

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CLAUDIA TENNEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2017

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "Nay" on Roll Call No. 395, and "Nay" on Roll Call No. 396.

SUGAR LAND NATIVE NAMED A
2017 NASA ASTRONAUT CANDIDATE**HON. PETE OLSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Loral O'Hara of Sugar Land, TX, a Clements High School Ranger, for being selected by NASA to join the 2017 Astronaut Candidate Class.

Currently working as a Research Engineer for the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Loral has an exceptional professional history, including working as a design engineer, mechanical technician and as a project engineer. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Aerospace Engineering from the University of Kansas and a Master of Science degree in Aeronautics and Astronautics from Purdue University. Loral will report for duty this August, where she will begin her two years of training as an Astronaut Candidate. Once done, she will be assigned technical duties in the Astronaut Office while she awaits a flight assignment.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Loral for being selected as a NASA Astronaut Candidate. We are very proud of her and look forward to her representing TX-22 in space.

IMPORTANT ISSUES OF THE DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. THOMAS A. GARRETT, JR.

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2017

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I hadn't intended to but I'll begin my remarks by addressing his remarks. And I'll do something that I rarely do and that is to quote a French historian, political scientist, and diplomat, and that is Alexis de Tocqueville, who stated, "The American Republic will endure until the day that Congress discovers that it can bribe the public with the public's own money. The previous administration was led by an individual who on the campaign trail said that 7 trillion dollars in debt was "unpatriotic." Now we sit at the precipice of 20 trillion dollars in debt after two terms and I would submit that perhaps that's unpatriotic multiplied by three, or nearly that, and echo the sentiments of Mr. SCHWEIKERT that it is absolutely, positively unsustainable. Now there are ways that we could certainly deal with runaway debt. One way would be to completely devalue the currency. If you really want to step away from the

hyperbolic barbs that are thrown by my colleagues across the aisle as it relates to the motives for the legislation that we carry and find out who would really be harming seniors and children, it would be those who would continue to spend until the only way to cover the tab was to deflate the value of the very monies set aside to care for those least able to care for themselves. And so I thank Congressman SCHWEIKERT, not only for his wise remarks but also for reminding me just how much I miss being a member of the state house in the Commonwealth of Virginia where there is actual back and forth debate on the merits of issues, wherein those small percentage of individuals who choose to inform themselves might shape their opinion based on a discourse rather than people standing at this microphone unchecked.

Which leads me to my next point, which is also not on the subject that I originally intended to address and that is, the statement of my distinguished colleague from Maryland, Mr. RASKIN, who spoke on this floor about 45 minutes ago on a subject that's important not just to him, and not just to me, but to America, and that is on the subject of asset forfeiture. His comments were indicative of the tone that this body has devolved into. One of the many Democrats who I admire, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who Vanity Fair described as a fervent Democrat who saw the value of working with Republicans (where is he today?), once said, "You're entitled to your own opinions, but you're not entitled to your own facts." Mr. RASKIN said the Trump Administration was burdening Americans by virtue of an asset forfeiture policy and he cited the case of a Chinese restaurant and an entrepreneur who he said had amassed 25,000 dollars so that he could buy a building, but he was going over the speed limit so he was pulled over by police so without cause they took his money and it took 7 years according to my colleague to recoup his money and the opportunity was lost and that's what's wrong with Mr. Trump's policy. Wow. And he implored listeners to please look up this case, so I did. In fact there was a man who had saved money to open up a Chinese restaurant who was going 10 miles an hour over the speed limit who was pulled over by law enforcement who had not 25 but 75,000 dollars forfeited and it took him not 7 years but 10 months to get it back and it happened in 2014 and I'm not terribly sure who was president then and I'm not terribly sure who was president then but I don't think it was Donald Trump! So I will join my colleague in suggesting that we need asset forfeiture review and refer in this country, but please, you're entitled to your own opinions, you're not entitled to your own facts.

Now why am I hear tonight? Golly ned why am I hear at all? Who are we as a nation? I tell my children if you want to know what's the right thing to do in life when you're confronted with challenges, when you have a dilemma, ask yourself who do I want to be, not who am I, but who do I want to be, because I hope I never reach my aspirational goals, but I keep trying as long as I am here. I don't think that if you reach all your goals for who you want to be that you've aimed high enough. And if you ask yourself who I want to be when you face that ethical or moral dilemma you will always then come up with the right answer when you answer what the person you want to be, would do. And so I grew up with a father who actu-

ally had a name for the belt that he wore around his waist, it was the enforcer. I had a mother who thought I could do anything I wanted to do and a father who would kick my tail if I didn't give it my best effort. I spent nearly ten years as a prosecutor and I can't tell you how many times I looked down the dais at the criminal defendant and thought, I wonder but there for the grace of God, go I. But for the fact that I was blessed with amazing parents who encouraged me who loved me and disciplined me and told me the things I could do, unlike so many in political office today who garner votes and support by telling people what they can't do, what they need done for them.

