

HONORING LYDIA STRUNK

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I agree with almost everything the Speaker just had to say, and I may repeat some of it. What I do not agree with, however, Mr. Speaker, is that we didn't notice. I noticed. My staff has noticed. My staff has not only noticed, but appreciated the extraordinary work that Lydia has done for this House—yes, for your office, yes, for the Republican side of the aisle, but for this House and for the American people.

Lydia and I have a great relationship, but probably more importantly, she has a great relationship with Shuwanza Goff, who runs the floor on our side of the aisle.

What a privilege it is to rise and say to Lydia, thank you—not as a Democrat, not as a Republican, but as an American who appreciates the role that you have played, Lydia, in making a difference. I always say that, when the House runs well, it is the staff's work. When it doesn't do so well, it is the Members' responsibility and fault. So you have been absolutely terrific.

And Jeff and Graham and Evie, I join with Speaker RYAN in saying that your mom is a great American, a wonderful human being. You know that personally. You see it every day in your own lives. But for the past 9 years, Lydia has been a presence on this floor first in the Republican Cloakroom as an assistant, later as a staffer with the Rules Committee, and then, as the Speaker just pointed out, deputy floor director for the Republican side of the aisle.

They are the majority party, so Lydia's responsibility really is institutional—not partisan, but institutional—and she has performed that in the best traditions of the best of this House.

It is a testament to Lydia's skill and professionalism that she has earned the respect not only of her own colleagues on the Republican side, but also those who work on my staff and the Democratic leader's staff on this side of the aisle. That is why, Lydia, I said we have noticed, we have appreciated it.

In many ways, Mr. Speaker, public service is a family affair for Lydia Strunk. She grew up around it when her father worked in the George H.W. Bush White House handling legislative affairs. Her dad is a good friend of mine, so perhaps I am not objective. I am also the father of three daughters, so perhaps I am not objective.

Nick Calio is one of the great people with whom I have served through the years. I think he is here in the gallery somewhere with his wife.

Thank you, Nick, for your service, and thank you for being such a wonderful example for your daughter. She has brought that same kind of cooperative, collegial, inclusive spirit to her work that you brought to yours not only working in the public sector, but also in the private sector.

Let me end. She grew up in a great State: Maryland. Again, perhaps making me more subjective than I otherwise would be.

After she began as a Cloakroom assistant, she met and later married Jeff Strunk, who then worked on Speaker John Boehner's floor staff, also very effectively and productively. And when Jeff left Capitol Hill in 2013, Lydia was promoted to take his place, a somewhat incestuous operation, but it worked extraordinarily well, Mr. Speaker.

I am grateful. We ought to all be grateful. The American people ought to be grateful for her efforts, her know-how, and the dedication she brings to the task of ensuring that our work, Americans' work, the American people's work here on this floor and on behalf of all of us can continue smoothly each day.

Lydia, thank you. We wish you the very best. We know that whatever you do, you will be extraordinarily successful in doing, and that you will be perceived by your colleagues and by those with whom you work in the same very positive and very appreciative way that we view you today. Godspeed.

CONGRATULATIONS TO GERING
HIGH SCHOOL

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

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Gering High School, one of three national winners of the 2017 Samsung Solve for Tomorrow contest. The team of 19 Gering students took top honors out of thousands of entries and 10 national finalists.

It is exciting to see young innovators from western Nebraska, especially my alma mater, recognized nationally for their ideas on how to advance agriculture. The students designed a drone-powered system to reduce herbicide quantity by allowing farmers to directly target specific areas rather than spraying entire fields. I applaud each of them for their hard work and the dedication they put into their winning project.

Congratulations go to Curtis Anderson, Jonathan Blanco, Dakota Boles, Blake Brunner, Gabriele Castro, Cody Catron, Eric Crane, Jeremy Forella, Michael Haworth, Xavier Horst, Elexus Johnson, Kaiden Reinmuth, Trevor Satur, Tyler Smith, Joel Torres, Carson Wallace, Skylier Ward, Payton Welfl, Joshua Wilson, and their teacher, Mr. Justin Reinmuth.

TODAY IS WORLD PRESS
FREEDOM DAY

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, today is World Press Freedom Day, a day that

deserves commemoration now more than ever.

Undermining the credibility of the free press and attempting to turn the American people against the media is reminiscent of authoritarian tactics, not the conduct of the leader of the free world. Yet the President has referred to the press as the "enemy of the people" for simply doing their job: reporting the facts and holding all of us accountable.

He has also dismissed distinguished publications as fake news, again, for simply doing their job and has threatened to change libel laws that will weaken the First Amendment, making it easier for him to attack and sue the press.

This antagonistic relationship between the President and the press is not only beneath the dignity of the office, it is also dangerous for our democracy. We have seen strongmen and autocratic countries suppress the media through intimidation and by discrediting the integrity of the very institution of journalism.

It is hard to believe that I have to say this in this country at this point in our history, but as Thomas Jefferson said: "Our liberty cannot be guarded but by the freedom of the press, nor that be limited without danger of losing it."

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HARPER). Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

MATKINS FLOWERS AND GREENHOUSE
CELEBRATES 90 YEARS
IN BUSINESS

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

Mr. WOMACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a small business in my district that is celebrating its 90th anniversary this week.

Matkins Flowers and Greenhouse in Bentonville, Arkansas, has served the northwest Arkansas region since 1927, when Henry Lenny Matkins, Sr., founded the company. Throughout the last nine decades, this Arkansas small business has persevered in good times and bad, and it serves as an example of how you make a small business sustainable with integrity, accountability, and hard work.

