

Mr. Speaker, to say we will miss Nancy is an understatement, but I know she is looking forward to spending time with her husband, Barry, and her three sons—Brian, Will, and Robby—and the rest of the family.

Nancy, on behalf of Penny and me and all the staff, we wish you the best for a well-deserved retirement. On behalf of the Congress of the United States, thank you for your nearly four decades of service to the people's House. Thank you for all your dedication to serving the American people.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join the Armenian community in commemorating the 102nd anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

On April 24, 1915, the Ottoman Empire began committing atrocities that would result in the first genocide of the 20th century. Between 1915 and 1923, 1½ million Armenians were systematically deported from their homes and sent to their death on marches through the Syrian Desert. That is a fact.

My district, located in California's San Joaquin Valley, is the land of William Saroyan and the resting place of Soghomon Terlirian, a hero of the Armenian people. It is also home to the only Armenian genocide monument on a college campus in the Nation at Fresno State University, my alma mater. It is a campus that has a storied Armenian Studies program known throughout the country and is a sister university to the American University of Armenia.

The San Joaquin Valley of California is also one of the earliest settling places for thousands of survivors and their families as part of the diaspora as a result of the genocide. Many still live there today and call the valley their home.

I was honored to visit Armenia this past year to meet with its people and leaders. I was truly humbled to visit the Armenian genocide memorial in Yerevan. We have seen religious and civic leaders from all around the world recognize the Armenian genocide and ensure that this tragedy is never ever forgotten.

I am very disappointed and saddened that another year has passed without the President of the United States or the Congress recognizing the events of 1915 as genocide. We cannot move forward free of genocide without recognizing the first genocide of the 20th century. So I ask my colleagues to please join me in recognizing the lives of 1½ million victims and their families.

It is always said that now is not the right time because of our relationship with Turkey as they become, like this country, less democratic as a result of recent elections. I reject that view. If we do not recognize the genocide now, then when?

I stand with Armenians all over the world to say ‘menk’ ch'yenk’ morranum.’ We will not forget.

RECOGNIZING PAUL JAMUSHIAN

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service and advocacy of Mr. Paul Jamushian, as the 16th Congressional District's Hero of the Month in California.

As a descendant of both martyrs and survivors of the Armenian genocide, Paul has been an advocate for the Armenian cause and for genocide recognition for over 50 years. As a member of the Armenian National Committee of America, he has led efforts throughout the country to advocate and educate residents and people of the atrocities of 1915.

I have been proud to call Paul a friend and a partner in what has been a mutual commitment to ensure that the Armenian genocide is never forgotten. His efforts have led to the Armenian genocide being formally recognized by numerous cities, counties, and State governing bodies.

While in my district, his efforts, along with those of numerous others in the Armenian community, have led to this beautiful Armenian genocide monument on the campus of Fresno State University as you see here.

Paul is the embodiment of the community of Armenian Americans throughout the country who have not only survived, but have gone on to thrive post-genocide and contribute time and time again to our country. It is my honor to recognize Paul as the Hero of the Month for the 16th Congressional District in California this month, especially during this week of remembrance for the 102nd anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

Let us never ever forget.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC FUNDING IN THE 21ST CENTURY CURES ACT

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

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last week, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced the first round of grant funding for the 21st Century Cures Act.

As a cosponsor and supporter of Cures and a Member who represents communities in Pennsylvania directly impacted by the opioid crisis, this was an encouraging and welcomed step toward combating this epidemic. This first round of funding will support prevention and treatment initiatives for those individuals in need.

In particular, these resources will assist our local health centers that serve the uninsured or underinsured and are leading the fight on the front lines against this epidemic. This is one of many steps that will need to take place to combat this crisis.

As the debate here in the House on efforts to improve health care continues, this announcement serves as a

reminder of the positive and good we can do when we work together to deliver solutions that strengthen our communities. Moving forward, I will continue to work with my colleagues to advance and support policies to address addiction prevention and treatment.

CONGRATULATING WINNERS OF 2017 CONGRESSIONAL ART COMPETITION

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate students in Pennsylvania's Sixth Congressional District.

Yesterday, my office was proud to announce the winners of the 2017 Congressional Art Competition. As a member of the STEAM Caucus and a strong supporter of funding for the arts and humanities, I always encourage students across my district to participate in the competition.

This year, Hannah from Conestoga High School, was awarded first place for her piece, entitled, ‘Three Cranes’; second place went to Rachel from Henderson High School; third place was awarded to Elizabeth from Conestoga High School; and fourth place was awarded to Juliet from Phoenixville Area High School.

The creativity displayed this year and every year by students from our community shows the depth of hard work and talent of our region's students. I congratulate and thank each student who submitted their work to the competition.

NIH FUNDING

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, during the recess period, I had the opportunity to host townhalls and meet with constituents to hear about the issues and concerns that matter to them.

