

Trump's administration, I hereby resign effective 9:00AM on February 10th, 2017, from the United States House of Representatives.

The opportunity to serve the citizens of the Sixth District of Georgia has truly been one of the greatest honors of my life. This job and my passion for serving would not have been possible without the support, love, and friendship of family, constituents, community, colleagues, and staff throughout the years. It has been a blessing to work with such talented and bright minds to advance real solutions to some of our nation's toughest issues and challenges.

My first professional calling was not that of an elected official, it was to care for patients—following in the footsteps of both my father and grandfather who were also physicians. The caring relationship a doctor has for their patients is what brought me into public service, and it is that caring approach I wish to continue at the Department of Health and Human Services.

With the remarkable challenges that lay ahead for our great nation, I am enthusiastic for the opportunity to be a part of solving them on behalf of the American people. There is much work to be done to ensure we have a health care system that works for patients, families, and doctors; that leads the world in the cure and prevention of illness; and that is based on sensible rules to protect the well-being of the country while embracing its innovative spirit.

It will be my honor to continue working with you and every other Governor of these great United States to ensure that that our health care system becomes one that is more patient-centered, innovative, responsive and affordable for all Americans. Thanks to you for your service, friendship, and support.

Yours truly,

THOMAS PRICE, M.D.,
Member of Congress.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the resignation of the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE), the whole number of the House is 432.

NO TRAFFICKING IN OUR CITY, OUR STATE, OR OUR COUNTRY

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Houston recently hosted the exciting Super Bowl LI. As Texas welcomed people from across the United States, the message was clear: no trafficking, not in our city, not in our State, not in our country.

As exploiters and buyers roamed the streets looking for prey, Mayor Turner, the Department of Homeland Security, and local law enforcement were prepared to jail traffickers and rescue victims.

Well, Mr. Speaker, 183 sex buyers and nine traffickers were arrested; 76 victims were rescued. The local news showed the faces of the arrested traffickers and buyers across the bottom of Houston television screens. The days of hiding in plain sight are over.

I am proud of all the work by Houston, the NFL, local law enforcement,

all worked together to track down traffickers and buyers during the Super Bowl, making the game a huge success.

As the game moves to Minnesota next year, those in the slave trade need to know the law will be ready to capture them.

And that is just the way it is.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S REPORT CARD

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, here is President Trump's report card after less than a month in office:

The President wants to stop terrorist attacks by conducting background checks on refugees from countries that are considered security threats.

The President wants to prevent criminal immigrants from being released into our neighborhoods where they continue to prey on innocent Americans.

The President wants to lower the cost of health care and let individuals choose their own insurance plans.

The President wants to reduce our \$500 billion trade deficit and export goods and services, not jobs.

The President wants to eliminate unnecessary regulations which are a drag on the economy.

Mr. Speaker, the President's critics oppose all these actions. Only the people are on the President's side.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 13, 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 February 13, 2017, at 10:11 am.:

That the Senate agreed to without amendment H. Con. Res. 18.

Appointment: National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1629

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky) at 4 o'clock and 29 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

ABIE ABRAHAM VA CLINIC

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 609) to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs health care center in Center Township, Butler County, Pennsylvania, as the "Abie Abraham VA Clinic".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 609

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Abie Abraham of Lyndora, Pennsylvania, was stationed during World War II with the 18th Infantry in New York; 3 years with the 14th Infantry in Panama; 15th Infantry, unassigned in China, while the U.S.S. Panay was sunk; 30th Infantry, Presidio, San Francisco; and the 31st Infantry, Manila, Philippines, for 9 years.

(2) During World War II, Abraham fought, was captured, endured the Bataan Death March and as a prisoner of war for 3½ years, was beaten, stabbed, shot, survived malaria and starvation to be rescued by the 6th Rangers.

(3) Abraham stayed behind at the request of General Douglas MacArthur for 2½ more years disinterring the bodies of his fallen comrades from the Bataan Death March and the prison camps, helping to identify their bodies and see that they were properly laid to rest.

