

our Nation. From Levittown to Lower Salford, no part of my district is left unaffected by this epidemic. Last year in Bucks County, opioid-related deaths rose by 50 percent. In Montgomery County, opioid overdoses claimed a staggering 240 lives.

Mr. Speaker, every fatality represents a family crushed by the overwhelming loss of a loved one. As lawmakers, we have the responsibility to act. Passage of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act and the 21st Century Cures Act were monumental first steps in countering the opioid crisis, but we must continue to press the issue from all sides, from the trafficking of narcotics across our border to preventing the overprescribing of painkillers.

Congress alone cannot solve this problem. We must be ready and willing to work with State and local leaders, law enforcement, healthcare professionals, and educators in our districts. We are all stakeholders in this challenge. Together, we can eradicate this epidemic, we can protect our families, and we can free our communities from this menace.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Mr. HECK. Mr. Speaker, it may be Valentine's Day, but I rise today to share a story of a Christmas miracle.

Now, this is little Gracie, and she was born on Christmas Day in 2015. Unfortunately, not too long after she was born, she was diagnosed with a respiratory virus. It is a very bad thing for little people because they have little lungs and little respiratory airways. Frankly, it can be extremely dangerous.

To make matters worse, she was snowed in at the hospital where she was born. She had to spend 5 days at the NICU before they could transport her to a children's hospital. When she finally did arrive at Seattle Children's Hospital, she had pneumonia, E. coli, and a collapsed lung. But, fortunately, little Gracie is a fighter, as was her medical team, and she made a complete and full recovery.

With coverage through Medicaid, her parents were able to focus on her care and her future. The financial stress of hospital bills that come with intensive care, a cardiac catheter, a life flight, and numerous medications was daunting, but it was not devastating.

Gracie's story is just one example of the difference Medicaid expansion through the ACA has made for millions of children throughout our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, when I am home, I hear these stories all day long about how the ACA has made a real difference in the lives of people. The ACA in my State expanded coverage to more than 750,000 people. In fact, this January, we hit record enrollment of 225,000 sign-ups. That is a 13 percent jump from last year.

The ACA is working for many people across America; but let's be honest: we have also heard the other stories from people who aren't seeing these gains. Instead, they are seeing higher premiums and increased medical costs in general, with little improvement in coverage. Those are legitimate concerns that Congress needs to address.

But whenever Congress makes major changes, such as Social Security or Medicare, or enacts big ideas, there will always be unexpected results in parts of the program that don't function as anticipated or designed. Our job is to follow up, see what works, and adapt accordingly going forward. Even the best laws are going to require some adjustment.

Let's do that. Let's do it the smart way, the American way, and work together to fix the parts of the ACA that need fixing while maintaining that which works. Repeal and replace is not the answer. It is not the answer. Working together to fix it is the answer.

As we continue—or begin—to work together, I hope we will remember Gracie and know that health care is not a miracle. Health care is the result of hardworking doctors, nurses, and healthcare professionals and a financially viable healthcare system and our actions here to support that in Congress.

We all come here for lots of reasons: philosophy, values, and ideology. We come here to represent our districts and their major components. I have the privilege to represent Joint Base Lewis-McChord, the largest force projection base on the West Coast, and many thousands of State employees—I have the State capital—who work every day to elevate the human condition of their friends and neighbors. We come here to represent the 672,554 people of our districts.

Mostly, I hope, however, that we come here to represent the Gracies of our districts. What I believe deep in my soul is that, if we will keep Gracie and the Gracies of our district in our hearts and foremost in our minds, if we keep them as our touchstone and our North Star, then America is going to be all right. I plead with you to do just that.

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF SAVANNAH'S NAACP

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the NAACP's Savannah branch. In July of 1917, James Weldon Johnson, field secretary of the NAACP, established Georgia's first NAACP branch in Savannah with 68 original members.

Similar to other NAACP branches, the Savannah branch pursues political, educational, social, and economic equality of minority groups and citizens. For the last 100 years, Savannah's NAACP branch has fought to eradicate

racial hatred and discrimination in the community. Its first meeting of 2017 was held on January 22 at St. Paul Christian Methodist Episcopal Church to install new officers and leadership.

