

of our scholars, we congratulate them for their prestigious accomplishment. And just to let all of you know, you continue to make all of us proud.

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND ENDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the mothers, daughters, and wives of my district. I stand here in solemn support for women not only in our community, but across our Nation and throughout the world who experience domestic violence each day.

This unacceptable treatment cannot go unnoticed. We must continue to push for better opportunities for those abused in our community.

By providing these women with more options, they can begin to find safety, support, and empowerment for a better way of life. Whether this be supporting a child or finding a better job and employment, it is important that their voices be heard.

I am proud to work with community-based organizations committed to empowering women and ending domestic violence for all. I commend A Woman's Place in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, for their steadfast commitment to a society where all individuals are safe and can flourish.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the leadership staff at A Woman's Place, Mae O'Brien, Lauren Bucksner, Danielle Ferri, and Heather Giampapa, as well as other staff and volunteers committed to promoting peace, quality, and respect in our districts and beyond.

PERKASIE PARK'S 135TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Perkasie Park on its 135th anniversary and celebrate its new status as a National Historic District.

Founded in 1882, Perkasie Park is one of just a handful of intact camp meeting facilities that continue to operate in Pennsylvania. Home to dozens of Victorian-era cottages and buildings, at its height, Perkasie Park was Bucks County's biggest attraction, drawing worshippers and vacationers from Philadelphia and the surrounding region to the quaint, quiet countryside of the Borough of Perkasie.

Last year, thanks to the tireless efforts of volunteers, residents, and community leaders, Perkasie Park was named to the National Register of Historic Places for its role in the American camp meeting movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Through their dedication, the park joined over 150 Bucks County properties on the National Register, including the 1832 South Perkasie Covered Bridge on the other side of town.

I am proud to represent a district that understands and honors its deep-rooted history, and I join with the people in Perkasie in celebrating this momentous anniversary and accomplishment.

MAINTAINING A STRONG DEFENSE IS NOT A NEW CONCEPT

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

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, before it was cool to quote Ronald Reagan's national security philosophy of peace through strength, there was our first Commander in Chief, George Washington, who, in his first State of the Union address, said, ". . . to be prepared for war is one of the most effective means of preserving peace."

See, maintaining a strong national defense is not a new concept.

While more war has been diverted, more peace has been kept, and more freedom has been defended by our Nation's armed services, today we risk not only our Nation's security, but the lives of those who serve if we fail to adequately fund our military.

The policies and posture of the past 8 years under the previous administration have left our defense arsenal dilapidated, our position in the world diminished, our allies doubtful, and, unfortunately, our enemies even more determined.

Our military men and women have faced years of cuts, almost a quarter of our entire military budget, with defense spending at historic lows, over \$170 billion, since 2010.

So as the world becomes increasingly dangerous and unstable, the government has forced our armed services to do more with less.

One of the United States' greatest assets in our national security arsenal and one of the crown jewels of west Texas is Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, Texas. Dyess plays a key role in protecting our democracy against the rising global threats, and our airmen from Dyess have been deployed all over the world in countless military and humanitarian operations. Additionally, Dyess hosts the largest B-1 bomber base in the Nation; and the city of Abilene has won the Air Force's award for most supportive communities so many times, they actually changed the name of the award to the Abilene award.

Now, that may sound like I am bragging, but in Texas, that is just telling the truth.

But while we put the lives of these men and women on the line daily and ask them to defend our Nation, they are crippled by this discouraging reality. The Air Force is now the smallest and the oldest it has been in our Nation's history. Altogether, given the current demand, our Nation's Air Force is short 1,500 pilots, 4,000 mechanics.

Before the House Armed Services Committee, General Stephen Wilson testified: "Today we find ourselves less than 50 percent ready across our Air Force, and we have pockets that are even below that."

In fact, just to get by, the Air Force has been utilizing bombers that were designed and constructed for World War II.

This is a national security crisis, Mr. Speaker. This is a great American travesty.

Why?

Because I believe our former President, for political reasons, in my opinion, arbitrarily withdrew troops from critical battlefronts and dangerously drew down our overall military resources.

Today, on behalf of Dyess Air Force Base and all the brave men and women who keep our great country safe, I urge my colleagues to pass the National Defense Authorization Act, which will rebuild our national security, repair our national defense, and restore America's leadership position in the world.

The NDAA will provide our military with the resources they need to address our current threats. We have increased funding 10 percent over the previous administration. The NDAA will fund Dyess Air Force Base and other military installations at appropriate levels, increase the size of our armed services, enhance and modernize our defense arsenal, give our troops a pay raise.

If anybody in the Federal Government has performed with excellence and with courage and distinction, it is our men and women in uniform, and they deserve a pay raise.

This NDAA will also build on the reforms that we have enacted over the last 2 years to update, improve, and streamline services to our armed services.

By passing the NDAA, we send a message to the world that America will continue to be the greatest force for good in the history of mankind; a message to our allies who promote liberty and democracy that you can count on us to defend you, we have got your back; a message to our brave military men and women that we are standing firmly behind you, we are going to put our money where our mouth is, we are going to protect you as you protect us; and a message to our enemies that America is no longer in the business of making idle threats.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I want to thank Chairman THORNBERRY for his hard work on this bill and for being a tireless advocate for our military. I am proud to call him a fellow west Texan, and I am even more proud to call him my friend.

