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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MARSHALL).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 25, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ROGER W. MARSHALL to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

COMMUNITY RALLYING TO HONOR FALLEN HERO THOMAS EDWARD HUNTER

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with you an inspiring story about a community rallying to honor one of our Nation's heroes. On September 12 of this year, Thomas Edward Hunter passed away at the wonderful age of 93.

He was a World War II veteran who served in Normandy and fought with

our troops to liberate Europe from the Nazis. Unfortunately, Mr. Hunter spent his final years mostly alone in a nursing home, and died without much close family. He literally outlived all of his siblings. He never married, nor had any children. As a result, he had no one to serve as pallbearers at his funeral.

Word of Mr. Hunter's passing reached the folks at Winnfield Senior High School, which is in a small community in rural north central Louisiana that I had the privilege of representing. After learning about Mr. Hunter's fate, six Winnfield football players—Matthew Harrell, Brett Jurek, Justin Lawson, T.J. Homan, Christian Evans, and Lee Estay—stepped up to serve as pallbearers for Mr. Hunter.

In addition, the folks at Southern Funeral Homes arranged for military honors, along with the flag and the playing of taps.

I am so inspired by the actions of Matthew, Brett, Justin, T.J., Christian, and Lee, as well as others in the community, who gave Mr. Hunter the hero's sendoff that he so deserved. They didn't know this man, but they knew that every veteran deserves to die with dignity and to be honored for the sacrifices they made for our great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I think the actions of these men that you see in the photo to my left here speaks volumes of what is so truly important in our country: community, country, family, God.

Our flag and the Nation it stands for is special because of veterans like Thomas Hunter who answered the call to serve without question. Thousands have given their lives for that flag and this Nation, and they deserve our respect for their ultimate sacrifices.

These young men in Winnfield, they get that. They got that at this funeral. I think others in this country will learn from their wonderful example.

SENATE PROPOSED HEALTHCARE SYSTEM IS INSANE

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, Albert Einstein is reported to have once said: The definition of insanity is trying to do the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.

Using that definition, the men in the white coats with large butterfly nets have plenty of wacky patients to catch in the Senate, where this week—tomorrow, in fact—the Republican leadership is once again, for over the 60th time, trying to jam through a so-called healthcare bill which will repeal the Affordable Care Act without a coherent replacement.

Once again, the Republican leadership will force a vote without analysis by the Congressional Budget Office of the Cassidy-Graham bill, no hearings at the healthcare committee; and in the face of a tidal wave of opposition from the healthcare world, patient groups, healthcare givers, and even Republican Governors have had one message over the last week, which is to vote "no."

Mr. Speaker, just to give you a small sample of some of the patient groups that have spoken out over the last week in opposition to this measure, they include the ALS Association, the American Cancer Society, The American Diabetes Association, the American Heart Association, the American Lung Association, the Arthritis Foundation, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, the National Kidney Foundation, the Down Syndrome Caucus, the American Foundation for the Blind, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Amputee Coalition of America, the Autism Speaks group, the Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose, and AARP.

These are mainstream, trusted organizations, which all of us have donated

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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to, done walkathons, done everything we can to help their missions, which is to help America's patients. They are unanimous that the Senate should reject this measure and that we should move on to a new approach—following Mr. Einstein's advice—to try and fix the American healthcare system.

Incredibly, American provider groups, who at many times are at each other's throats in terms of different healthcare legislation, have also taken the same position: the American Medical Association; the American Nurses Association; the Association of American Medical Colleges; the American Hospital Association; the Catholic Health Association of the United States; and the American Health Care Association, which represents thousands of nursing homes like the one that just cared for that gentleman that we heard such kind words about a moment ago from Louisiana.

Again, incredibly, the National Association of Medicaid Directors from all 50 States—Republican States and Democratic States—issued an extraordinary letter last week. Again, these are folks who run the system. They are actually on the ground. They are in the real world, not in the political bubble of Washington, and they have unanimously begged the Senate to vote "no," and to stop this rush to undermining and creating a catastrophic damage to America's healthcare system.

The RAND Corporation issued a report just a couple of days ago that talked about the impact of this measure on America's veterans. 1.75 million American veterans use the Medicaid program; many in nursing homes, maybe like Mr. Hunter, who we just heard about. The RAND Corporation has told us that passing this measure will undermine our promise to America's veterans, the people who wore the uniform of this country, that they would have access to coverage through the Medicaid program. That is what this bill does.

Mr. Speaker, in the real world, at the end of this week, the Children's Health Insurance Program, a bipartisan measure that passed a couple of decades ago, expires its authorization. The law that provides authorization for America's community health centers, that expires at the end of this week. The National Health Service Corps, which allows young Americans to get the opportunity for affordable medical education, that expires at the end of this week.

