

for Fairness, fake Astroturf groups actually funded by Airlines for America. In fact, this Flyers for Fairness is pretty funny.

A guy named Alan Clendenin is the head of it. He won't say who finances the group. He is a former air traffic controller who vehemently opposed privatization as recently as June and now chairs this citizen group and is being paid a handsome salary by whom? I wonder.

Now, here is the big problem with their argument. We have the most recent statistics on delays. Normally, the biggest cause of delays is weather. They would have you believe it is the air traffic system. It is not. In fact, the number one cause of delays in the United States of America today is airline operations. So that is right; the airlines themselves, when they schedule 15 planes to take off at the same time at one airport, when the airport can only take off 1 plane a minute, that causes delays.

□ 1045

When they mess up their crews' schedules and they do other things, that causes delays. When they fly decrepit aircraft and they have maintenance issues, that causes delays. Forty-six percent of the delays in June were due to airline operations.

How is that going to be dealt with by privatizing the safest, largest, most complex, and sophisticated air traffic control system in the world?

The second largest cause, as you can see from the chart, is bad weather. Actually, the FAA has developed a way to help deal with that and more efficiently reroute planes called Data Comm, which is in all of our major airports now so we can deal with it. So we have cut down on weather delays about as much as we probably can. There are always going to be weather delays.

Then the ATC system itself, in fact, improvements are coming there with a very sophisticated electronic flight script, which will be in all of our control towers within 3 years. It is already in our en route centers. We are told that they are using paper strips. Well, the paper strips are actually infallible. They don't have computer malfunctions, unlike their reservation and dispatch systems which frequently strand travelers.

The FAA made a business decision to have a much more sophisticated form of electronic strip which will help sort out traffic at dispatch on the ground, given the routes they are going to take automatically, and reduce congestion at airports and reduce delays in the future.

So what would those private interests do differently?

The bottom line is they would profit from it. That is all. They wouldn't make it any better.

NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I pose the question: Why do many people—too many—how many is too many?

The number that can have an adverse impact.

Why do too many people—not all—why do too many people deny the existence of circumstances that can have an invidious impact upon society? Why?

Why would people deny that there is a link between smoking and cancer?

Why would people deny that invidious discrimination existed when there were laws on the books that encouraged invidious discrimination?

Why would people deny the existence of climate change with all of the empirical evidence available to us to peruse and scrutinize? Why? Why, Mr. Speaker?

Because if you deny it, you don't have to do anything about it. If you deny the linkage between smoking and cancer, you don't have to do anything about it. If you deny the links between invidious discrimination and the impact on persons who are discriminated against, you don't have to do anything about it. If you deny that climate change exists, that there is something going on, then you don't have to do anything about it.

Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding denials, we have to acknowledge that, as of late, in Houston, Texas, we have had three major events—three major hurricanes—to have to cope with. And these three major events, while there may be some debate about whether they are 100-year floods or 500-year floods, everybody agrees that they are billion-dollar floods, plus, I might add, because the empirical evidence is there to support it.

With all of these hurricanes that are traversing the Atlantic Ocean and coming into landfall here in the United States, the frequency of them has to get our attention. So whether you think it is climate change or whether you think that these are acts of God—and the law recognizes such language—or whether you just can't explain it but you recognize that it is occurring, I think we have to do something about what is going on.

Mr. Speaker, we can no longer assume that the old normal is going to apply to our circumstances. There is a new normal that we have to cope with, and this new normal has much to do with how we will provide for the welfare and safety of the people of the United States of America.

How will we approach flood insurance?

The National Flood Insurance Program is in debt that we acknowledge to the tune of \$24.6 billion. That is what we acknowledge. But after Harvey and after what has happened recently in Florida and in the islands, Mr. Speaker, that number is going up exponentially.

If we are of the opinion that there is no climate change, this is just sort of a freak of nature that is occurring right

now and things will go back to the old normal and we just stay with that, then we won't take the necessary steps to provide flood insurance that is going to cover people so that they are not lost in a storm of red tape and bureaucracy.

We have to change the dynamics that relate to flood insurance in this country. We have to find a way to allow that \$24.6 billion that is going to go up exponentially to be properly resolved. It has to be eliminated.

Here is why: If you pass that on to the policyholders, then many people will not be able to afford flood insurance. If people can't afford flood insurance, then they are not going to be able to buy homes. If they can't buy homes, then we are going to have an impact on the economy.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it is time for us to do several things with flood insurance. One, resolve the issue of when versus flood as it relates to compensation for damages. Two, eliminate the debt. And, finally, I would say this: We have to, whether we like it or not, acknowledge that there is a new normal, especially after what has happened in Texas, Louisiana, Florida, and the territories.

I would also want to be specific about Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Our prayers and thoughts are with them just as they are with those persons in Florida who have been harmed and the many persons across Texas, Louisiana, and other States.

This is our moment in time. This is our opportunity to make a difference. Let's acknowledge the change and make a change.

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 52 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

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Thank You, Dear Lord, for giving us another day.