By gosh this country was built on a government dependent upon people, not a people dependent upon government. And that's who we are. Now, who are we going to be? Where are we going? A wiser person than I once said, "If you want to know where you're going, you should look where you've been." It's a relatively humbling thing to do representing the fifth district of Virginia, because the fifth district of Virginia was first represented by in this institution by James Madison. I tell people those are some very small, big shoes to fill. Very small, big shoes to fill. James Madison won the congressional seat when he ran in an election against a pillar of American foreign policy named Monroe. They were so collegial during the campaign that they often traveled together and when Madison was elected to Congress, prior to the Seventeenth Amendment, he went to the Virginia Assembly, the longest serving, democratically elected, legislative body on the planet Earth, and suggested that James Monroe should be the Senator, and indeed he was made the Senator. So we have Madison, we have Monroe. The drafter of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, lived in Virginia's fifth district. The arbiter of the power of the Article III branch of government, the Supreme Court, John Marshall, retired in Virginia's fifth district. Patrick Henry retired in Virginia's fifth district. Lee and Grant sat at a table at Appomattox Courthouse at the end of the American Civil War in the fifth district of Virginia. And a young woman named Barbara Johns stood up in the face of possible injury or death to start the Virginia Civil Rights movement in the fifth district. So it's pretty humbling and it gives me a good lesson in who we are. So many on my side of the aisle criticized President Obama when he said, you know if you have a business, you didn't do that, somebody else did that for you. I'll defend him, I'll defend him. You did it, with blood and sweat and tears and hardwork and persistence and willingness to stand up time and again after failing. You did it because you stood on the shoulders of giants who gave you the opportunity to do it. That imperfect people, Thomas Jefferson, a slave owner, who gave us near perfect documents, James Madison, documents that have been revised, oh I don't know 27 times in hundreds of years. That we constantly should strive to be a more perfect union. That we will never achieve that status of a perfect union, so long as institutions on Earth are governed by mere mortal men, but that we have a duty in this nation to try to continue to. So that's why I'm here. I'm not here to perpetuate my own power. I understand that the most indispensable person is the person who recognizes that they are not indispensable. Folks drive past the graveyard

and look at the headstones because I can promise you there's piles of folks buried there that thought the world just couldn't go on without them. And the band played on. The fifth district of Virginia was here before I got here and it'll be here when I leave. I'm not here to perpetuate my own name or my own legacy or any sort of power. I'm here to make sure that everything I do is pointed towards giving the posterity that will follow us, my children, SCHWEIKERT's children, and your children, every bit as good, if not better opportunities than those which we had. I believe there are two fundamental entitlements to birth of Americanism. First, you are entitled to opportunity. We should always strive to make that opportunity equal opportunity. But in a world where if your last name is Clinton or Trump or Obama or Bush, you probably have a better chance of getting into Harvard, we're not there yet. But everyone, everyone is entitled to an opportunity. And everyone within the Jeffersonian Construct of Liberty, that is my freedom extends to the point where yours starts, so long that you don't harm another, you should be free to make decisions for yourself.

Everyone is entitled to an opportunity and everyone within the Jeffersonian construct of liberty that is my freedom extends to the point where yours starts, so long as you don't harm another you should be free to make decisions for yourself has an entitlement to define success for themselves. If you wanna be the world's best bee keeper, go be the world's best bee keeper. If you wanna be a great stay at home dad, by golly be a great stay at home dad. If you'd like to work to cure cancer, please do. If you wanna be a member of this body and try to perpetuate opportunity for our posterity, please do. If you wanna be a member of This body and try to perpetuate your own power or your own legacy, please don't. And so this brings me to the point of why I stand here today, I've been here 6 months not terribly long. Thank god, I've been unable to shake my citizen world view in favor a legislator world view. So as I walk into this chamber as I stand next to these women and men on both sides of the aisle I'm a little humbled. When I walk down the staircase on the edge of the original house chamber that's been worn by time by the footsteps of the likes on Kennedy, and Madison, and Monroe, and Eisenhower and Lincoln, I'm humbled. But I would revert back to the words that elitists observed over 150 years ago, and that is we will thrive until we attempt to begin to bribe the tax payers with their own money. And at some point things become unsustainable and at some point we need to recognize that we are about freedom of individuals to venture and fail and venture and gain and that we are a nation whose government should depend upon people, and not whose people should depend upon government. An hour and a half ago I stood on this very floor and I dropped at the clerks desk, HRS 458, house resolution 458 is a vehicle that would move to discharge past the normal process and procedures house resolution 1436, HR 1436 is a bill that was voted for by every republican member of this body in 2015 which would provide for a repeal of the broken promises that are the affordable care act. Just yesterday, in conference they showed us polling and it showed that the American people trusted republicans more on national defense, border security, jobs in the economy, but were kinda sketchy

