

"Tera is among the hundreds who have died of overdoses within the last three years in Lorain County. The county coroner's office said a record 67 people died in 2013, followed by 60 in 2014 and 62 in 2015."

Lori took her tragedy and turned it into action and formed the Lorain Community Task Force, which is a group that raises awareness and provides assistance to addicts and their families.

Lori stepped up, and now Congress must do the same. We cannot turn our back on these people now. We must fight, we must work together, we must put politics aside. Only then can we begin to heal our Nation from this crisis.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GALLAGHER).

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership on this critical issue.

As was laid out, communities across this country, communities like mine in northeast Wisconsin, are in the midst of a public health crisis. It is not a Republican or a Democratic issue. It is an American issue, one that should bring us all together.

Opioid abuse is wreaking havoc on our homes, our schools, our churches. Its devastating effects are destroying our families and the lives of our loved ones.

As was pointed out, more Americans will have died from drug overdoses in 2017 than there are names on the Vietnam War Memorial. That is alarming. That should put it into sharp relief.

As a Marine veteran, I am acutely aware that servicemembers are more susceptible than the average person to addiction. In fact, veterans die from accidental drug overdoses at a 33 percent higher rate than the rest of the population, and something must be done to reverse this awful trend.

I commend our State lawmakers in Wisconsin who are doing aggressive work on this front, and I commend the gentleman and everyone who has spoken out for doing the same thing at the national level, and I look forward to working with him.

Because headline after headline reminds us of the tragic loss of life that has resulted from our Nation's opioid and addictions risk, we have to step up. We have to take action.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. I yield to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I deeply appreciate the gentleman convening this Special Order this evening. It has been fun working with him in the past on creative, bipartisan efforts to try and make sure the Federal Government is a better partner on this.

I look forward to working with him on legislation that will make it easier to be able to have the information available that people need for integrated treatment and his commitment to trying to bring people together to understand the problem and the fact that we are agreed more than we are divided on these things. I look forward

to working with him on some progress in the months ahead.

□ 1745

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Oregon, and I thank all the Members speaking here tonight. I want to say, as you saw, this was a bipartisan coalition of Members. We are much better off working hand in hand to pass legislation that changes issues than standing next to each other as pallbearers for another 59,000 people in our Nation next week.

Mr. Speaker, with that and with some hope that we can pass this legislation and save some lives, I yield back the balance of my time.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3003, NO SANCTUARY FOR CRIMINALS ACT

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia (during the Special Order of Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-195) on the resolution (H. Res. 414) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3003) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to modify provisions relating to assistance by States, and political subdivision of States, in the enforcement of Federal immigration laws, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3004, KATE'S LAW, AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM JULY 3, 2017, THROUGH JULY 10, 2017

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia (during the Special Order of Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-196) on the resolution (H. Res. 415) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3004) to amend section 276 of the Immigration and Nationality Act relating to reentry of removed aliens, and providing for proceedings during the period from July 3, 2017, through July 10, 2017, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank all my fellow Members that are speaking up on this very important issue. I appreciate Dr. Murphy taking the lead. It is something that has not gotten enough attention. We continue to have people dying, and we need to deal with the issue.

It is interesting: some people find great hope in their religious beliefs. Throughout America's history, Christianity has been an important foundation. No, you didn't have to be a Christian to participate in government, to be a Founder, but, as Ben Franklin said, we know because he wrote out the speech in his own handwriting immediately afterwards, as requested.

So often, teachers teach that he is a Deist, as so many of the Founders, we are told, were Deists. Yet in his own words, in his own handwriting, at the Constitutional Convention in 1787, at 80 years old, 2 to 3 years away from meeting his Judge, his Maker—severe gout, arthritis, overweight, trouble getting up and down—he said these words:

"I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?"

Franklin said, we have been—by the way, that is obviously a reference to Jesus' comment about the sparrow, and God seeing the sparrow, watching the sparrow.

But he goes on and he makes it very clear, as his own words indicate, that unless—he said: "We have been assured, sir, in the Sacred Writing that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."

Again, referencing Scripture.