One of the recurring topics of concern that I kept hearing was about potential cuts to Federal medical research funding, in particular, NIH cuts from the President's skinny budget.

We made great progress last Congress toward strengthening the NIH, most notably through passage of the 21st Century Cures Act. In addition to increasing funding, we have made positive structural changes to ensure that every dollar invested is being used effectively and efficiently.

The NIH and medical research represent our best hope to find cures, improve care, and solve the diseases and conditions that affect millions of Americans. We should not reduce one penny of NIH funding, not one penny. The work and research of the NIH is simply too valuable.

FENTANYL CRISIS

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, because of the fentanyl crisis we are facing, I have cosponsored the Synthetic Trafficking and Overdose Prevention Act, also known as the STOP Act. The bill aims to prevent synthetic drugs, such as fentanyl, from being shipped to the United States by drug traffickers.

Illicitly produced synthetic opioids have strong associations with countries like China and India, where there

is little to no regulation, and fentanyl and its analogues are manufactured in both small- and large-scale production laboratories.

The STOP Act would require foreign postal operators to send advanced electronic data to the USPS, the Postal Service, for packages imported into the United States. This would enable Customs and Border Protection and other agencies to target high-risk shipments for screening.

This bill also gives the Postal Service more authority to scan arriving mail from places that are currently exempt from CBP protocol, helping to stop these packages from reaching U.S. borders in the first place. It is a vigilant Federal response, including the STOP Act, which is crucial to reversing the tide of addiction, helping to save lives in our community and across the country.

BURN PITS

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, burn pits, which are found on military bases, create substances that can be toxic. Tires, batteries, human waste, medical waste, and other garbage items are put into pits and set on fire, sometimes after being soaked with jet fuel. Burn pits were regularly used in Iraq and Afghanistan, so veterans of these wars are particularly at risk.

My colleagues and I have introduced legislation that says, if a veteran does not have visible wounds, it is often difficult to provide the proof that VA needs to process a claim—but it shouldn't be that burdensome for a veteran who has sacrificed so much for our country—to get the treatment they need when they come home. There are many reports of veterans who believe their illness was caused by their exposure to burn pits who have not been able to get the VA to provide them with coverage.

This epidemic is being compared to the major problem veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange had when they returned home from the Vietnam war, and we cannot let that happen again. So we have introduced legislation because veterans who are exposed to burn pits and subsequently have complications need to have the right diagnosis and treatment as soon as possible.

This bill would create a Center of Excellence at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which would provide research to be able to properly address the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of these veterans. It is important the men and women who dedicate their lives to protecting our country can access the care they need when they return home.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 43 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Michael D. Gutierrez, St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, Baldwin Park, California, offered the following prayer:

God, source of goodness and mercy, today we pray that You touch the minds and hearts of the Members of Congress.

Grant them wisdom and insight to make effective decisions that benefit the common good of our Nation, respecting all ethnicities, genders, and faith traditions.

We pray, Lord, that our Representatives may listen to one another so that they may seek what is good and true for all people. We ask You, Lord, to guide them and grant them courage to act in peace and justice so that other nations may see the goodness of our Nation and our leaders.

God, may this day be a continual exchange of ideas and prosperous debate, that people may see that our Representatives are being guided by You, God, and that Your wisdom be reflected in their decisions.

We lift up this prayer in Your holy name.

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. WILSON of South Carolina. 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. WILSON of South Carolina. 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 gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. BEATTY led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING FATHER MICHAEL D. GUTIERREZ

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to introduce to the House and bid welcome to Father Mike Gutierrez today. He is the pastor at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church and school in the city of Baldwin Park in California. Thank you, Father, for coming from Baldwin Park and for the wonderful prayer.

Father Mike, as he is known—he doesn't use Gutierrez—leads a parish of 10,000 families with a focus on Filipino and Hispanic communities. He has increased participation in religious and educational programs, youth and family ministry, and allows the church to bring attention and encourage activism on issues impacting the area.

He is an integral part of the 32nd District's, my district, annual immigration clinic event and is known for his joviality and smiling consistently.

Since my move to the California 32nd, he has been helpful in many issues and events that I have put forth, recognized by the California State Legislature and the Archdiocese of Los Angeles for support of social issues.

Father, thank you. Thank you for today's blessing and for the work you do to spread and promote Gospel throughout the San Gabriel Valley.

May God continue to bless you and your ministry.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

AN ADMINISTRATION MARKED BY STRENGTH

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this Saturday marks 100 days in office for President Donald Trump, an important milestone for Congress and this administration.

Since being sworn in, President Trump has stood strong, upholding his pledge to protect the American people in the face of world threats. He has stood up to the dangerous regime in North Korea by supporting our allies in the region and deploying the THAAD missile defense system. He took swift, decisive action against the dictatorship in Syria by using military force and economic sanctions after the brutal dictatorship executed a chemical attack murdering innocent civilians.