

and Mr. Hencely was one of 16 soldiers who were injured. He was immediately transported to Germany for treatment and surgery, but is currently in critical condition.

This attack is a sobering reminder of the harsh reality that our soldiers must endure during their deployment.

I encourage everyone to keep our Nation's soldiers in their thoughts and, especially, Mr. Winston Hencely during his time of need.

Mr. Hencely, thank you for your service to our country, and we will be with you every step of the way.

RECOGNIZING JOHN RUTLEDGE

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Mr. John Rutledge, who passed away on September 11, 2016, at the age of 96.

Mr. Rutledge's life has been quite extraordinary as he has been on hand for some incredible events in our Nation's history.

On December 7, 1941, Mr. Rutledge was aboard the USS California during the attack on Pearl Harbor, narrowly escaping with his life. The next year, he was at the Battle of Midway in the Pacific Ocean, covering the battle as a photographer and filming the burning of Japanese ships.

Mr. Rutledge continued his service to our Nation long after his time with the military and fighting in World War II. For the next 20 years, he taught science classes at Pensacola High School.

I am proud to honor someone who dedicated so much of his life to the betterment of our Nation.

Mr. Rutledge, you will be greatly missed.

FINDING CURES

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

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of legislation that begins making strides toward enhancing our ability to combat some of the toughest diseases of our time—the 21st Century Cures Act.

From improving the development and approval process of drugs and devices, to bettering our ability to diagnose and treat diseases like Alzheimer's and diabetes, this legislation will have a positive impact on countless lives.

I further applaud provisions in the bill that address mental health issues and opioid abuse, both crises that tear families apart in my home district of St. Louis and across our Nation.

However, I also rise today to say that passing this bill must not be the end of our efforts, but, rather, the beginning—the beginning as we look towards a better day for thousands of children fighting against pediatric cancers.

Mr. Speaker, the 21st Century Cures Act legislation outlines that rare and pediatric diseases and conditions should remain a biomedical research priority. While the bill provides an additional \$4.8 billion to the National In-

stitutes of Health, I see little that suggests a sufficient amount of this money will be dedicated to pediatric research and care.

This past October, I had the opportunity to tour the Cardinals Kids Cancer Center at Mercy Hospital in St. Louis and meet with families affected by pediatric cancer, including the Leslie family. The Leslies' son, Caleb, was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma, a rare type of bone cancer, when he was just 10 years old. Despite the incredible strength that Caleb showed in his more than 2-year fight with cancer, he ultimately lost the battle on July 22, 2015.

I was shocked when the Leslies told me that childhood cancer receives only 4 percent of the National Cancer Institute's annual research budget—only 4 percent—an absurdly small amount of money for a population with countless life years ahead of them.

In fiscal year 2016, the NCI was appropriated \$5.21 billion, and only \$208 million of this went toward childhood cancer research. Childhood cancer does not discriminate based on gender, race, or social class. These are diseases that could affect any of our children at any time.

It is my hope that going forward, as both a lawmaker and a mother of three children, that we can prioritize NCI research funding to give every child a fighting chance at a healthy and happy future.

I am committed to giving families like the Leslies solace, solace in knowing that maybe one less family will have to suffer the tragic loss that they endured.

GATLINBURG FIRE

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

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, Tennesseans have experienced the worst of Mother Nature this week—from the tornadoes in my own district to the historic wildfires that ravaged the Gatlinburg community. These fires forced a mass evacuation, destroyed hundreds of homes and businesses, and tragically caused three known fatalities so far.

Today I rise to call for prayer for our neighbors in the beautiful Smoky Mountains region of our State, to remember those precious lives lost, and to recognize our heroic first responders who have worked diligently to contain the damage.

As the work continues, we pray that healing rain would fall, literally, across eastern Tennessee this week, that businesses would be able to quickly reopen, and that visitors would once again flock to this treasured region of our State to experience all that Gatlinburg has to offer.

FIDEL CASTRO

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

Mr. DESANTIS. Mr. Speaker, last week marked the death of the tyrant in Cuba, Fidel Castro. This is a man whose regime was marked by the suppression of God-given rights—the right to religion, to speech, to assemble.

The people who disagreed with the regime in Castro's Cuba were jailed or tortured. People who had spent their lives building businesses, restaurants, and hotels had their property confiscated after the Cuban revolution. People were executed by the thousands who ran afoul of the regime.

□ 1045

Now, in pre-Castro Cuba, you had economic opportunity and prosperity, but you did have a yearning for democratic reforms. It was effectively an authoritarian system, and Castro capitalized on this by pointing out that we needed to have free elections. There were people who supported Castro initially because they thought he was going to usher in democratic reforms. He duped people. Once he had the opportunity to seize power, he sided with the Soviet Union and imposed a Stalinist tyranny on the small island nation.

I think it is interesting, when people look back, to see how poorly Cuba has done under his rule. Compare that with a lot of the Cuban exiles who left Castro's tyranny. These are people—many of them—who came to Florida. A lot of them didn't speak the language. They were in a new country and didn't necessarily have a whole lot of advantages; yet Cuban Americans, in our country, have excelled at all levels—in business, in government, in athletics, in entertainment. You name it.

Meanwhile, you look at the people, over the last decades, in Cuba, and unless you are attached to the ruling class—the regime—to the intelligence services, or to the military, you basically have no shot to do anything to advance your life and to make the most of your God-given abilities. Of the Cuban exiles who came to Florida, a lot of them were responsible for really putting Miami on the map. I think that shows that, when you have folks fleeing from a tyranny and going to freedom, they can succeed beyond people's wildest dreams, but the people who are suffering under the tyranny just have nowhere to go.