Those are not the words—any of them—they are not the words of a Deist. So teachers that have been miseducating people for so long, I know they are just passing on what they were taught, but there has been so much miseducation for so long.

Regardless of what else, we don't try to force our religious beliefs on anyone. That is not what the House of Representatives is for. But since it formed such an important part of our founding and a part of the discussion for most of our Nation's history, it is important to point out that those Scriptures that Ben Franklin referenced at the Constitutional Convention, the Scriptures that have been quoted so often—

We know the Bible is the number one, far and away, most quoted book in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Nothing else anywhere even close. It has brought hope to people that had no hope.

So it is interesting that, as our Nation moves further and further away from the source of so much hope for so much of our Nation's history, and for those who lived through that part of our Nation's history, the hope that Franklin Roosevelt brought to the microphone when he read the famous prayer on D-Day as American soldiers were fighting, as he said, against those forces of evil, drawn from a country that was used to peace that were fighting forces of evil.

But they had hope. That hope and prayer that Franklin Roosevelt gave over the microphone for several minutes now is condemned by so many.

That hope that served as the foundation, the building blocks for the beliefs of Sam Adams, that so many around in those days gave credit as being an important foundational building block for the revolution, for the new Nation.

We are arriving at a time when record numbers of people are dying. We heard today in our Judiciary hearing, I believe it was 144 Americans each day are dying of drug overdoses.

Who dies of a drug overdose?

People without hope, people who are drawn to drugs to provide a good, warm feeling.

We have more military members killing themselves than at any time probably in any nation's history. I don't know that for sure, but it is just hard to imagine a time in any nation's history when so many of its veterans are taking their own lives, a time when so many of our active military have taken their own lives.

Obviously, as people have said over the years, that is a permanent solution to a temporary problem, and it is the act of someone without hope.

So we know, regardless of whether people accepted Christian beliefs or not, Christianity, throughout our Nation's founding, provided hope. The Bible provided hope for those who were slaves through the 1700s and 1800s. So many were Christians, and it was the Bible, it was those wonderful spirituals, it was Scripture that gave them hope to endure and get through the horrors of slavery.

Though Abraham Lincoln bragged in his early twenties about being an infidel and not believing in God, Steve Mansfield, in his book in the last 5 years or so about Lincoln's struggle with God, documents his going from being an infidel to a point where, as President, he read Scripture constantly.

Dr. Rufus Fears, a brilliant history professor at the University of Oklahoma, asked me once: You know why Lincoln's speeches are so good and touch our hearts?

And I said: I don't know. They are just really well-worded. They are great speeches.

He said: No. He was reading so much Scripture by that point in his life, like the Gettysburg Address, he wrote his speeches as if they were Scripture. His words provided hope because he referenced Scripture so much.

And whether atheist, agnostic, Muslim, Buddhist, whatever, so many have a general knowledge of what Christians believe, and it is very basic. God, according to Genesis, the Old Testament, He created the world, created the universe, created man and woman. Basically, we got the Bible as an owner's manual, giving us important history so that we could get a good look at what works and what doesn't, and what the owner expects, and how we can live the most joyous and hopeful life even through terrible, perilous times.

Christianity goes on and, in the New Testament, points to the belief that

the Old Testament, as we refer to it, points to the Messiah coming to be born in Bethlehem. So many of the prophecies about the Messiah to come. Even if one believes Jesus was not the Messiah, incredible that He could fulfill those prophecies the way He did.

And Christians, as people of most religions understand, believe what John 3:16 says: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

So, clearly, Christian religion is based completely on love; that God so loved the world, that he gave His only Son, who was perfect, unblemished with sins of the Earth. And only something—someone unblemished could take away the sins of the world.

And the additional exclamation point that makes clear that Christianity is a religion based on love: it was made clear by Jesus himself when He was asked by the lawyer, naturally: What's the greatest commandment?

He said: love God, and the others like it. Love each other. And on those two commands hang all the law and the prophets.

If you were to go about outlining the Ten Commandments, they easily fall under those two headings: Love God, love each other.

But then Jesus also made clear: Greater love hath no one than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

And Jesus knew, because whether you believe he was the fulfillment of all the prophecies from the Old Testament or not, He could have escaped. He made no effort. He gave himself out of love.

