

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 Hanoach 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

for those fighting cancer, Alzheimer's, and other debilitating diseases, bringing us closer to the promise of better treatments and cures for the afflicted and hope to those who love and care for them.

The 21st Century Cures Act also provides tens of billions of dollars more in research funds to accelerate promising cancer research in our Nation's leading cancer centers, including Buffalo's Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

(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 today in recognition of National Adoption Month, which is observed each November.

The goal of National Adoption Month is to increase national awareness of adoption and to bring attention to the need for permanent families for children and youth in the foster care system. As of September 30 of last year, there were more than 110,000 children across our Nation waiting to be adopted.

This year, the initiative focuses on older youth adoptions, which has a special significance to me. When I was 11 years old, my family welcomed a foster care child, Bob, into our home. Bob, throughout the years, has been a part of my life since I was 11 and will be my brother for life. In fact, it is because of Bob that I developed a lifelong passion for scouting and was eventually motivated to a call to public service.

I commend the men and women across our Nation who have selflessly decided to open their homes to these boys and girls, providing good homes at a very challenging time for these young people.

To all the parents who have either adopted a child or participated in foster care: Thank you.

HATE CRIMES

(Ms. GRAHAM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak out against hate. Across our country, incidents of hate crimes and harassment are on the rise.

Just this last week, the trend reared its ugly head in my hometown of Tallahassee. A community office was vandalized with the letters KKK painted across the door.

With the rise in hate, we have also seen an increase in indifference. Too many are turning a blind eye. But there can be no tolerance for racism, bigotry or anti-Semitism in the United States of America.

The opposite of love is not hate. It is indifference. I won't be indifferent. I won't be silent. I am asking each of you to speak out against acts of hate

wherever you see them. We cannot be bullied or intimidated. We must fight back. Together, we are stronger than any hatred.

HELPING DISABLED VETERANS

(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, I rise today to applaud the unanimous passage last night of the Veterans Mobility Safety Act.

With this commonsense bill on its way to the President's desk, we are making sure the mobility equipment veterans depend on is safe. The VA helps disabled veterans update their vehicles with things like wheelchair lifts and easier steering and braking to improve their quality of life. But outdated policies and lack of standards in the program have led to safety issues for veterans and the driving public.

With my bill, the VA will develop new policies and standards to ensure veterans have access to safe, high-quality mobility equipment.

I thank Chairman MILLER for his tireless work on veterans' issues, as well as my colleagues, Representatives BROWNLEY and RUIZ, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association for their work on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, we owe a debt of gratitude to our disabled veterans, and that includes making sure the mobility equipment they need is safe and reliable. With this bill, we are doing just that.

FIDEL CASTRO'S DEATH

(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, in the wake of the announcement of Fidel Castro's death, some world leaders and some in the media were quick to express their sorrow and sympathy for Castro.

They fawned over a dictator, as Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau claimed he was "a legendary revolutionary and orator."

It is precisely this ignorance of Castro's true nature that is so alarming. Fidel Castro was a ruthless tyrant who ruled with an iron fist. Castro was responsible for the deaths of countless Cubans, and he beat, jailed, and even tortured his opposition.

Castro was a despot who confiscated private property and businesses. He subjugated Cuban citizens, and he took away all their freedoms and their rights.

Fidel Castro was an avowed enemy of the United States. This is a thug who should be condemned and not eulogized.

REMEMBERING REGIS BOBONIS OF SEWICKLEY, PENNSYLVANIA

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

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to remember an outstanding member of the Sewickley, Pennsylvania, community: the late Regis Bobonis, who passed away this past November 25.

This great American was a man of many firsts. He was the first African American news reporter for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and the first African American television news reporter in Pittsburgh. Following his career in communications, he served as the public relations director for Mercy Hospital for 25 years.

Prior to these achievements, Regis Bobonis served as a Petty Officer 3rd Class during World War II, and he was a committed husband, father, and grandfather. He and his late wife, Hurley Williams, remained married for 53 years before her passing.

Through his work for the Daniel B. Matthews Historical Society in Sewickley, Mr. Bobonis discovered there were more Tuskegee Airmen from western Pennsylvania than any other State in the Nation. His discovery led him to spearhead the campaign that resulted in the largest outdoor memorial to the Tuskegee Airmen, which is in Sewickley Cemetery, pictured to my left.

Mr. Bobonis' sterling example and lasting contributions to our community will not be forgotten. May his family be consoled, and may he rest in peace.

BRIDGES TO HOPE

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I believe the number one way to move people from poverty to self-reliance is not a government program. If we want to make a difference in the lives of the impoverished, we must help them find a pathway to employment.

In my hometown of Hot Springs, Arkansas, a nonprofit has taken this mission to heart. Cooperative Christian Ministries and Clinic works with disadvantaged residents to give them skills that will give them a step up in the workforce. The ministry's program, Bridges to Hope, has worked with local employers in Hot Springs to put its graduates to work, and it is seeing great success. According to a report by the local Sentinel-Record newspaper, Oaklawn Race Track has employed four graduates, all of whom have had a 100 percent success rate, according to Oaklawn General Manager Eric Jackson.

The first Bridges to Hope class graduated only 90 days ago, but its success is already resounding as residents in