

will be stationed all over the world to protect and defend the United States of America.

There are about 1.3 million military personnel on Active Duty who serve in more than 170 countries. While it is not easy to be away from family, it is especially difficult during the holidays.

But, Mr. Speaker, events like American Red Cross' Holiday Mail for Heroes card-signing campaign lets our troops know that we are keeping them in our thoughts and prayers. Since 2007, the Holiday Mail for Heroes program has provided Americans the opportunity to extend holiday greetings, expressions of gratitude, and well wishes to servicemembers, veterans, and their families. Last year, the Red Cross distributed thousands of cards to troops across the globe.

As we are extending our support to military personnel serving overseas, the Marine Corps Reserve is giving back to those who are less fortunate right here in our own backyard. Toys for Tots, which was founded in 1947 by Reservist Major Bill Hendricks, collects new, unwrapped toys each year and distributes them as Christmas gifts to children in need. As of 2016, Toys for Tots collected and distributed more than 512 million toys to less fortunate children.

That kind of selflessness truly embodies the spirit of Christmas.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot forget to honor our fallen heroes this Christmas season. One of our finest holiday traditions that honors our fallen servicemembers took place last Saturday: Wreaths Across America.

Many Americans can recall the iconic photograph of wreaths on the tombstones at Arlington National Cemetery. Snow blankets the ground. Red ribbons adorn the balsam wreaths, which lay on rows of tombstones as far as the eye can see.

This annual tribute began in 1992 by a Maine wreathmaker named Morrill Worcester, who donated 5,000 wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery in honor of our fallen heroes.

Today, Wreaths Across America has grown into a national organization. A total of 1.2 million wreaths were placed on markers across the country in more than 1,200 locations, with more than 200,000 at Arlington National Cemetery alone. The mission is to remember, honor, and teach. Morrill describes the wreaths as a symbol of honor, respect, and victory.

As we celebrate with our loved ones, let us remember all of our military men and women, especially those we lost in service to this Nation. Thank you to Morrill and to all the volunteers who honor their memory.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of our troops serving at home and overseas. I wish them a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Merry Christmas and God bless America.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY BIVENS RETIREMENT

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

Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great west Tennessean and a dear friend of mine, District Attorney General Phil Bivens.

After more than 25 remarkable years, Phil Bivens is retiring from his post as district attorney general of Tennessee's 29th judicial district, which covers both Dyer and Lake Counties.

Since 1992, Phil Bivens has been the consistent voice of law and order in his community. District Attorney General Bivens is a lifelong resident of Dyer County and a graduate of the University of Tennessee at Martin and the University of Memphis School of Law.

Throughout his career as a prosecutor, District Attorney General Bivens has handled some incredibly important cases and has earned a reputation for being fair, honest, and by the book.

In 2016, District Attorney General Bivens was elected to the executive committee for the Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference. Serving in this respected leadership role, he has advised the Tennessee General Assembly on issues related to the criminal justice system.

When I was the United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee, I also served Dyer and Lake Counties, so we worked together very closely. We worked together to tackle dangerous crimes and drug crimes. Most recently, District Attorney General Bivens has been instrumental in combating the growing opioid crisis that is hurting west Tennessee and certainly the entire country. During our time together, I saw firsthand District Attorney General Bivens' strong work ethic and dedication to making west Tennessee a safer place. He is a true public servant.

In addition to being known as a prosecutor, he is also the voice of the Dyersburg High School football team. District Attorney General Bivens spends Friday nights calling some of the most thrilling high school football games in the Nation.

In summary, District Attorney General Bivens is a real west Tennessee legend. While he may soon no longer be our district attorney general, I know that he will never stop working to make his community a better place, just as he has his entire life. I will always be grateful for the time that we worked together.

I wish Phil Bivens; his wife, Barbara; and their whole family the best as they begin their next exciting chapter.

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 11 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Lord of Heaven and Earth, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Darkness descends upon us as the days grow shorter, and the cold chastens us to withdraw inside. Be for us the light we long for. The very promise of change creates expectation.

By the first hints of Your dawn, banish all fear and hesitation. May those who live on the margins of America's rich blessings have peace and prosperity too.

Because You are always faithful, strengthen us with Your mighty arm, that this Congress may be unified in lifting Your people to renewed hope.

May all that is done in the people's House 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.

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

The question was taken; and the Speaker 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. 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. Will the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN 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.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE
CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 20, 2017.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 20, 2017, at 1:18 a.m.:

That the Senate recede from its amendment with a further amendment H.R. 1.

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 695.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

COMMENDING JARROD DAVIS FOR
HIS EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

(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 to commend Jarrod Davis, of Blossburg, Pennsylvania, for his Eagle Scout project in honor of our Nation's veterans.