It is easy to say He is either a liar, or He is a lunatic, or He is exactly what He said. But his acts were based on love. He gave his life for a world that needed an unblemished lamb.

□ 1800

With that background, Mr. Speaker—and, of course, the Supreme Court outlined it much more thoroughly in the late 1800s as it came to the conclusion well after the horrid case of Dred Scott, when the court analyzed and made clear, determined, pronounced: Even though everyone in the United States is not a Christian, this is a Christian Nation.

And everything that the Court called into view in their decision testified to that fact, as the Court pronounced.

Now, so why am I going into this?

It is because we have hit what may be as low a point as we have ever hit in Congress. When Russell Vought was being questioned, on the same day, another person named Comey was testifying here on Capitol Hill. Russell Vought was being questioned by Senators so they could determine how they wanted to vote on whether or not he could fill a role in the administration. This low point in our Nation's history has to rank down there as one of our low points.

When so much throughout our history has testified to the fact that Christianity was such an important part of our foundation, of everything that has been good in America, the ending of slavery, driven and guided by churches. Sure, there were some atheists involved. The revolution following The Great Awakening, 1730s and 1740s, ended up yielding a revolution that produced the greatest country in the history of the world by virtue of the opportunities, by virtue of the protections for freedom-loving people around the world, by virtue of, you know, the opportunities and the assets, and that a country would ultimately arise where the number one health problem for the Nation's poor was obesity. With more opportunities, more assets, more freedoms, even then Solomon's Israel—incredible country with many religions—celebrated here in the United States.

But as General Jay Garner was told when he was in Iraq after Saddam Hussein was driven out—he has told me twice—actually, three times has said it when I heard him speaking back in 2004. I called him. He reiterated it. He told me again in last September. Yes, I remember it correctly. He talked to a direct descendant of Mohammed in Iraq about what kind of government the U.S. should help Iraq have. I will contend we shouldn't be about nation building, but that was his order and that is what he was doing.

And he said that this descendant of Mohammed with a black turban said he was going to explain in his native tongue, because they were recording it. And then after he finished, he said: Now, let me just give you, in a nutshell, what I told you we need here for a government in Iraq. We need a government formed by Iraqis, a government composed of Iraqis, and a government based on a constitution which is based on the teachings of Jesus.

A descendant of Mohammed told Jay Garner that the best hope for a country was a constitution based on the teachings of Jesus, because basically those teachings of Jesus are the only way in which a nation can allow freedom of religion.

No matter which religion or agnosticism, atheism, whatever religion, it is not going to be able to truly allow freedom of religion unless it is based on the teachings of Jesus. And that is what this insightful descendant of Mohammed in Iraq told retired General Jay Garner.

So we get to 2017, a hearing on the same day Comey testified, this appointee nominee by President Trump, Russell Vought, a great man, a fine man, had his Christian beliefs perverted, twisted into something that was represented to be hateful. It is a religion based on the love of God and the love of His Son that would give his life for others.

Senator SANDERS said: "Let me get to this issue that has bothered me and bothered many other people. And that is in the piece that I referred to that

you wrote for the publication called 'Resurgent.' You wrote, "Muslims do not simply have a deficient theology. They do not know God because they have rejected Jesus Christ, His Son, and they stand condemned."

Senator SANDERS then went on and said: "Do you believe that statement is Islamophobic?"

Mr. Vought replied: "Absolutely not, Senator. I am a Christian, and I believe in a Christian set of principles based on my faith. That post, as I stated in the questionnaire to this committee, was to defend my alma mater, Wheaton College, a Christian school that has a statement of faith that includes the centrality of Jesus Christ for salvation, and . . ."

Senator SANDERS interrupts: "I apologize. Forgive me, we just don't have a lot of time. Do you believe people in the Muslim religion stand condemned? Is that your view?"

Mr. Vought replied: "Again, Senator, I am a Christian, and I wrote that piece in accordance with the statement of faith at Wheaton College."

Senator SANDERS said: "I understand that. I don't know how many Muslims there are in America. Maybe a couple million. Are you suggesting that all those people stand condemned? What about Jew? Do they stand condemned, too?"