(4) After his promotion in 1945, Abraham came back to the United States where he served as a recruiter and then also served 2 years in Germany until his retirement with 30 years of service as a Master Sergeant.

(5) Abraham received numerous medals for his service, including the Purple Heart, and had several documentaries on the Discovery Channel and History Channel.

(6) Abraham wrote the books "Ghost of Bataan Speaks" in 1971 and "Oh, God, Where Are You" in 1977 to help the public better understand what our brave men endured at the hands of the Imperial Japanese Army as prisoners of war.

(7) Abraham was a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the Purple Heart Combat/Infantry Organization, the American Ex-POWs, the Disabled American Veterans, and the American Defenders of Bataan.

(8) Abraham was a volunteer at Veterans Affairs Butler Healthcare for 23 years from

1988 to 2011 and had 36,851 service hours caring for our veterans.

SEC. 2. ABIE ABRAHAM VA CLINIC.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The Department of Veterans Affairs health care center in Center Township, Butler County, Pennsylvania, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the “Abie Abraham VA Clinic”.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the health care center referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the “Abie Abraham VA Clinic”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and add extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 609, a bill to name the Department of Veterans Affairs health care center in Center Township, Butler County, Pennsylvania, the Abie Abraham VA Clinic.

This bill is sponsored by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY), my good friend. I am grateful to him for introducing this legislation in honor of an American hero.

Master Sergeant Abraham lived a truly remarkable life. As a teenager, he set a world record for tree sitting—a popular pastime in those days—after sitting in a tree for 3½ months, according to his obituary in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

In 1932, at the age of just 19, he enlisted in the United States Navy and, 2 years later, the United States Army. Over the course of a 30-year military career, he served in the Philippines, China, Germany, and Panama. He earned a number of accolades, including the Purple Heart. He survived, Mr. Speaker, the Bataan Death March and 3½ years in captivity, being beaten, shot, and starved.

Following his rescue, instead of returning immediately to the United States, Master Sergeant Abraham agreed to stay behind to recover the remains of his fallen comrades and to ensure they received the recognition they were certainly due.

Following his service, Master Sergeant Abraham devoted his time to caring for his fellow brothers and sisters in arms as a lifelong member of several veterans service organizations and as a volunteer at the VA Butler Healthcare Center, where he spent a total of almost 40,000 hours over the

course of 23 years tending to the veteran patients there.

In his spare time, he authored two books, made public appearances at schools and community centers, and participated in documentary films that have aired on the Discovery and History Channels. In addition to all of that, he was also a lightweight boxing champion and trainer.

Master Sergeant Abraham most certainly lived a full and interesting life characterized by both service in and out of uniform. Given that, it is only fitting and appropriate that we honor him by naming the VA healthcare center in Butler County, Pennsylvania, after him. This legislation satisfies all the committee's naming criteria and is supported by the Pennsylvania congressional delegation as well as many VSOs.

Once again, I thank my colleague, Congressman MIKE KELLY, for introducing this bill. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would, first of all, like to thank the chairman for bringing H.R. 609 to the floor, and a very special thank you to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) for the honor and privilege to learn about this great American. You heard a little bit of the story, and you will hear more of it from Mr. KELLY. It is sometimes unimaginable that such as Mr. Abraham walked amongst us.

I oftentimes hear that people disparage when Congress does naming bills. If anyone was ever deserving of having a VA center named after them, and the importance of attaching that name and the history for those who come after, this is the gentleman.

You are going to hear more of this, but Mr. Abraham was born in Lyndora, Pennsylvania. The stories just keep coming up. Apparently he was gifted academically and, of course, was a boxer. Again, this is a point of personal privilege on this, he was actually a Regimental Sergeant Major for a time when he was in his service. He served in the Philippines, China, Germany, and Panama. He survived the Bataan Death March. Having been out on Corregidor Island and hearing the stories of the people who survived, unimaginable horrors that they survived, and then imagine after being rescued and being liberated and having a chance to come home, Mr. Abraham chose to make sure that all of his comrades came home.