Jarrod, the grandson of a World War II veteran, wanted his Eagle Scout project to benefit veterans, so he began working in the spring on a reflection project outside the Veterans Center in Charleston Township, in Tioga County.

He collected donations to assist with establishing a flagpole, black metal benches, and a monument. At the project's completion, he donated the remaining funds to the Veterans Affairs Outreach Fund.

Jarrod worked with 10 volunteers on the project for 3 months, and he spent about 80 hours working on his Eagle Scout project. The flagpole and the reflection area were finished on April 21.

Jarrod, who graduated from North Penn-Liberty High School in June, now works at Sullivan Farms in Mainesburg. His project was dedicated earlier this month, on the 76th anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day on December 7.

Mr. Speaker, I am so proud of Jarrod, his patriotism, and his respect for those who serve. I wholeheartedly commend Jarrod Davis on this outstanding project.

CONFRONTING THE GUN VIOLENCE
EPIDEMIC

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, it has been 5 years since 20 children were senselessly murdered in the Sandy Hook massacre. And while we will never forget the young lives we lost that day, we must also remember that this tragic, life-altering and life-robbing epidemic continues to impact thousands of other families across the country.

Two weeks ago, I had the honor of meeting the parents of Alexandria Burgos. On October 19, 2014, Alexandria was picking up her brother from a friend's house when her life was cut short by a stray bullet shot through an apartment window. She was 18 years old. She worked with kids at the local YMCA and hoped to be a social worker after graduating from college.

Like her parents, I am telling her story to push the conversation forward, the conversation that includes thoughts and prayers, but also must lead to action.

Alexandria's story and the pain felt by her loved ones is something that far too many have had to endure in this country. Let 2018 be the year that we do more than reflect on the lives we have lost and finally step up to find the courage to confront gun violence.

OBSTRUCTION OF A DEA
INVESTIGATION INTO HEZBOLLAH

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

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my outrage at a detailed report by Politico which included testimony that President Obama and his administration obstructed a major DEA investigation into Hezbollah when they wanted to secure the Iran deal. These revelations are shocking and infuriating but, regrettably, not surprising. This is the same administration that sent \$1.7 billion in cash ransom to Iran.

According to the DEA, Hezbollah was operating a global criminal enterprise worth over \$1 billion, annually. They were selling drugs and running arms as a means of funding their terrorist activities.

A major DEA-led task force called Cassandra had procured mounting and incriminating evidence against them. Yet, according to senior Treasury and Defense officials, the Obama administration consistently obstructed and stonewalled the investigation in order to protect the Iran deal.

In essence, it seems President Obama and his administration were so focused on striking a deal with Iran that they let a major global terror group off the hook, even though the terror group was involved in global drug trafficking and sent massive amounts of cocaine and other drugs to our American communities.

I have sent this letter to Chairman GOWDY, urging an immediate investigation into this matter.

THIS IS THE WRONG DIRECTION
AND THE WRONG BILL

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, on the floor of this House and, I guess, again today, there will be a vote on this massive tax cut targeted to people at the very top, targeting big cuts for corporations.

Like many Members on this side of the aisle, I welcome the opportunity to do comprehensive, real tax reform. And for a long time, the discussion in this body and around the country was about the need to lower the rates and broaden the base and eliminate some of those loopholes that allow some corporations to get away with paying literally no taxes at all. But instead of doing that, what we saw was a massive shift of the responsibility to fund the government away from people at the top to people who work hard every day.

There are many examples of how we could have done this better. There was a lot of discussion on the Senate side about the child tax credit. But why did we end up with a child tax credit that rewards a minimum wage family with about \$75 a year, when somebody making \$400,000 would get \$4,000? I mean, is the life of a child of a family making a half a million dollars worth that much more?

This is the wrong direction. This is the wrong bill. We should reject it.

CELEBRATING THE CAREER OF
DORIS JACKSON

(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, I rise to celebrate the career of Doris Jackson, who will be retiring after more than 33 years of service to the U.S. House of Representatives. Doris began working as a cashier in the Cannon Cafe in 1980 and eventually became a supervisor.

After more than three decades, there have been many changes as Members and staff have come and gone, but Doris' smile has remained ever present. I know that I speak for every Member, staffer, and intern who has had the privilege of knowing Doris when I say that we will miss her witty sense of humor and her willingness to give encouragement to everyone she meets.

In retirement, Doris plans to spend more time with family, especially her grandchildren, and to stay active in her community by volunteering at her church.

Mr. Speaker, Doris has dedicated her life to serving us as we strive to serve our constituents. On behalf of our congressional family, I wish Doris the best of luck in the next exciting chapter in her life.

Congratulations, Doris.