Mr. Vought replied: "Senator, I'm a Christian . . ."

Senator SANDERS at this point is shouting: "I understand you are a Christian, but this country are made of people who are not just—I understand that Christianity is the majority religion, but there are other people of different religions in this country and around the world. In your judgment, do you think that people who are not Christians are going to be condemned?"

Mr. Vought replied: "Thank you for probing on that question. As a Christian, I believe that all individuals are made in the image of God and are worthy of dignity and respect regardless of their religious beliefs. I believe that, as a Christian, that is how I should treat all individuals . . ."

Senator SANDERS responded: "You think your statement that you put into that publication, they do not know God because they rejected Jesus Christ, His Son, and they stand condemned, do you think that is respectful of other religions?"

Mr. Vought said: "Senator, I wrote a post based on being a Christian and attending a Christian school that has a statement of faith that speaks clearly in regard to the centrality of Jesus Christ in salvation."

Senator SANDERS said: "I would simply say, Mr. Chairman, that this nominee is really not someone who this country is supposed to be about."

And that came from—the quotes came from an article in the National Review quoting from the hearing itself.

That is why I say, Mr. Speaker, this may be the low point for hope in Amer-

ica when a sitting Senator condemns someone who is simply quoting from the teachings of Jesus, teachings that even a descendant of Mohammed knew was helpful in creating a great nation.

We have come a long way from the hope that abounded within the founders of this country, within the hope of those who fought to bring about the end of the horrendous, hideous practice of slavery, where human beings treated brother and sister human beings with chains in bondage.

And now we come to a point that I feared—and I brought it up when hate crime legislation was discussed—that the day would come when the religion of the world based on the love of God and the love of Jesus Christ would be twisted to the point that it would be called hateful.

Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

He is either a liar or a lunatic or he is exactly who he said he was. But that is not hateful. It is not hateful to believe in a religion where you want to share the joy and the hope that comes from it.

One of the results, maybe it is a—not a result, but more of an unfortunate situation that exists. When you take away the hope of the Christian religion, condemn people for believing Jesus is the hope, as he said he was, or as our friend, the late Chuck Colson, pointed out: "Our hope is not going to arrive on Air Force One."

He believed the hope was in Jesus.

And now we have someone who is declared totally inappropriate to be a government official because he believes the teachings of Jesus. It is not hateful to believe the teachings of Jesus. In fact, someone—I know I have Jewish friends who have said: I thought Christians blamed Jews for killing Jesus.

Well, the truth is that anyone who is a true Christian, if they blame Jews or anyone else for the death of Jesus, they are not a Christian. They don't understand the belief that Jesus died for me and for anyone who has done wrong in this life.

□ 1815

So it is a sad day, it is a sad week, and it is a sad month to look how far we have come from the hope that was once so prevalent. Now we are in a society where suicide is rampant—144 drug overdoses a day, and that doesn't count all of the suicides by veterans and Active Duty military.

Christianity is a religion of love. May God grant wisdom to any Senator who thinks otherwise.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 27, 2017.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Under Clause 2(g) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I herewith designate Mr. Robert Reeves Deputy Clerk to sign any and all papers and do all other acts for me under the name of the Clerk of the House which they would be authorized to do by virtue of this designation, except such as are provided by statute, in case of my temporary absence or disability.

This designation shall remain in effect for the 115th Congress or until modified by me.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. STIVERS (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today through June 29 on account of his duties with the Ohio National Guard.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 16 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, June 28, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1803. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's Selected Acquisition Reports for the Chemical Demilitarization-Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives and Ballistic Missile Defense System programs, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2432(b)(1); Public Law 97-252, Sec. 1107(a)(1); (96 Stat. 740); to the Committee on Armed Services.

1804. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Defense, transmitting an additional legislative proposal for the proposed legislation titled the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018"; jointly to the Committees on Armed Services, Natural Resources, and the Judiciary.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 414. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3003) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to modify provisions relating to assistance by States, and political subdivision of States, in the enforcement of Federal immigration laws, and for other purposes (Rept. 115-195). Referred to the House Calendar.