He was a recipient of the Purple Heart and a lifelong member of the VFW, the American Legion, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the American Ex-Prisoners of War Organization, the Disabled American Veterans, and the American Defenders of Bataan; but I think the chairman brought up something truly remarkable: giving 40,000 hours of volunteer service to his fellow veterans. This Na-

tion could ask no more of a single person, and Mr. Abraham continued to give.

To the gentleman from Pennsylvania, the State of Pennsylvania is represented well here. They were represented well by Mr. Abraham. It is an honor and a privilege to support this piece of legislation. I encourage my colleagues to not only support this, but to maybe go read the bio of this great American.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY), my friend and colleague.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman. I brought with me today a picture of Master Sergeant Abraham. Now, I never knew him when he looked like this. I knew him when he was much older. I have got to tell you that to know Master Sergeant Abraham, you would never have known what he had gone through in his life because all of these folks from that time period just did what they had to do. When you ask them, “Why did you do it?” they said, “It wasn’t an option. It wasn’t an option. We had to do it.” There is just certain times in our history that people rise up and they do things that are incredible, ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

Just being around Mr. Abraham for a long time—I never called him Abie, by the way. I did not call him Abie. I always called him sergeant or Mr. Abraham—I was just always so impressed with him. It is such an honor and a privilege to be able to stand here in the people's House to talk about a true American hero, somebody who was not just a patriot, but was compassionate, somebody who never stopped serving his country in so many different ways.

When I first read “The Ghost of Bataan,” I went back and I talked to Mr. Abraham. I said: You never told me about these things.

He said: Oh, don't worry about that. Those were just things we had to do.

I said: No, but what you did was incredible: to survive the Bataan Death March, to be in a Japanese prison camp for 3½ years, to be stabbed, to be shot, to be beaten, to survive malaria and starvation. Did you ever think of trying to get away?

He said: Yeah, MIKE, I did, but here was the thing: if one of us were to escape, the Japanese soldiers would shoot 10 of the prisoners who were still in the camp; so we didn't want to do that to any of our colleagues. I watched them die. I held them as they died. We tried to get them through the darkest times that we could.

I said: How did you endure?

He said: My faith. My faith.

That is how we all get through the darkest time, on both knees, believing that God is there for us no matter what. But when you read his books and you understand who this man was—and

I think the second book was the one that was incredible. Let me read this because I just thought if there was anything that somebody did out of love, it was Mr. Abraham.

His second book was "Oh, God, Where Are You?" I want you to think of this as a prisoner of war who survived the Bataan Death March, who watched his colleagues killed along the way, and if they fell down, they got shot. Toward the end, when they fell down and they couldn't move anymore, they were put into open graves, and they were told to go ahead and cover the graves. He refused to do it. He said: They are still moving.

So we come to today and we think about what it is that we as Americans can do. What is it we can do? What is in our hearts? What is in our memory? What about all those who came before us and what they went through?

Mr. Abraham, as a child, went to school barefoot. His family didn't have money to even buy him shoes, but he had a love for our Nation. He had a love for his fellow man. He had a love for veterans that was just incredible. But imagine the despair of being in that prison camp and not knowing what was going on in the outside war.

I asked him: What did you do? How did you keep people's spirits up?

He said: I made up stories. I would tell them that I just heard there was a rumor going through camp that our armies are close and they are going to rescue us.

Think about that. They were clinging to a made-up story from this man because he knew that is how he could keep their spirits up in the darkest of times. He kind of smiled about it.

I said: That is incredible.

He said: Well, sometimes you have to do things a little different just to get people's spirits up.

I want you to fast forward to who this man was. I watched him walk with a cane as he got into his later years, in his eighties and nineties, going to VA Butler Healthcare Center every single day to help fellow veterans. His sole purpose in life was to help other American citizens, to help other veterans, to bring a little light into their life, to bring a little happiness into their life; 40,000 hours of service in a VA center. He could have spent his time doing other things, but he didn't. He chose to stay with those he loved. He chose to serve those he loved. He chose to continue to serve even in his retirement this Nation that he loved so much.