One must wonder, on the heels of our 241st birthday, how did this oldest continuous democracy persist for two centuries against all odds? Don't you wonder?

Mr. Speaker, vote for NDAA, vote for our military.

God bless America.

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 54 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

Bishop Joshua K. Lynn, Mastin Lake Church of God of Prophecy, Huntsville, Alabama, offered the following prayer:

Holy Father, You are the almighty, all-knowing creator. We submit to Your infinite wisdom.

On behalf of our Nation and these leaders, we seek Your forgiveness for placing other ways higher than Yours. Grant us Your amazing grace from our sin as we turn to You. Open the ears of this body, this Nation's leaders, and all who call this great land home to hear Your voice. Tenderize the soil of our hearts so we may receive Your guidance.

Heal our land of bitterness, hate, and evil against You and one another. Grant our Nation a spiritual renewal and awakening.

Give this Nation and its leaders wisdom today and the days that follow. As we follow You, let Your favor be with us.

Let Your name ring higher than any other name. For it is in Your holy, loving, merciful, and gracious name we pray.

In Jesus' 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. MCNERNEY 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.

WELCOMING BISHOP JOSHUA K. LYNN

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to welcome Bishop Joshua K. Lynn to the House of Representatives. I thank him for serving as today's guest chaplain.

Joshua is the senior pastor serving Mastin Lake Church of God of Prophecy in Huntsville, Alabama. He also serves as the area presbyter, regional overseer, of north Alabama.

Bishop Lynn earned his bachelor's degree and his master of arts in biblical studies from Clarks Summit University. He serves Huntsville not only as a pastor, but as a volunteer with the Covenant Christian Academy Athletic Committee.

Bishop Lynn and his wife, Chrissy, also direct a summer youth program at Camp Boothe in West Blocton, Alabama.

Bishop Lynn and Chrissy have been married for almost 18 years, and they have four children: Camille, Ava, Heidi, and Elias. I understand they are here with Joshua today. We welcome them to Washington.

I appreciate the work Bishop Lynn has done and the positive impact he has had on north Alabama by providing care and support not only for the spiritual needs, but also the social and physical needs of our community.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

HONORING MICHAEL "MATT" PATRICK RYAN

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

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the life and faith of my friend, local Houston radio favorite, Michael "Matt" Patrick Ryan.

Matt came to Houston after stints in New York, Indiana, and Ohio. Boy, he just became a favorite of our region, his no-nonsense but so optimistic way of informing and entertaining us as host of KTRH Morning News and his syndicated afternoon show.

In September of 2015, Matt faced a new challenge—stage IV melanoma. He shared his struggle with us. Matt's battle with cancer ended last Sunday, July 9, but his inspiration is eternal.

So today, as a country, we all join Matt's family—especially his best friend and wife, Paula; children, Alexandra, Alanna, and Jake; his family, friends, and listeners in "the Sandbox"—to recognize his lifetime of service, his courage, and his absolute faith in God.

We love you, Matt. You will be missed, friend.

NOT A SOCIAL EXPERIMENT

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

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this House discriminating against transgender

Americans and restricting their ability to serve our country, saying now is not the time for a social experiment. I firmly believe that the privilege and responsibility to defend our country should not be denied to anyone based on gender identification.

Prior to the 1950s, the "not a social experiment" argument was used to deny African Americans from fully participating in our military. Today there is a long history of service and heroism by African Americans, including Generals Colin Powell and Vincent Brooks.

Prior to 2010, the "not a social experiment" argument was used to keep gays and lesbians from full participation in our military. Today there is a long line of distinguished service by gay and lesbian servicemembers, including Generals Randy Taylor and Tammy Smith.

Today there is a long line of transgender servicemembers who are ready to distinguish themselves. I welcome their service and appreciate their willingness to sacrifice for our Nation.

As a Member of Congress, I will never deny that privilege and responsibility to those who want to serve.

PROVIDING FOR THE COMMON DEFENSE OF OUR NATION

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the fiscal year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act.

With the hard work of the Armed Services Committee, this year's NDAA will begin to rebuild our military after years of spending cuts. Our troops have been facing a readiness crisis due to consistent underfunding.

This important legislation will begin to address the crisis with key investments in military readiness, and it fully funds a 2.4 percent, well-deserved pay raise for our troops.

In the 12th District of Georgia, we are at the forefront of cyber innovation, with the U.S. Army Cyber Center of Excellence located at Fort Gordon. I am happy to say that the NDAA will fully fund cyber operations with an increase of \$1.7 billion from fiscal year '17 and provides over \$85 billion in military construction and Army Family Housing funds.

It is our constitutional obligation as Members of Congress to provide for the common defense of the Nation. I believe that, with the passage of the fiscal year '18 NDAA, we are meeting our obligation to keep America safe, close the critical readiness gap, and rebuild the 21st century military.

SAVE AMERICAN JOBS

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

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today regarding an issue that Congress