

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. The People's Republic of China and other external powers are gaining visibility and influence in the region, including the neighboring Independent State of Samoa. Due to the new influence of foreign interests in the region, members of American Samoa's territorial legislature, the Fono, just days prior to the Vice President's arrival, expressed to me, during my appearance before a special joint session, their concern about the rise of foreign influences in the region. I am certain the Pago Pago Declaration will help to allay their concerns and will be welcome in capitals across the Pacific from Port Moresby, Tahiti.

Moreover, Madam Speaker, I anticipate that the Pago Pago Declaration will be a component of the evolving Trump doctrine that is under development by the administration, which I expect will be fully articulated when the U.S. participates in the Port Moresby APEC summit in November of next year.

Madam Speaker, we, in American Samoa, recognize the strategic importance of our location in the center of the Pacific Ocean and are proud of the contributions we make to our Nation's security.

As always, we stand ready to do our part to advance the spirit of the Vice President's Pago Pago Declaration, which I expect will have a long lasting and positive effect on the region.

I want to, once again, thank the Vice President and the administration for their attention to the Pacific territories, a region that too often goes unnoticed in Washington.

McGOVERN-DOLE INTERNATIONAL FOOD FOR EDUCATION PROGRAM

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

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the George McGovern-Robert Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program, one of America's signature child nutrition and food security programs.

Established by Congress in the 2002 farm bill, over the past 15 years, it has provided life-saving meals in school settings to over 14 million of the world's most vulnerable children.

Administered by the Department of Agriculture, this bipartisan-supported program provides U.S. and international organizations with U.S. commodities, grants, and technical assistance to strengthen child nutrition and education.

It receives a modest \$201 million each year. Regrettably, the President's FY 2018 budget would cruelly eliminate the entire program.

McGovern-Dole is named after two Senators who worked in a bipartisan way during their long tenures in the Senate to end hunger, especially

among children in the United States and around the world. They continued their work together after leaving the Senate. They are models for what can be accomplished when Members of Congress actually put petty partisanship aside and make the welfare of children and families become your number one priority. And even though George McGovern is no longer with us, Bob Dole continues to champion this cause.

On March 20, in a statement to The Washington Post, he said: "Eliminating the McGovern-Dole program would have a disastrous effect on the planet's most vulnerable children. Without a reliable source of nutrition, these children face a lifetime of stunted physical and mental development and unrealized opportunity. This global school meals program remains one of the proudest achievements of my lifetime. It embodies the very best of America's values. Saving this program means saving lives. It's as simple as that."

Madam Speaker, working through partners like the U.N. World Food Programme, Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, Save the Children, Counterpart International, and many more, McGovern-Dole has reduced the incidence of hunger among school-aged children. It has increased school enrollments and attendance. It has increased the support of families and communities for education, especially for girls. It is a proven success.

Instead of eliminating it, we should be strengthening and expanding it. Now, I have had the privilege of visiting some of these programs around the world. In Colombia, I visited a program in Soacha, on the outskirts of Bogota. On barren hillsides, surrounded by shanties housing thousands of internally displaced families, children were receiving a school breakfast and lunch. Mothers and grandmothers were training as cooks preparing the meals. Clearly visible in the cafeteria were USAID bags of grains, beans, and lentils.

One mother came up to me and said: "Please thank the American people when you go back home. I couldn't feed my children. I couldn't send them to school. I was afraid my son was going to join the paramilitaries or guerrillas just to get food. Now my son is getting fed and he is staying in school. Please tell the American people thank you."

In Nairobi, Kenya, in the largest slum in the world, I went to a McGovern-Dole breakfast and lunch program. The school principal showed me how they store and prepare U.S. commodities that feed her students and how all the students know that this program is from the American people. I ate porridge made from yellow peas grown by American farmers. The kids dug into this food like it was manna from Heaven. One little boy would take a bite and then scoop a small amount out of his bowl and put it in his pockets. He was taking food home to his younger siblings who don't get anything to eat.

Outside of Nairobi in Maasai country is a school for girls where McGovern-Dole provides a hot lunch. I helped cook and serve the meal of U.S. bulgur wheat and locally grown vegetables. One student told me how grateful she was to be able to go to school every day and eat every day. She grew up in a village over 100 miles away.

When she was 12, her father told her that she had to marry a much older man. She refused. Her father ordered her to go to her uncle's house and get his machete and bring it back to him. She knew that he was going to kill her.

She ran away, walking alone for days, because she had heard of this school. And when I met her, she was 15, healthy, and well fed, and at the top of her class. I knew I was talking to someone who will some day be a leader in her country. In the very best way, she will never forget us.

And when we take food away from children, families, and schools, those communities will never forget us either. They won't forget that we took away their children's future. I wouldn't forget it if it were my child. Would you?

Madam Speaker, there are many ways to advance U.S. national security and economic interests abroad. Education and child nutrition are very much at the top of the list. So I urge my colleagues to visit McGovern-Dole programs when they travel abroad and to support continued funding of the program in FY 2018. It is yet another way that we can all work together to end hunger now.

ATTEMPT TO REPEAL AND REPLACE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, this morning, the American public woke up to news accounts that the Trump White House and Republican leadership in Congress is going to again this week make another attempt to try and repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act.