I am proud to recognize today the branch's new officials, including President Al Scott, Vice Presidents W. Richard Shinhoster, Lynette Hymes, Barbara Magwood, Secretary Linda Carter, and Treasurer Joe Lang. I am confident in this leadership's ability to continue to uphold the values of the NAACP and help Savannah serve as an example to the nearly 75 NAACP branches Georgia has today.

REMEMBERING STETSON BENNETT, JR.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember a lifelong public servant, Mr. Stetson Bennett, Jr., of Jesup, Georgia, who passed away on Thursday, February 9, 2017, at 87 years old.

Mr. Bennett was born in 1929 to Reverend Stetson Bennett, Sr., and Irene Bennett in Wayne County. He graduated from Jesup High School in 1947, before attending Auburn University. Around this time, he also married his wife, Patsy Jones. They were married for more than 69 years.

Mr. Bennett first entered public service in 1949, as chief deputy clerk. By 1965, he was elected clerk of superior court and served nearly 50 years. Recognized by the Georgia House of Representatives as the longest serving constitutional officer in Georgia, Mr. Bennett has received a number of honors throughout his career.

His dedicated service earned him Clerk of the Year Award in 1985, the highest honor a clerk can receive. Fittingly, the award is now named in honor of Mr. Bennett. Perhaps his proudest achievement was when the citizens of Wayne County officially named the main courtroom the Stetson Bennett, Jr. Courtroom in honor of his years of service to the community he loved.

In addition, he served as the president of the Wayne County Chamber of Commerce, was an active member of the Lions Club, and helped develop Wayne Memorial Hospital as a member of its board.

Mr. Bennett was always proud of where he came from, which was clear from how selflessly he dedicated his life to Wayne County. He truly will be missed.

PRAYERS FOR LEIGH RYAN

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask for your thoughts and prayers for Mrs. Leigh Ryan, a Tybee Island mother of two who is battling an aggressive form of cancer.

Originally from Roberta, Georgia, Mrs. Ryan settled on Tybee Island 20 years ago to work as a nurse at Memorial University Medical Center. Since arriving on Tybee Island, giving back to the community has been a top priority for Mrs. Ryan, who is a member of Junior League and often works with the homeless in the area.

She was originally diagnosed with breast cancer in the fall of 2015, but through treatment, Mrs. Ryan believed herself to be cancer free. Unfortunately, around Thanksgiving of 2016, doctors told her the cancer was back.

With Mrs. Ryan's twin 8-year-old daughters in mind, a close friend began fundraising to help care for Mrs. Ryan's children as she continues her treatment. The community returned the kindness she showed them and raised more than \$40,000 for Mrs. Ryan in the first week of collecting donations.

It is inspiring to see a community come together to help someone in need, especially someone who has already done so much for the community. Please keep Mrs. Ryan, her daughters, and the generous community of Tybee Island in your thoughts.

REMEMBERING MR. WILMER RANDELL
KICKLIGHTER

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the life of my dear friend, Mr. Randall Kicklighter, who passed away on Saturday, February 11, at the age of 74.

Randell, as he was known to his family and friends, was an icon in the Garden City, Georgia, community. He spent his life helping others, sharing wisdom, and brightening people's days.

At the age of 18, he met the love of his life, Bessie. Ten months after the couple met, they ran away and married. Randell went on to serve 2 years in the United States Army, making sure to always have Bessie by his side. During this period, the couple spent time in both the U.S. and Germany serving our Nation.

When Randell returned from duty, he decided to go to beauty school and become a hairdresser, which would allow him to work beside Bessie every day. They opened a salon called Randell and Dean's, which quickly gained a reputation around Garden City. Clients would say you could not expect a quick trim because long conversations with Randell were a must. I can attest to this firsthand. You see, Randell kept my hair for over 37 years. Many times it was just he and I together, and he was truly one of my best friends.

However, Randell worked harder than nearly anyone around. He never retired and worked until the last day in his salon. Each day after work, Randell would head to the gym to exercise. Even there, he continued his hard work and long conversations.

In the 1960s, Randell won many power lifting competitions. Then, at the age of 61, he competed and won national bodybuilding competitions. Even at the gym, Randell was talking to people about his children and grandchildren and sharing tips about exercise.