I can't tell you how much it means to be able to look at that new health center going up and knowing that Mr. Abraham, from his new post, is looking down and is so thankful to a grateful nation that we are taking time to take care of those who have given everything they can to make sure our Nation remains free.

This is an incredible time in our history. This has nothing to do with parties. It has nothing to do with who you vote for. It has to do with who we are,

the fact that every single one of us has a role. I would just ask people to please look into Abie Abraham. Go online and see about Mr. Abraham. Go and see what Master Sergeant Abraham did, and say: If I could just be a little bit like Abie Abraham, the world would be a better place. For all those who have died in the service of our country, they will rest easier.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers and I am prepared to close.

I would just like to thank the gentleman again for bringing this to our attention, honoring Master Sergeant Abraham's life. Again, I think there is a little lesson here of how we conduct ourselves reflects on the sacrifice that people like Mr. Abraham gave; and the gentleman has done so honorably and nobly, and I thank him for that. I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 609.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I think this is an amazing story that Mr. KELLY shared before us. I had a history professor in college who survived the Bataan Death March. He spent 3½ years in the same—I wonder if these two men knew each other. He, indeed, too, was a remarkable man. I can think of no better honor in Butler, Pennsylvania, than to honor his memory by naming this medical center. Once again, I encourage all Members to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 609.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WORKING TO INTEGRATE NETWORKS GUARANTEEING MEMBER ACCESS NOW ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 512) to title 38, United States Code, to permit veterans to grant access to their records in the databases of the Veterans Benefits Administration to certain designated congressional employees, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 512

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Working to Integrate Networks Guaranteeing Member Access Now Act" or the "WINGMAN Act".

SEC. 2. PROVISION OF ACCESS TO CASE-TRACKING INFORMATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 59 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 5906. Access of certain congressional employees to veteran records

"(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) The Secretary shall provide to each veteran who submits a claim for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary an opportunity to permit a covered congressional employee employed in the office of the Member of Congress representing the district where the veteran resides to have access to all of the records of the veteran in the databases of the Veterans Benefits Administration.

"(2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, upon receipt of the permission from the veteran under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall provide read-only access to such records to such a covered congressional employee in a manner that does not allow such employee to modify the data contained in such records or in any part of a database of the Veterans Benefits Administration.

"(3) A Member of Congress may designate not more than two employees of the Member as covered congressional employees.

"(b) REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary may not impose any requirement other than the requirements specified under subsection (e)(1) before treating an employee as a covered congressional employee for purposes of this section.

"(c) NONRECOGNITION.—A covered congressional employee may not be recognized as an agent or attorney under this chapter.

"(d) LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS.—None of the amounts made available to carry out this section may be used to design, develop, or administer any training for purposes of providing training to covered congressional employees.

"(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) The term 'covered congressional employee' means a permanent, full-time employee of a Member of Congress—

"(A) whose responsibilities include assisting the constituents of the Member with issues regarding departments or agencies of the Federal Government;

"(B) who satisfies the criteria required by the Secretary for recognition as an agent or attorney under this chapter; and

"(C) who is designated by the Member of Congress as a covered congressional employee for purposes of this section.

"(2) The term 'database of the Veterans Benefits Administration' means any database of the Veterans Benefits Administration in which the records of veterans relating to claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary are retained, including information regarding medical records, compensation and pension exams records, rating decisions, statements of the case, supplementary statements of the case, notices of disagreement, Form-9, and any successor form.

"(3) The term 'Member of Congress' means a Representative, a Senator, a Delegate to Congress, or the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

"5906. Access of certain congressional employees to veteran records."

(c) NO AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section or the amendments made by this section. This section and such amendments may only be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated, of which, during the period of fiscal years 2018 through 2021, not more than \$10,000,000 may be obligated or expended for such purpose.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from