It is funny because, if you look at some of the media reports, Castro is lauded by some as an egalitarian—that this was a big deal that he was an egalitarian. Look, I have to admit that part of that was true. I mean, he was an egalitarian in the sense that he inflicted the equal suffering—equal misery—upon broad cross-sections of the Cuban people. That much is true, but it is obviously false in the sense that his thing was not egalitarianism. It was to amass power for himself. He died a billionaire. This was the avant-garde of the working class, supposedly. He was a billionaire while many Cubans struggled to even eat, and, certainly, they could not prosper.

We also shouldn't forget that this was a very reckless leader. He brought the world to the brink of a nuclear confrontation in 1962 during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Once the Soviet Union expired and we had access to these files, Castro was urging Khrushchev to nuke the United States. So you had Khrushchev—this crusty, Communist, Soviet leader—having to be the voice of reason in telling Castro: no, we are not going to do that, or we will end up in a thermonuclear war. If it had been up to Fidel Castro, those nuclear bombs would have been launched.

This is not a complicated legacy. This is not the George Washington of Cuba, as some have said. Washington refused power. He won a war, refused power, and could have aggrandized power for himself. He did the exact opposite. Castro wrecked Cuba and turned it into an island prison in order to amass power and wealth for himself, and that is his legacy.

The most damning evidence of his failure, of his tyranny, and of his evil nature are the tens of thousands of people who perished while fleeing Cuba and going through the Straits of Florida. Those watery graves really stand as a monument to Castro's barbarity because these were people who knew that, very likely, they were not going to be able to make it as these were shark-infested waters. Yet even the small chance of their escaping freedom and Castro's tyranny was so oppressive that they were willing to do that while knowing that they would, most likely, meet their own demise.

As we look forward, let's be honest about the nature of this regime. Let's commit to having policies that will actually put pressure on the regime and that will help those people who are still in Cuba and who are trying to fight the good fight for freedom, for free elections, and for democratic reforms.

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 at noon.

PRAYER

Rabbi Shea Hecht, Hadar Hatorah Yeshiva, Brooklyn, New York, offered the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, help us be honest enough to admit our shortcomings, brilliant enough to accept flattery without arrogance, tall enough to

tower above deceit, strong enough to treasure love, brave enough to welcome criticism, compassionate enough to understand human frailties, wise enough to recognize our mistakes, humble enough to appreciate greatness, and righteous enough to be devoted to the love of God.

Almighty God, inspire the leaders in Congress to inspire all the people. Bestow Your infinite blessings upon all the citizens of this great country.

We pray for the safety of our Armed Forces and that every soldier return home safely after fulfilling Your mission.

We pray that the world be a better place for all mankind; that we rid ourselves of prejudice and hatred, poverty and addiction, greed, jealousy, and selfishness, and that all these ills are replaced with love and harmony, peace and tranquility, respect and dignity, sanctity of marriage, family and community.

May this country, the greatest country of the world, go from strength to strength.

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 New York (Mr. HIGGINS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HIGGINS 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.

WELCOMING RABBI SHEA HECHT

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GIBSON) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. GIBSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Rabbi Shea Hecht for his opening prayer. Rabbi Hecht, a Chabad Rabbi, is the chairman of the board of the National Committee for the Furtherance of Jewish Education.

Rabbi Hecht has brought together people of different faiths, races, and backgrounds in New York to promote peace through understanding. These principles hold true in New York, as they do throughout the country and right here in this body.

One thing that my time in Congress has reinforced in me is that prayer matters. The daily opening prayers here in the Chamber set the tone for my day and often help me reflect on how to be a better husband, father, and Congressman.

I join Rabbi Hecht in his pursuit for peace at home and abroad and thank him for his meaningful prayer. I certainly thank his family as well, including Rabbis Hanoch and Yitzchok, rabbis in the Hudson Valley.

Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

CONGRATULATING CHAIRMAN TOM PRICE

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Tuesday morning, President-elect Donald Trump made an extraordinary cabinet selection by appointing Chairman Dr. TOM PRICE to serve as America's Secretary of Health and Human Services.

President-elect Trump announced: "Chairman PRICE, a renowned physician, has earned a reputation for being a tireless problem solver and the go-to expert on healthcare policy, making him the ideal choice to serve in this capacity. He is exceptionally qualified to shepherd our commitment to repeal and replace ObamaCare and bring affordable and accessible healthcare to every American."

I am grateful to have served alongside Chairman PRICE in the House of Representatives and I was honored to be an original cosponsor of his legislation, the Empowering Patients First Act. This is a comprehensive healthcare plan that puts Americans in control of their healthcare plans and choices, not the government.

Congratulations to Dr. TOM PRICE, his wife, State representative Betty, and their son, Robert, my former intern, on this deserved honor. I look forward to watching his success in this new role for the American people.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and may the President, by his actions, never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

PIONEERING MEDICAL RESEARCH LEGISLATION

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the 21st Century Cures Act and the hope and help it brings to those whose lives have been touched by disease or addiction.

In my western New York community, opioid overdoses doubled from 2014 to 2015, and, tragically, that number is expected to double again this year. This bill delivers funds to help States and families fight the epidemic.

This legislation also makes substantial investments in pioneering research