Randell was one of my best friends, and I will miss him, as will everyone who had the honor of knowing him.

OUR CRUMBLING NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, candidate Trump talked a lot about the need to invest \$1 trillion in our crumbling infrastructure, and President Trump, on Inauguration Day, referenced again the need to invest in our infrastructure. There has been little progress since that point and no major proposals.

Last week, I talked about surface transportation. I am running a clock on the costs to the American economy and the American people of not investing in roads, bridges, highways, and transit. That clock started at noon on the 20th of Inauguration Day, and it is now up to \$11 billion. That is the cost to the American people, to the economy, of not investing.

This week we have seen a dramatic new example in a different area of infrastructure of the costs of not investing: the evacuation of 130,000 people below the Oroville Dam in California. This shouldn't be happening. Federal and State officials warned that the dam didn't meet current safety standards in 2005, yet no investments and no improvements were made.

I wish this were an isolated example. Unfortunately, 96 percent of the dams in America are owned by State, local, and private entities, and many are in need of upgrades or a complete overhaul. Fifty years is the estimated lifetime of a dam. There are 50,000 dams that are past that lifetime, and some of them are safety critical, that is, if they fail, people will die.

□ 1045

The American Society of Civil Engineers gives us a D. They say by 2020, 70 percent of our dams will be over 50 years old. There are 2,000 that are classified as a high hazard today—those whose failure, by definition, or misoperation will probably cause loss of human life.

We need about \$53 billion to repair these dams. That is a lot of money, but think of what a life is worth. Think of the cost of the damage that is caused when these dams fail. Most everybody downstream has Federal flood insurance.

Instead of the Federal Government partnering and working with communities and States to improve these dams and prevent a disaster, until last year, the only program we had was one to mitigate after the disaster. But luckily, we moved forward last year in the Water Resources Development Act with an amendment offered by our colleague Mr. MALONEY that would authorize repair and rehabilitation of non-Federal dams and provide proactive maintenance and repair.

Obviously, it is much more cost-effective than waiting until failure and then mitigate the property loss downstream and declare an emergency to re-

build the dam. We will have the sad loss of life when we don't make those investments.

There are many examples that I could cite. A dam failure in Hawaii killed seven people. It had never been inspected. It was a 100-year-old dam. In 2 weeks, we will mark the 35th anniversary of the Buffalo Creek Dam failure in West Virginia. It killed 125 people, 1,100 were severely injured, and 4,000 people were homeless. The dam had received safety violations, but there was no follow-up.

So, this is another aspect of infrastructure in America that needs investment. President Trump was pretty much spot on with his estimate of a trillion dollars. If you look at surface transportation—roads, bridges, highways, and transit—if you look at infrastructure for water treatment—think Detroit—or if you look at the thousands of communities that need to upgrade or rebuild their sewer facilities and other aspects of infrastructure, a trillion dollars would just about do it.

If we made those investments, we would put hundreds of thousands of people to work in this country, make America more efficient and more competitive in the world economy. But many of my Republican colleagues on the other side of the aisle think that we shouldn't be making these investments publicly. They classify any kind of spending as a deficit, even if it is a capital investment that will last for a hundred years or a capital investment that will save lives and mitigate losses for the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Flood Insurance Program.

It is penny wise and pound foolish not to make these investments. We can and should. We need to move forward and rebuild our country.

BRING HADAR HOME

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

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the story of Hadar Goldin.

Hadar was born in the Galilee region of Israel in 1991. He was a gifted young man—a happy person with a lively personality. He was an accomplished painter and, I am told, an inspiration to everybody that knew him. He served as a lieutenant in the Givati Brigade of the IDF.

Mr. Speaker, I did not know Hadar personally, but, during my time serving alongside the IDF, I knew so many who were just like him. I met some of the most humble and compassionate people that I have ever known. I chose to serve alongside the IDF because our friends in Israel fight for the same values that we fight to protect in our country: human dignity, freedom, and liberty.

I can tell you from experience that we soldiers often label our uniforms with sentiments that are important to us. Hadar had his rifle belt embroidered