Working through the Great Depression, World War II, and the modern era, the Matkins family has continuously exhibited the importance of the family-owned small business to the American economy. Now in its fourth generation of leadership with Jim and his son Jeff, it is worth celebrating this important milestone.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to represent this outstanding family and offer my thanks and admiration for the success of Matkins Flowers and Greenhouse.

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HEALTHCARE SCAM

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

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, for the third time in 90 days, Republicans are trying to take away patient protections for Americans with preexisting medical conditions. Fifty percent of all Americans and 86 percent of Americans ages 55 through 64 have preexisting conditions. There is a genetic influence in many people who have preexisting conditions, meaning that tens of millions of Americans are born into a predisposition for certain diseases like cancer, Alzheimer's, and heart disease.

The Republican healthcare scam would obliterate protections for preexisting conditions. For example, if you have a dad with a kid who is stuck with childhood cancer, the dad could buy a policy, but that policy would not have to cover his kid's cancer treatments. That, Mr. Speaker, is a deliberate intent to deceive the American people.

TEACHER APPRECIATION 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, next week marks Teacher Appreciation Week, which recognizes the special role educators make for American families.

As the husband of a retired schoolteacher and a grateful dad of four sons with eight grandchildren, I know firsthand the positive impact educators have for students.

South Carolina's Second Congressional District is filled with dedicated and talented teachers and administrators, and it is always a pleasure to visit with them at their school or when their classes visit Washington.

I would also like to recognize the 2017 Teacher of the Year, Jennifer Wise, of Hand Middle School of Columbia, which my mother attended. As a math teacher, Jennifer motivates her students for mathematics to energize their lives outside of the classroom.

The success of our teachers is amplified by the leadership of State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman, working with Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, and the parents, teachers, administrators, and locally elected school boards who are making a difference for the students of South Carolina for job opportunities and meaningful lives.

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

VIETNAMESE BLACK APRIL

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

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday we commemorated the 42nd anniversary of Black April and the fall of Saigon. On this day, we are reminded of the pain of losing your homeland and of the sacrifices made in search for freedom.

When Saigon fell in 1975, thousands of families were forced to flee their home, and many came to America with nothing but hope and their dreams to keep them alive.

Today I am proud to have represented Little Saigon, the largest concentration of Vietnamese outside of Vietnam. Each and every one of them has a personal connection to the sacrifices that their families have made and to the loss of their homes. This shared experience has made the Vietnamese community and culture thrive in Orange County, California.

I am honored to represent this community and mourn alongside with them. I am proud that America gave them shelter in their time of need.

The U.S. must always be a beacon of hope to those without hope. We must continue to stand up for human rights and religious freedom.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF
MATTHEW McCLANAHAN

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

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Matthew McClanahan.

Matthew was a loving and devoted family man, a friend to so many, a respected employee who worked among our congressional community for the Office of the Architect of the Capitol. Born in Annapolis, Maryland, Matthew made his home in Glen Burnie, Maryland. As part of the maintenance division team of the Capitol Grounds, he was only 30 years young when he passed away.

Respected by his colleagues and exemplifying hard work and dedication to his trade, he was known as being good-humored and someone always ready to lend a helping hand. Our entire congressional community mourns the loss of one of our own, following the terrible accident that took place last month on April 18.

Later today, I will stand with my House colleagues in a moment of silence to honor and remember Matthew McClanahan. My entire staff and I join with the Architect of the Capitol team in offering his family, especially his wife, Lauren, and children, Evie and Matthew, our prayers and deepest sympathies.

TERRIBLE HEALTHCARE PLAN

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, Republicans in Congress and now President

Trump are twisting arms and trying to make a deal to get their terrible healthcare bill through this House of Representatives.

It is so interesting to note that they are working really hard to make sure they can have a vote, if they can, before Members have to go home and speak to the people that they work for.

Why would that be? Why would they be so fearful of having to go back and explain what is happening?

They would rather go back and say: It is too late. I already voted for it. Sorry.

They do that because they know this is a bad piece of legislation. Don't just take it from me. Other Republican Members have said things like: This legislation provides health care in name only or it torpedoed protections for people with preexisting conditions.

No one should be fooled by this last-minute ditch effort to put some money on the table as if it is enough to provide support for preexisting conditions.

Let's be clear, this change eliminates the guarantee that you can get coverage if you have any sort of preexisting condition. We should reject it.

MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD
AWARDED UNIT OF THE YEAR

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

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a Minnesota National Guard unit for recently receiving the prestigious John J. Stanko Army National Guard Unit of the Year Award.

During their deployment, which included soldiers spread across multiple locations, the Bravo Company 2 of the 211th General Support Aviation Battalion completed more than 300 missions across Afghanistan, enduring some of the most difficult and dangerous environments imaginable. Additionally, they moved an incredible 1 million pounds of cargo and participated in high-risk missions and deliberate operations to support forces on the ground.

Due to their overall excellent performance, the Bravo Company soldiers have been awarded three Bronze Stars, several Air Medals, eight Combat Action Badges, three Meritorious Service Medals, five Army Commendation Medals, and 14 Army Achievement Medals.

The Bravo Company's achievements have earned them the reputation as one of the best Army aviation units serving in Afghanistan. We are proud to know that these soldiers call Minnesota their home.

I want to thank these soldiers for their brave service to our Nation, their unwavering dedication to their unit, and the honorable way in which they have served. You are the reason the United States Armed Forces are the best in the world.