

PRAYER

Reverend Ric Metzgar, Sr., The Church of God, Essex, Maryland, offered the following prayer:

My heavenly Father, You are the composer of my life. Thank you for orchestrating my direction today.

I recognize You as the source of life and love. Hear the prayers of this House, both for the good of the Nation and the good of humanity and around the world. Help this House to discern Your will in our day.

Strengthen all of us and help us to show forth the fruits of Your spirit of love, joy, peace, and generosity as we go about our work. Grant us a spirit of compassion and cooperation.

We ask Your blessings for all those who have chosen to take up this difficult task of governing, not only those who are elected but also those who serve as staffers, interns, and volunteers here and around our great Nation.

We look to Your Scriptures that tell us "Balance and scales belong to the Lord; all weights of justice belong to You." And as Jeremiah 29:7 exhorts us to:

Seek the peace of the city and our Nation. Pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace, you will have peace.

May the peace that passes all understanding guide our hearts and our minds in the days to come.

This we pray in Your matchless name, thanking You for being the architect of our lives.

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The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.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 gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KENNEDY 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 REVEREND RIC METZGAR, SR.

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RUPPERSBERGER) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce and welcome to Washington, Maryland State Delegate Ric Metzgar, a friend for a long time, Second District resident, who has been representing eastern Baltimore County in the Maryland General Assembly since 2015. He has been serving his community far longer.

Delegate Metzgar has lived in Essex for most of his life, graduating from Kenwood High School before attending Northwest Bible College. His father worked for the Glenn L. Martin airplane community, and his mother owned a drycleaning business.

Delegate Metzgar managed a local car dealership and a diner, and, as an ordained minister, he has served as a ministry leader and Sunday school director for several local churches. He founded Gateway Pastors and Churches Association.

In Annapolis, Delegate Metzgar serves on the Health and Government Operations Committee as well as the Maryland Veterans Caucus. His volunteer efforts within his community are unending.

Delegate Metzgar has long served as chair of the Essex Christmas parade and co-chair of the massive Essex Day Festival. He is a member of the board of directors for the Heritage Society of Essex and Middle River.

Delegate Metzgar is married with two children and two grandchildren. I am honored to call Delegate Metzgar a friend and constituent of the Second Congressional District of Maryland, and I offer sincere thanks on behalf of this entire body for his delivery of today's opening prayer.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

(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 week marks National Small Business Week, a time to recognize the remarkable contributions small businesses make creating jobs.

In South Carolina, small businesses represent 99 percent of our State's

businesses, employing 47 percent of our citizens. I am grateful for the input from the National Federation of Independent Business, NFIB, led by Ben Homeyer; the State Chamber of Commerce led by Ted Pitts; and local chambers from Barnwell to Blythewood and from North Augusta to northeast Columbia, promoting every corner of the district.

When I meet with members of the small-business community of South Carolina, I learn how government regulations and government overreach threaten their businesses and reduce job opportunities.

I support President Trump's commitment to creating jobs and how, in only 100 days, his administration has proven to be a champion of small business by cutting harmful regulations and outlining tax reform.

I appreciate the leadership of the small-business administrator, Linda McMahon, and her advocacy for the 29 small businesses nationwide.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH FUNDING

(Mr. HIGGINS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, President Trump wanted to cut \$1.2 billion from the National Institutes of Health and the National Cancer Institute. Instead, Congress will exert its independence by rejecting the President's cut and will instead increase National Institutes of Health's funding by \$2 billion.

My community of Buffalo, New York, is home to America's first cancer center, Roswell Park Cancer Institute. Roswell Park is a national leader in NIH-funded research for immunotherapy.

Immunotherapy uses drugs and vaccines to unleash the cancer-killing potential of the body's own immune system. Immunotherapy has the potential for longer remission and is an alternative to debilitating chemotherapy.

Because of this congressional action, Roswell Park Cancer Institute's clinical trials and immunotherapy will continue, and the potential for tens of millions more in NIH research funding over the next 5 years is a reality.

This is good for the good that it will do in advancing this promising research and is good for Buffalo and the continued growth of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus.

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION WHISTLEBLOWER

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, according to Kuauhtemoc Rodriguez,

called K-Rod, a VA employee at the medical center in Phoenix, Arizona—yes, that famous VA hospital—he has been threatened and harassed by the VA for speaking up about excessive wait times for vets to see doctors.

In October of 2016, the VA's inspector general released a report of misconduct on the Phoenix hospital based on information provided by Mr. Rodriguez. Mr. Rodriguez alleged that more than 90 veterans had been waiting over 400 days to see a doctor, 5 of whom died before they could see the doctor. These accusations are very disturbing.

But Mr. Rodriguez' discovery did not earn him a medal or a plaque, just threats and harassment by the VA. They even moved his desk to a closet.

