

RECOGNIZING DIANE WHITAKER

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 honor Diane L. Whitaker as she retires from the Clinton County Library System this year after serving 31 years and 31 days as executive director of the Ross Library in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania.

In the library's 107 years of existence, Ms. Whitaker is just the seventh director, but she is the longest serving in its history.

The Ross Library Board of Trustees recently hosted a celebration for Ms. Whitaker. They also revealed the newly named "Diane L. Whitaker Genealogy Collection" on a plaque in her honor.

Over the years, Ms. Whitaker has overseen numerous projects and has also authored grant applications that have helped local libraries with much-needed funding.

Ms. Whitaker was raised in Clearfield County and holds a bachelor's degree in secondary education from Lock Haven University. She earned a master's degree in library science from Clarion University.

She has been a career librarian for more than four decades, working as a school librarian, bookmobile librarian, children's coordinator, branch librarian, and administrator.

Ms. Whitaker and her husband, Lester, live in Beech Creek. They have three daughters and six grandchildren, all of whom reside in Clinton and Centre Counties.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. Whitaker for all her contributions to Ross Library and the entire Clinton County Library System. The community is a better place thanks to her efforts. She plans to visit State and national parks in her retirement, which I think is an outstanding plan.

RECOGNIZING MICHAEL COLBERT

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, for nearly 20 years, Michael Colbert has given his leadership to Oil Creek Township as supervisor chairman. Last week, he oversaw his final meeting as supervisor, and he will retire at the end of the year.

Mr. Colbert first served as a supervisor in 1993 to fill a vacancy, but he stepped down the next year. He would run again in 1999, win the seat, and officially be sworn in in January 2000.

Over nearly 20 years at the helm, Mr. Colbert oversaw numerous projects, but he told the Titusville Herald that his proudest achievement was helping pave the way for Walmart to open a store in the township.

In his well-deserved retirement, Mr. Colbert said he plans to vacation in Florida for a few weeks.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. Colbert for his dedication and leadership to Oil Creek Township as supervisor chairman. He has given nearly 20 years of

his time and energy to his neighbors and his community. For that, we are grateful.

I wish him the best in retirement.

RECOGNIZING PEARL S. BUCK INTERNATIONAL

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the important work that Pearl S. Buck International is doing in our community in Bucks County.

Pearl S. Buck was the first woman to receive both the Pulitzer and Nobel Prize for literature. Pearl Buck spent decades of her life in China, immersing herself in its culture and history, with her remaining time living in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

The foundation continues her work, providing opportunities to explore and appreciate other cultures and building better lives for children around the globe. Their work on projects—like the Backyard Gardening Project in the Philippines, Life Skills Education for Children Living in Vietnamese Orphanages, and Thailand Clean Drinking Water and Sanitation Project—has increased humanitarian aid for people across the world.

The organization's School Outreach Program and the High School Leadership Program, which equips students committed to making lifelong contributions within the community with effective leadership skills, have made positive and long-lasting impacts in our district. I am thankful for, and stand in full support of, the work that Pearl S. Buck International does in our community and around the globe.

RECOGNIZING BENJAMIN RUSH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, this December, over 50 students at Benjamin Rush Elementary School in Bucks County were recognized for their completion of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program. This training—more commonly known as D.A.R.E.—teaches young students basic skills for responsible decisionmaking.

I thank the officers of the Bensalem Township Police Department for their work with Benjamin Rush Elementary School and for their commitment to educating young citizens in our district.

□ 0930

In the face of a growing opioid crisis, it is vital that students learn about the consequences of drug abuse.

Mr. Speaker, as an EMT and vice chair of the Bipartisan Heroin Task Force, I applaud the efforts of educational programs like these and all those who seek to learn from them. Educating the young people in our communities about the potential dangers of drug abuse is absolutely crucial, and it is my hope that they will use the

tools they have learned to lead safer and healthier lives and to become leaders in the lower Bucks County community.

CREATION OF A NEW GOLD STAR FAMILIES MEMORIAL MONUMENT

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, this December, ground was broken at the Washington Crossing National Cemetery for the creation of a new Gold Star Families Memorial Monument. These monuments are erected across this country to recognize U.S. military members who have laid down their lives and their family members who have suffered alongside of them.

Among those present for the groundbreaking was Hershel "Woody" Williams. Mr. Williams, a former marine, is the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient for honorable service during the Battle of Iwo Jima. It was with the help of his foundation that this monument was made possible.

These memorials include stories about homeland, family, patriot, and sacrifice. In the center is a cutout that represents the loved one who has sacrificed their life in defense of our great country.