As the difficult work of appropriations continues in the Congress, we ask Your blessing upon the Members and their staff who have done the detailed work to produce legislation for the government of our Nation. May their work be blessed with success to the benefit of all Americans.

Continue to bless those who are recovering from hurricane destruction

and those fighting, still, the storms of wildfire that plague our Western States. Blanket those who fight to overcome these natural disasters with Your spirit of strength and endurance, and preserve them all from harm.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

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 New York (Mr. ZELDIN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. ZELDIN 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

THE SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HURRICANE IRMA

(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, I was grateful this weekend to visit and thank volunteers at local shelters in the Midlands of South Carolina for helping families displaced from their homes due to Hurricane Irma.

At the South Carolina Emergency Preparedness Center in Pine Ridge, Governor Henry McMaster ably received updates to make thoughtful decisions to protect citizens. Emergency Management Division Director Kim Stenson professionally hosted over a dozen State agencies with FEMA Coordinator Willie Nunn. Adjutant General Robert Livingston and the Army National Guard were vital in preparation efforts.

While visiting the Dent Middle School Red Cross shelter, we were welcomed by Principal Tamala Murrill Ashford, Red Cross Executive Director Rebecca Jordan, Beth Shwedo, and volunteers dedicated to service.

State officials and the South Carolina Army National Guard have been successful leaders for preparation. Attorney General Alan Wilson led efforts to reduce price gouging. I appreciate everyone for ensuring that citizens had the resources for safety.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the

11th in the global war on terrorism. Our prayers for all those affected by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DESERVE A BETTER DEAL

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve a better deal. They deserve better jobs, better wages, and a better future. That is what Democrats are committed to doing, and it starts with creating millions of full-time, good-paying jobs that give more Americans the opportunity to get ahead. That is why we have proposed doubling Federal support for apprenticeship programs.

Apprenticeship training is one of the most cost-effective ways for getting workers started on a successful career path. Over their lifetimes, folks who completed an apprenticeship will earn \$300,000 more than folks who don't.

Now, you would think that a President who once hosted a game show called "The Apprentice" would see the wisdom of this approach, but that is not the case. Earlier this year, President Trump actually proposed a budget that cuts job training by nearly 40 percent. That is not a better deal. It is not even a good deal. It is a raw deal.

We can do better. Let's make the expansion of apprenticeship programs a national priority. Let's give young people and folks who are changing careers the tools they need to get ahead. Let's give the American people a better deal.

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK

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

Mr. STEWART. Mr. Speaker, today I want to address a topic of grave and tragic importance. Every 12 minutes in the United States we experience a suicide-related death; and, shockingly, for every suicide death, there are 25 attempts.

These are heartbreaking statistics and, sadly, they hit very close to home. In Utah, for example, we have the fifth highest rate of suicide deaths in the country. These are our neighbors, our coworkers, and, in some cases, our family and our friends.

I think that most of us, if not all of us, have been touched by some of these tragic stories, and I believe that we have a responsibility to do everything we can to help those in need. That is why I introduced the National Suicide Improvement Act earlier this year. This bill hopes to streamline and provide easy access to potentially life-saving resources by designing a new, national three-digit dialing number similar to 911 for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline.

I believe this legislation has the ability to save lives and to benefit our

loved ones who struggle with mental illness or suicidal thoughts. Let us do everything we can to help our fellow citizens who are in need, and that is what this legislation will do.

HOUSE DEMOCRATS ARE FIGHTING FOR A BETTER DEAL FOR AMERICANS

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

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, the Trump administration has turned its attention to so-called tax reform, and the American people will face a clear choice.

House Republicans want tax cuts for the wealthy and the well-off. That is a raw deal.

House Democrats are fighting for tax cuts for working families and middle class Americans. That is a better deal.

The American people deserve a country where, if you work hard and play by the rules, you can provide a comfortable living for your family; but for far too many Americans, that basic contract has been broken. That is why House Democrats are fighting for better jobs, better wages, and a better future.

House Democrats are fighting for higher pay, lower costs, and tools for the 21st century economy, and House Democrats are fighting for a better deal for every single American.

CAMPAIGN FOR DECENCY

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

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring awareness to the Campaign for Decency, which was launched by Lisa Cholnoky, a part-time resident of my district who is with us here today in the gallery.

Operating out of the First Congressional District of New York, in Shelter Island, the Campaign for Decency is a nonpartisan organization that seeks to bring civility back to our Nation.

Ms. Cholnoky was inspired to launch this campaign after witnessing much of the bitter division in our country and the inability of many Americans to engage in civil, productive discussion. As Americans, we cherish our freedom to dissent, but must always bear in mind that these debates must be productive and substantive.

In July, Ms. Cholnoky mailed out 535 Decency buttons to every single Representative and Senator. She describes the campaign as "a simple reminder of the basic standards of decency that every American deserves, regardless of their political views."

I am proudly wearing this button here today to join in Ms. Cholnoky's call for unity both here in Congress and together as citizens of the greatest country on Earth.

This campaign sets an example for us all to abide by as we strive to reach across the aisle in a bipartisan fashion.