There are many folks at the VA who genuinely care about our veterans in this country, like K-Rod, but there seems to be a culture problem at the VA that must be addressed from the top down.

Fix the problem rather than attack whistleblowers. No veteran should ever wait to see a doctor for over a year. That is shameful.

And that is just the way it is.

FULLY CODIFYING CIVIL RIGHTS PROTECTIONS FOR THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I stand proudly today with my colleagues to reintroduce the Equality Act, a bill that would finally fully codify civil rights protections for the LGBTQ community.

It is unthinkable to me that this bill finds opposition in this Chamber, where we stand less than a mile from a sacred American promise that is etched in stone above the doors of the Supreme Court: “Equal justice under law.” There is no asterisk. There is no condition or compromise. No caveat. It is a promise that is afforded to each of us; that no one—man, woman, political candidate, or President—can look us in the eye and say that you do not count or you are unworthy.

Some of the most shameful moments of our Nation’s history have come when we have broken that promise, when we say that everyone matters except you. Every life counts except yours.

It is time for this body to take a stand and say everyone counts in this country today, on our watch today.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE IMPORTANT ROLE SMALL BUSINESSES PLAY IN OUR COMMUNITIES

(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 during Small

Business Week to acknowledge the important role small businesses play in our communities nationwide. I am proud to be the product of a small-business family.

Small businesses are responsible for creating 63 percent of new jobs, and they employ more than 47 percent of the employees in the private sector.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is also marking the week with events hosted by the Small Business Development Center. From workshops to webinars, there is information for those looking to start a small business and those looking to grow their businesses. Even long-time small-business owners can get advice on how to continue to thrive or find a renewed sense of direction.

Pennsylvania Small Business Week recognizes the significant contributions of our small businesses and highlights the resources available to support their growth in the Keystone State.

The Nation has celebrated Small Business Week each year since 1963. I would like to congratulate all the small-business owners for the role they play in employing our neighbors, serving our communities, and creating two out of every three new jobs in the United States.

HONORING THE BROTHERS OF KAPPA ALPHA PSI

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

Mr. LAWSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the brothers of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated, during their annual James “Biff” Carter Kappas on Capitol Hill Legislative Policy Conference.

Each year, donning their crimson blazers, they come to Capitol Hill to raise awareness around many of the key issues facing the African-American and other communities in this country.

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity represents over 150,000 members from all 50 states, several U.S. territories, and six countries around the globe. These distinguished men of achievement are leaders in their respected communities, in the boardrooms, classrooms and academia, public service, and every field of human endeavor.

Today, it is with great humility and commitment to improving our communities that my brothers in the bond come to Washington for the Kappas on Capitol Hill Legislative Policy Conference.

As I see the brothers in their red blazers walk these hallowed halls, bringing their professional expertise, wisdom gained through experience, and passion for their communities to Washington, my heart beams with pride.

Mr. Speaker, now, more than ever, we need leaders in our communities to raise their voices to raise awareness about the issues that are confronting our communities back home. Today, I

am proud of my brothers in Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated, for coming to Congress today to ensure that we never forget how decisions on issues like health care, higher education, job creation, and veteran benefits are affecting our communities at home.

RECOGNIZING 93Q MORNING DJ KEVIN KLINE

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I have had many heroes since I moved to Houston: Neil Armstrong, Earl Campbell, Nolan Ryan. My newest hero is a good friend, 93Q morning disc jockey Kevin Kline.

Kevin and his wife, Trish, have watched a teenage friend, Chelsey, die from cancer. They turned that pain into extreme good. They started the Snowdrop Foundation to stop kids dying from cancer like Chelsey. They have used long runs to raise over \$1 million for Snowdrop.

Movie hero Forrest Gump ran for 3 years, 2 months, and 15 days. Recently in Italy, our real-life hero Kevin ran for 178.5 miles in 47 hours and 28 minutes.

Naval aviators are given call signs. Tom Cruise was Maverick. I was Pistol. By the powers vested in me by the 93Q’s Tim Tuttle and Erica Rico, Kevin Kline’s on-air call sign is now and forever Gump Man.

I hope Gump Man is smiling. I know Chelsey and her friends are smiling in heaven.

□ 1215

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH FUNDING

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, recently I met with leaders of the San Diego medical research community who had a unified message: We need to end the cuts in research that have slowed medical innovation for the last decade.

This year I was proud to lead the bipartisan effort, along with over 200 of my colleagues, to push for an additional \$2 billion in funding for the National Institutes of Health.

This is a very personal issue. Almost all of us know someone who is struggling with a disease where NIH funding is used to find a cure. That person could be a mother, father, family friend, or even more heart-wrenching, a child.

I am thrilled that the spending bill before us this week avoids the cuts proposed by President Trump and actually increases NIH funding by \$2 billion. We have seen what can happen when leadership takes a bipartisan approach: top priorities like medical research actually get funded.