on healthcare, right? We can read a poll but I came here to do what I think is right I came here to do what I said I would do, and this plan that I think could reasonably be called the managed healthcare bailout program, the health insurance industry profit enhancement act has failed working Americans and that paradigm under which we have debated it has failed to be an honest one. But if I'm here not to enhance myself, or my legacy and if I'm here to do what I think is right, what I said I would do when I ran for office, then I need to stand up and do what I said I was gonna do when I ran for office, and that was to ensure that the decisions of Americans were left to Americans that we minimize the interference in individuals lives by the government, and that we recognize and ill paraphrase the Mr. Jefferson who was correct when he said the fruits of the working class are safest when the legislators not in session. Hm, I believe it was Roy Rogers who said that the only certain thing in life are death and taxes but death doesn't get worse every time congress meets. We hear about a CBO score that says x million people will lose coverage. Hm. Well the last time I looked this thing was called the affordable care act not the affordable coverage act and even if it was called the affordable coverage act it would be a misnomer because it's not affordable. A story published about 3 months ago indicated that two thirds of Americans couldn't find a 1000 dollars in case of a financial crisis. But deductibles have gone from 1000 to 2000 to 3000 to 4000 to 5000 dollars for the average family of four, and I ask you if your deductible is 5000 dollars in times of crisis do you have healthcare? You have coverage, you have coverage but you don't have healthcare, you're still indigent and it's a broken promise but don't worry there were lots more if you like your plan you can keep your plan turns out that wasn't true. If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor, turns out that wasn't true. We should see an average decrease of about 2500 dollars per year per policy turns out that wasn't true don't worry these insurers who have supported the plan remember the insurance industry endorsed the affordable care act there doing this out of benevolence folks. I have an article from the New York post that says there's a cost spiral that associated with Obama care with the insurance industry but the cost spiral is upward if you'd have bought 100 dollars worth of united health care the day the ACA passed and sold it the last time I looked you'd have 580 dollars, that's a heck of an investment. The only people making out on this are the big insurers, meanwhile all Americans are perpetually lied to by folks who say those guys don't care, actually we do, we're just not trying to perpetuate our own power by taking from one group and giving to another while bankrupting our nation and robbing our children blind. And so, I've only been here for 6 months and I went to some people very early on and said so how about discharging this bill, and frustrated him and they said well its not time for that and I said okay I wanna be a team player. I'm frustrated and we get to this point, the president's frustrated, the senate's frustrated, I don't give a hoot and hack about the president or the senate or this body, I care about the American people who I serve and they're frustrated. And nobody on the other side of the aisle will talk about a plan that the namesake of a plan President Barack

Obama said, and I quote has serious problems. That Minnesota democrat governor Mark Dayton said bankrupting a state and is unsustainable that President Bill Clinton said is the craziest thing, we have zero suggestions for help, because by gosh we can score political points. Shame on ya, on both sides of the aisle if you're doing this to score political points. We oughta be doing this to make sure that the fundamental birth right of Americanism, opportunity is perpetuated for perpetuity and that it doesn't die in the hands of a group of political class who said well this will get me points at home. People told me not to do that it might not help you, your districts not that safe, I don't rightly care, I'm gonna do the right thing I've never had a job in my life that I wasn't willing to lose if it meant doing the right thing. So what are the goals of this? Rather, rash, they're humble I want the leadership of this chamber to understand that the ranking file members support them, that we got their backs, that we thank them for their best efforts and that we don't wanna quit this fight. Thank you for what you do. Let's keep going and keep that darn promise I got a feelin that if you keep you promise if you're worried about elections, your reward will come when people realize there's somebody in this town that has some integrity so I wanna support leadership, I wanna send a message to the other chamber that were willing to act if they're willing to act and maybe embolden them. I wanna let the president know that we haven't quit on him but most importantly I wanna send a message to the American people that some people in D.C. mean what they say. Woah. There have been dozens of votes for repeal by members who knew that the repeal would never happen because it had to cross the desk of the person for whom the bill was named. Right? It was a theoretical abstract, sure, I support it. Were playing with live ammunition folks lets see who meant what they said come to this desk and if you're watching this at home, contact your member and tell them to come to this desk and sign on to the discharge position HRS 458. Or maybe you didn't mean it, or you did or who knows but let us know. Hm. Dozen of votes for repeal and let me be clear about this too, I'm not sitting here trying to pull the rug out from under people, and the bill that would be discharged by this solution would not immediately end Obamacare, and instead it would give us a two year window, a two year window, and I'll bet you that if we repealed and had a two year window to bait a replacement that we might get some input from people.