Mr. Speaker, we can never forget those who have paid the ultimate price to secure our freedoms, nor can we forget the families who supported them in their noble endeavors. We are so proud to have a Gold Star Families Memorial Monument in our district.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 31 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

In the waning days of the first session of the 115th Congress, help the Members of the House, and those of the Senate, to act wisely and carefully in the important work they do.

And as our Nation passes through this holy season for millions of Americans, may there be good will in our communities and peace and reconciliation where those virtues are so sorely needed.

May all that is done within the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

SUPPORTING TAX REFORM

(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 support of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

For the first time since 1986, there is a real opportunity to challenge the status quo and simplify the Tax Code. The final agreement lowers rates and significantly increases the standard deduction for both individuals and joint filers. American families will see the child tax credit expanded to help parents with the cost of raising children.

Importantly, the graduate tuition voucher exemption and student loan interest deduction have remained to ensure our commitment to opportunity through education. I, and many of my colleagues, urged the conference committee to keep these important provisions intact.

H.R. 1 also eliminates ObamaCare's individual mandate penalty tax to allow Americans the flexibility to buy

healthcare that is right for them. Job creators will see the corporate tax rate lowered to 21 percent on January 1, 2018, which is the largest reduction in our Nation's history.

Mr. Speaker, this is just some of what this once-in-a-generation proposal does to help America keep more of their hard-earned paychecks. I encourage my colleagues to join me in voting for H.R. 1.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT THE MAJORITY SAYS AND WHAT THE MAJORITY DOES

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

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because the majority is working to pass a tax scam that will raise taxes on my constituents.

For nearly a year, Republicans have promised tax reform that benefits middle class families. Once again, there is a big difference between what the majority says and what the majority does.

Instead of being a tax break for middle class Americans, it is a tax scam that will force hardworking Illinois moms and dads to pay the bill for tax giveaways to the rich and well connected. That is just wrong.

Mr. Speaker, the American people know it is a scam. A new poll from Monmouth University found that half of all Americans believe this GOP tax scam will raise their taxes. These folks are right. It will raise their taxes, especially for families in Illinois and in the Second District.

Mr. Speaker, I will never vote to raise my constituents' taxes just to pay for massive tax giveaways to major corporations and a handful of super-wealthy families.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" and stand with America's middle class and working families, the backbone of our Nation.

WATER IS LIFE

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, nearly 700 million people across the globe lack access to water. This is a disturbing world crisis. In many countries, women and children walk for miles and face countless risks just to find some water.

Mr. Speaker, water is not just about drinking; it is about sanitation; it is about hygiene. It prevents diseases and drastically improves the quality of life. That is why I worked with my friend, Representative EARL BLUMENAUER, for the Water for the World Act.

This bill has made it U.S. policy to improve international access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene. I applaud the administration on issuing the Global Water Strategy required by that law, and I look forward to seeing its implementation.

The road ahead is long. Eighty percent of the countries receiving U.S. aid still suffer from water issues. With our God-given resources, we have an obligation to make sure people receive the basic element of life—clean water—because water is life.

And that is just the way it is.

PROTECT OUR DREAMERS

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to stand with the DREAMers, both in the San Joaquin Valley and throughout our country. Protecting our DREAMers is the responsible, moral, and just thing to do.

The majority of Americans want legal protection for our DREAMers, and Congress must listen. I have been listening to those who have visited my offices, university presidents, religious organizations, my constituents, who simply want us to provide legalization for these individuals who have come to this country at an average age of 6 years of age. This is the only country they have ever known.

Passing the Dream Act is a priority for Democrats and has strong support for many Republicans. We just need to vote on the bill.

I am a cosponsor of the Dream Act, and I have joined nearly 200 of my colleagues signing a discharge petition to bring this legislation to the floor. I now call on my Republican colleagues to do the right thing and allow a vote on the Dream Act.

I will continue to advocate for policies that protect our DREAMers. I urge our DREAMers to continue to make their voices heard, as they have across this country, and to urge people in Congress to do the right thing.

We must stay vigilant in our efforts to protect these individuals, and we as Americans understand what these individuals mean to our country.

Pass the Dream Act now.

ENSURING A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR FAMILIES

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, as I travel the Seventh District of Michigan, I have met with many hard-working families who are living paycheck to paycheck; moms and dads struggling to pay the mortgage, make ends meet; many businesses weighed down by a burdensome and outdated Tax Code. We developed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act with them in mind.

For families across my district, our plan means more jobs, more take-home pay, and more money in their pockets. At every income level, people will see meaningful tax relief.

On top of that, our plan will help small businesses thrive, boost job creation here at home, and make our