That is what we should be focused on; not another mindless rushed judgment to satisfy a political promise that the American people don't want and we know, from all the folks who are out there in the real world of America's healthcare system, won't work. Vote "no."

RECOGNIZING THE WORK OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE WASHINGTON CROSSING NATIONAL CEMETERY

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my admiration for a dedicated group of individuals in my community who tirelessly work to ensure every veteran receives the recognition they deserve.

This organization is the Guardians of the Washington Crossing National Cemetery. Through rain, sleet, extreme heat, and excessive cold, conditions that would make others seek shelter, these dedicated members have not missed a single veteran's funeral since the opening of the Washington Crossing National Cemetery. Over 10,000 of our Nation's veterans have received their final honors provided by this devoted patriotic group of citizens.

It is with deep gratitude that I share their efforts on this floor.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of their humble service, I include their names in the RECORD.

Bob Craven, Gabe Masico, John Heenan, Dan Worden, Mel Benson, Joe Hogan, Joe Longmore, Marge Weiner, Jerry Byrnes, Gene Hamilton, Hugh Bell, Les Walters, Randy Seitter, Ken Myerson, George Sweet, Tom Hauserman, Ron Lyons, Gene Teece, Bob Miles, Terry Schweikert.

Bill McKenna, Walter Elsperger, Bob Sundling, Sal Castro, Tom Molnar, Bob Davis, Jan Becknell, Bob Greenwood, Bill Tuttle, Bill Kratz, Harry Magrishi, Harold Shultz, Rich Bender, Tim Ward, Ken Fox, Skip Munday, John D'ascenzo, Fred Ameel, Joe Darwalk, Frank Adams.

John Morgan, Walt Jerdan, Dennis Cudnik, Joe Fonde, Steve Whiteman, Terry Sherk, Jim McDevitt, Bob Castor, Jim Kuhn, Tom Lyons, Bob Boccuti, Jim Hartman, Kathleen McCall, Marc Wilard, Victor Teat, Ned Cooney, Dick Lima, John Lee, John Wharton, Jim Frawley.

Chet Gursky, Donn Nolan, Tim Ghebeles, John Sandle, Jim Harris, Ed Stegliik, Bill Fenimore, Bob Crossett, Fred Cadwell, Bill Lee, Steve Govern, Brian Watson, Joe Keller, Bill Stevens, Barry Helfer, Dan Madden, Mer Claar, Don Weiss, Charles Godin, John McGarrigle, Jerry McGovern, Fred Stewart, Jack Jameson.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, we can never truly thank our Nation's veterans enough for their service and their sacrifice. But the work of the members, past and present, of the Washington Crossing National Cemetery Honor Guard is an example we should all follow.

MITOCHONDRIAL DISEASE AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the importance of raising awareness of mitochondrial disease this month of September.

Mitochondrial disease is a chronic genetic disorder that occurs when the mitochondria of the cells fail to produce enough energy to keep them functioning. This disease affects 1 in 4,000 Americans of all ages, including my constituent, Bettemarie Bond.

It can have severe consequences. Symptoms of mitochondrial disease are poor growth, loss of motor function, and an increased risk of infection. For more than 25 years, Bettemarie has relied on continuous infusions of parenteral nutrition, saline, and pain medication to help manage the effects of her conditions.

As a patient advocate, she raises awareness of the importance of access to home care. Home infusion care has allowed Bettemarie to go to college, work as an occupational therapist, and buy her home in my hometown of Levittown.

This month we highlight the importance of coming together to support those with this disease, as well as educate the public about its effects. We can and must spread awareness for this disease through social media awareness, spreading the word in our communities, sharing stories of those afflicted, wearing green in support, and holding events to help gain recognition of this disease and its repercussions.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to speak with all those impacted by this condition, including my constituents, as we work to find a cure.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF FOOD STAMPS ACT OF 1977

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

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, this Friday marks the 40th anniversary of the Food Stamps Act of 1977, landmark legislation that expanded the reach of the Food Stamps program and made it more effective and efficient.

The bipartisan legislation came as a response to the severe hunger and malnutrition that plagued our country in the 1960s. In 1968, a CBS documentary called "Hunger in America" turned the Nation's focus to this terrible problem, making us all aware that even in the United States of America, the richest country in the history of the world, kids were going to school hungry and families couldn't afford nutritious meals.

For the next decade, my friend and mentor, Senator George McGovern, the Democrat from South Dakota; and Senator Bob Dole, a Republican from Kansas, led the Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs. This bipartisan panel worked to examine the issue of hunger and malnutrition in the United States. They held field hearings to witness firsthand how devastating the curse of hunger was across this country. They worked together to educate the public and other Members of Congress on hunger, and worked together to find common ground on how best to tackle this terrible problem.

Out of this work came important updates to the Food Stamps program. The Food Stamps Act of 1977 established national standards of eligibility for the program and eliminated the requirement that recipients pay for their