I know to a metaphysical certainty that no side has a monopoly on good ideas. I would love to have some input, there will certainly be members who say "well I don't believe the federal government should have a large role." There will be other members that say we should have single payer. Well, right now we are stuck in a broken system because of political gamesmanship. And it burned me when I was on the outside and it burns me on the inside. What are the facts? What are the real facts? The average individual premium according to E Health in May 3rd, 2017 has gone up 39% in the last two years. The average family plan has gone up 49%. That means if you are an individual and your premium was a \$1000 a month its now \$1330 or there roughly a month. I'm doing math on the fly in my head. If you are a family and you are

paying \$500 a month than its \$740ish a month. That's in two years.

The average individual plan is up 147% from 2008. The average family plan is up 177%. Folks, Americans income hasn't increased at that rate. The average is up 25% in the last year and that is according to the Department of Health and Human Services report of October of 2016. That means if you were paying \$2000 a year ago, you are paying \$2500 now. 25% in 1 year. And candidly all the disingenuous arguments on the other side about how many people will die, if we move to a system that allows individuals choices, is not only hollow and disingenuous and beneath the dignity of this body by virtue of their disingenuity but also false. Folks, for the first time in nearly a generation mortality rate rose in 2015. U.S. life expectancy dropped from 2014 to 2015 for the first time since the 1990s. And ironically it dropped more in states that expanded Medicaid.

So, I'm not only disgusted with and sick of such harsh rhetoric, but I think it's not been proven demonstrably false. We talk about who will be kicked off their plan. According to the CBO, 10 million people have lost their employer plans. Those are the plans that if they like they can keep. And roughly 15 million of the people who are now insured, by virtue of an individual mandate, that we have forcefully compelled American citizens to purchase a good or service at the risk of forfeiture of their money or their freedom. We live in a country where you can choose in many places to buy marijuana, you can choose to bungee jump, you can choose to sky dive. Heck, in some places you can choose to visit a prostitute. But you can't choose a healthcare plan that doesn't carry coverage for mental health or for

maternity. You can't do that. That's against the law.

This is about choice. I served in the United States Army as a fire support officer. And when I left the army, I made the egregious error of law school, just kidding. And when I did that, I chose not to have healthcare because as I looked at what I was able to do on a limited amount of money that my family had, and did a cost benefit analysis, and the fact that I was in relatively good shape and young, I determined that my best interests were served by not spending the money. It was a crazy, brazen risk that I think paid off, but it should certainly be in the prevue of decisions Americans are allowed to make. And right now, it's not.

I'm frustrated, but I'm fighting. A lot of people are frustrated, but they are fighting. I want to see our leadership succeed. I want to see this nation be, unequivocally, the greatest experiment in freedom that the earth has ever known. But, if we continue to try and parlay largesse and failed programs into political power, we won't, we won't. And the time to measure things based not on intentions, but results is nigh. In Oregon, they spent hundreds of millions of dollars to create a website for the Obamacare exchange that failed to enroll a single individual—and nobody was fired and nobody went to prison. I was a prosecutor for a long time. And I'll tell you that if you waste or defraud people of one hundred or two hundred or three hundred million dollars, you usually either lose your job or go to prison. But, if you're in politics in Oregon, you're rewarded because by gosh you had great intentions.

Let's judge these things not by their intentions but by their outcomes. Let's not argue about who has coverage but who has access

to affordable care. Let's support revision that drives down premiums and down deductibles. And let's trumpet our victories based on who we actually helped, not who we intended to help. In stand untied with the bulk of my colleagues. I know there are some who said we'd do one thing and now do another. This is an avenue by which we might find out who they are. But I don't for a moment question the individual motives of members. I think they have an opportunity to distinguish themselves by virtue of signing on to this resolution. I ask you again if your watching at home to contact your member if you agree with what we said. And ask them if they'll come to this bar, when we're in session, and sign their name to House Resolution 458 and demonstrate their willing to do the exact same thing now, when it counts, that they did dozens and dozens of times under the previous administration when they knew that they're actions would be met with a veto pen. And I don't do this to score political points. And I don't do this to make my name bigger. I don't do this to because it feels good. I do this because we owe it to the giants who's shoulders we stand upon, to Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson and Martin Luther King and Abraham Lincoln and Barbara Johns and John Kennedy and Ronald Reagan, the people who gave us the opportunity to be as successful and great as we are. Don't piddle it away. Don't piddle it away. Be responsible. Be willing to say no when no is the appropriate answer. And do what's right. Mr. Speaker, with that I yield back my time and I'd ask unanimous consent that all members have five legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the topic of this special order.