work. Token or superficial changes won't work. Continuing to fund the current mess won't work. If anyone thinks it does, then I suggest you get on the phone and explain this to the officer's widow and children that everything is just fine.

Or the Senate can act and pass the changes we passed in H.R. 2646, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, which the House passed with near unanimous vote in July. Lives are at stake. Time is running short; and for Officer Bashium's family, time has run out.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF STANFORD LIPSEY, BUFFALO NEWS PUBLISHER

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the legacy of longtime Buffalo News publisher, Stanford Lipsey. Mr. Lipsey, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, will be most remembered for his significant contributions to the field of journalism. As the Buffalo News publisher, he saved it from closure, revamped its content and quality, and appointed the first woman editor in Buffalo News history.

Mr. Lipsey has also been a tireless advocate for projects that have contributed to Buffalo's revitalization—from leading efforts to preserve our architectural treasures to securing funding for our prestigious cancer center. He donated over 2 million books to low-income children and invested in projects like Re-Tree Western New York that helped to reforest our neighborhood parks after a surprise October snowstorm.

Mr. Lipsey's vision for Buffalo was one of hope. He recognized the city's potential, and he helped people of the city to realize their own potential. Although he was a native of Omaha, Ne-

braska, he loved his adopted city of Buffalo, New York. As we continue to work towards a better Buffalo, I hope to honor his dedication to our city.

MINNESOTA'S LENDERS HELPING TOMORROW'S BIG BUSINESS

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

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and thank the many banks and credit unions in Minnesota's Sixth District who were named a top Minnesota Lender by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

These lenders include BankVista, Woodlands National Bank, Minnesota Business Finance Corporation, KleinBank, and the Central Minnesota Credit Union.

Promoting small business is vastly important to our State's success. Our great State of Minnesota would not be where it is today without the contributions of these banks and credit unions. Today's small business is tomorrow's big business. Great Minnesota companies like Medtronic and Best Buy exist and have become the powerhouse companies they are today because of the vital support of local lenders.

Our community banks and credit unions ensure that business owners and entrepreneurs have the funds necessary to build a business from an idea, creating new jobs and opportunities for Minnesotans from all walks of life. We must never underestimate the importance of our community banks and credit unions, and I am proud to stand here today to recognize their work.

Again, congratulations, and thank you for being an important part of our community and our State.

REJECT STEVE BANNON'S WHITE HOUSE APPOINTMENT

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I led 168 of my colleagues in sending a letter to President-elect Donald Trump, asking that he rescind his decision to appoint alt-right leader Steve Bannon to serve as White House Chief Strategist. This appointment undermines the President-elect's pledge to bring our country together.

As executive chairman of Breitbart News, Mr. Bannon repeatedly and aggressively pushed stories that promote anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and racism. During an interview last summer, Mr. Bannon bragged that Breitbart was "the platform for the alt-right," a movement that upholds White nationalism while strongly rejecting diversity in any form.

Under his leadership, Breitbart has referred to a leading Republican columnist as a renegade Jew. He suggested that young Muslims in the West are a ticking time bomb. He declared

that the Confederate flag proclaims a glorious heritage, and he praised the alt-right as a smarter version of old-school racist skinheads.

I hope that the President-elect and Republican Members of Congress will join us in good faith in rejecting Mr. Bannon's appointment and the ugly, divisive message it sends to so many across our country.

THE LATEST COLOMBIA FARC AGREEMENT

(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, despite some modest revisions in Colombia's new deal with the FARC, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization, this is still a sweetheart deal for these narcoguerrillas.

Under this deal, FARC members will still be allowed to run for public office; and I worry that while in office, FARC officials will undermine the progress made in Colombia.

We have already seen a significant increase in drug trafficking from Colombia since negotiations with the FARC began, and there should be no doubt that the FARC, one of the largest narcoterrorist groups in the world, is responsible for this increase.

What kind of increase in drug trafficking should we expect if these narcoterrorists are given even more power and more influence in Colombia's government?

Mr. Speaker, the Colombian people rejected the prior FARC agreement, and I believe that their concerns must be addressed before any revised agreement is finalized.

President Santos will be here in Washington to meet with Members of Congress tomorrow, and I hope he addresses our concerns.

REJECT STEVE BANNON'S WHITE HOUSE APPOINTMENT

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleague, Congressman CICILLINE, and 158 others in urging President-elect Trump to dismiss the notion of Steve Bannon as being stationed outside the Oval Office.

I have been deeply disturbed by the increase in hate speech and intimidation directed at people based on color, religion, gender, and sexual orientation, as well as outbreaks of violence.

Oregon's largest school district just sent a message home with the children dealing with families because of the problems there and the need to unite to prevent further activity.

One thing we can all agree on is that the protection of all our citizens, especially our children, is not a partisan issue. Violence and destruction of public property accomplishes nothing. I