Republican Majority Leader KEVIN McCARTHY gave a speech in Texas a few days ago on Saturday where he promised that this is the week that the Republicans will repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act.

For those of us who were in the Chamber here just a short time ago in March when the first attempt was made to butcher the healthcare system with the so-called American Health Care Act, what we saw was the culmination of a process that was hyperpartisan starting in January in which the committees rushed through a piece of legislation without even giving the Congressional Budget Office a chance to analyze the cost and the impact in terms of the uninsured rate in America.

And then finally, as the hour approached when a vote was scheduled to

take place, the facts caught up with the legislation. The Congressional Budget Office determined that 24 million Americans would lose their health coverage, that the Medicare trust fund would be weakened because of the raid on the trust fund by reducing a Medicare tax surcharge for millionaires; and it would reduce the solvency of the Medicare trust fund by 4 years, a program that is revered and probably the most popular insurance program in America in which, again, collection of healthcare stakeholders from all across the country, the American Hospital Association, the nurses, the doctors, the March of Dimes all came out universally opposing this measure.

And finally, the Quinnipiac poll showed what the American public thought of this bill. They came out with a poll that showed only 17 percent support in the American public for the Republican healthcare bill. Again, the Quinnipiac poll comes from my State, the State of Connecticut, and was very supportive and friendly in terms of its polling data in terms of the Trump campaign last year, so it is certainly not a partisan poll.

So why are we revisiting a measure which was so universally denounced and despised? Well, there has been a new amendment that has been offered in an attempt, again, within the confines of the Republican majority, to try and win votes to pass this bill this week.

Again, they have a majority with roughly 240 seats. They need only 216, and that is really what has been the focus of the majority leader in terms of trying to line up a vote this week.

The amendment, the so-called MacArthur amendment, again, revisits some of the issues, which, again, some of the more conservative members of the Freedom Caucus were complaining about, and what it proposes to do is basically give States the ability to wipe out essential health benefits—in other words, the basic patient protections that were built into the health insurance law 8 years ago.

□ 1215

It does nothing in terms of trying to ameliorate the impact of the Medicaid cuts, which is the program for low-income and working Americans, which the ACA expanded and has done great work in terms of reducing the ranks of the uninsured. That is the measure which we now have before us this week.

Well, once again, the stakeholders who have to live with this have weighed in with their thoughts. This is what the American Hospital Association said:

“The amendment proposed this week would dramatically worsen the bill.”

Again, it is a bill that was so unpopular, poorly drafted, and not ready for prime time that the Speaker pulled it from a vote on March 24.

The American Hospital Association, which is the largest trade association for hospitals in America—they rep-

resent thousands of hospitals—have said that, in fact, this makes it even worse.

By weakening the essential health benefits—and I come from Connecticut. We know a little bit about insurance in that State. What we know is, if insurance companies can redesign healthcare plans, the essential health benefits will be the first to go. The ones that will be the first to go will be maternity care, behavioral health, and emergency coverage because those are the most expensive items that are included within the health insurance plan. I would say, well, that is true. On the other hand, those are the essential benefits that families need.

Look at what has happened since the Affordable Care Act passed in 2007 to infant mortality, for example: because of the Medicaid coverage, 57 percent of the live births in America are now women—and particularly young women—who get the benefit of Medicaid coverage. So they get prenatal care. They get the help that they need to make sure that a healthy delivery occurs. That is why infant mortality rates have been coming down in this country since the Affordable Care Act passed.

To allow States to eliminate or give insurance companies the ability to eliminate maternity care, again, is just going exactly in the opposite direction. A goal all Americans support is to reduce infant mortality and to promote healthy live births.

The American Hospital Association was joined by the American Medical Association, which is the largest trade group which represents physicians all across the country, and came out against the bill.

America should listen. The people in Congress should listen. We should not take up this bill. It is time for a true bipartisan process to improve America’s healthcare bill.

Let’s not vote on this this week. Let’s listen to the American people.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o’clock and 17 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WEBER of Texas) at 2 p.m.

PRAAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

We give You thanks, O God, for giving us another day.

We ask Your blessing upon this assembly and upon all to whom the au-

thority of government is given. Help them to meet their responsibilities during these days, to attend to the immediate needs and concerns of the moment, enlightened by Your eternal spirit.

We thank You for Your gifts of patience and perseverance that have led to agreements on the funding of government. It is difficult work calling for true leadership. Continue to bless those Members who continue to work toward solutions that redound to the benefit of our Nation.

Please send Your spirit of peace upon those areas of our world where conflicts continue and threaten to break out. May all Your children learn to live in peace.

And 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina 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.

APPRECIATING CAPTAIN TAYLOR FORCE

(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, Captain Taylor Force of South Carolina was a graduate of West Point, a veteran who had served in Afghanistan and Iraq, and he was an MBA candidate at Vanderbilt University when he was, at random, stabbed to death by a Palestinian terrorist in March of 2016 as he innocently departed from a bus as a tourist in Israel. He was only 28 years old.

His merciless murder at the hands of Palestinian terrorists is even more gruesome because of the Palestinian Authority program of paying out hundreds of millions of dollars to terrorists and their families in support of mass murder.

I am grateful to support the Taylor Force Act, legislation that restricts all aid from the Palestinian Authority until the Secretary of State confirms they do not provide financial rewards for terrorists in their murderous activities. I appreciate the leadership of