

stamps. It was revolutionary and it helped to dramatically reduce extreme poverty and extreme hunger in the United States.

Since the 1970s, Congress has worked to strengthen the program, making it even more effective and efficient. We have modernized benefit processing, and replaced the paper food stamps with EBT cards. We have added incentives for the purchase of healthy foods, and improved access to fresh fruits and vegetables. We have updated benefit calculations to exclude combat pay for military families, and allow childcare deductions to assist families with young children.

In 2008, we renamed the program SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The modern SNAP provides millions of children, seniors, and other vulnerable adults with food assistance each year. It helps families lift themselves out of poverty, and improves health, educational, and economic outcomes for its recipients.

As I hear from families in my district, I learn how powerful SNAP is in transforming lives. Just last week I heard the story of a graduate school-educated constituent who became disabled and was unable to work and was resistant to applying for SNAP. She didn't think she fit the profile of someone who needed food benefits, but she did. She applied for and received benefits, and now she no longer panics about where her next meal is going to come from.

□ 1215

This constituent wanted us to know that people who use SNAP are not lazy. She said: "SNAP helps people at least not to have to worry as much about going to bed, school, or work hungry."

Another constituent shared that she and her husband rely on SNAP to eat healthier meals. Prior to receiving benefits, they had peanut butter and jelly for almost every meal. Now, with modest assistance, they are able to buy fruits and vegetables. While they still continue to struggle, they are able to enjoy more nutritious meals, and they have seen an improvement in their health.

These are just a few stories of how important it is to maintain—and increase—these lifesaving food benefits. Still, as 42 million Americans continue to struggle with hunger and food insecurity, more needs to be done.

In preparation for the 2018 farm bill, the House Agriculture Committee has conducted a thorough review of the program. We have held 23 hearings and received testimony from dozens of expert witnesses—both liberal and conservative—who all agree that the program is working.

Based on this testimony, we have learned that there is no reason whatsoever to undermine the program through structural changes, block grants, further restrictions, more onerous requirements, or cuts, as some of my House colleagues have proposed.

Instead, we should be focused on making the program even better. We need to make sure that anyone who needs modest food assistance benefits has access to them. We need to support and expand innovative programs that help to increase the purchasing power of SNAP, and we need to increase SNAP benefits which currently average a mere \$1.40 per person, per meal, in order to provide families on the program with access to more nutritious food that will last them through the month.

Mr. Speaker, SNAP works. It is our Nation's first line of defense against hunger and one of the most important tools we have to help lift our neighbors out of poverty.

In the spirit of Senators McGovern and Dole, it is time for Congress to renew their bipartisan commitment to ending hunger in this country once and for all. As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the landmark Food Stamp Act of 1977, I urge my colleagues to join me in strengthening SNAP and working to end hunger now.

FIRST PRINCIPLES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, on the question of race, we clearly have come a long way in America, but we still have a long way to go.

There are some in this country who want to sugarcoat the African-American experience in the great United States of America, but the facts are the facts. In this country, the African-American community has been forced to endure slavery, rape, kidnapping, lynchings, Jim Crow, segregation, mass incarceration, and a police brutality epidemic that continues to this very day. It was in this context that athletes like Colin Kaepernick bravely chose to kneel down so that others may have the courage to stand up.

There are some who have criticized these athletes as unpatriotic, but their actions are uniquely American. Liberty and justice for all is an American value. Equal protection under the law is an American value. Freedom of speech and expression as embedded in the First Amendment is an American value.

Yet there is criticism coming even from folks in the White House. I find this ironic because this is the same group of people at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue who regularly refuse to criticize Vladimir Putin and defend Russia's interference with our election, undermining American democracy for the first time in our Nation's history.

How dare you lecture us about what is patriotic.

So I just came to the House floor to make it clear to all of the athletes across this great country who have chosen to stand up and confront injustice in our society that there are Members of the United States Congress who have your back.

Steph Curry, we have your back.

LeBron James, we have your back.

Coach Mike Tomlin, we have your back.

You stand on the shoulders of giants like Joe Louis, Wilma Rudolph, Jackie Robinson, Jim Brown, Bill Russell, Muhammad Ali, and so many others who throughout the annals of time chose to confront injustice in America to make us a better place.

Now you have taken the baton, and, thankfully, you are doing the same exact thing. We should be grateful.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. FOXX) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Dear Lord, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We come to You as a nation in the midst of significant, imminent transition, even as important disagreements on policy promise vigorous debate in the days to come.

As people look for causes and solutions, the temptation is great to seek ideological position. We ask that You might send Your spirit of peace and reconciliation, that instead of ascendancy over opponents, the Members of this people's House and all elected to represent our Nation might work together, humbly, recognizing the best in each other's hopes to bring stability and direction toward a strong future.

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

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PITTENGER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PITTENGER 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.

EXTRAORDINARY MILITARY LEADERSHIP

(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. Madam Speaker, I was grateful to participate in a congressional delegation last week to Japan, the Republic of Korea, Guam, and Hawaii. We visited troops on the front line who are defending American families and promoting peace through strength.

In the shadow of North Korea's latest missile launch over Japan, it was reassuring to meet with leadership of the highest competence and integrity.

We were inspired by the leadership from Vice Admiral Phil Sawyer, Commander U.S. 7th Fleet; General Vincent Brooks, Commander, U.S. Forces Korea; Lieutenant General Tom Bergeson, Commander, 7th Air Force; Lieutenant General Tom Vandal, Commanding General, 8th Army; Rear Admiral Shoshana Chatfield, Commander, Joint Region Marianas; Lieutenant General Bryan Fenton, Deputy Commander, U.S. Pacific Command; Admiral Scott Swift, Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet; General Terrence O'Shaughnessy, Commander, Pacific Air Forces; General Robert Brown, Commander, U.S. Army Pacific.

The delegation was professionally coordinated by Captain Scott Farr and Lieutenant Commander Victoria Marum. Many thanks to staff Craig Collier and Brian Garrett for accompanying the delegation.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism. Our prayers are with those in Mexico City, Puerto Rico, and all in the path of Hurricane Maria.

THE MEDIA BIAS BEAT GOES ON

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, the media bias beat goes on.

Last week on PBS, columnist Mark Shields criticized Senate sponsors of the new healthcare bill. He said that no Republican Senators have credentials for working on healthcare, and added that Senator CASSIDY got to the Senate a year ago and is not exactly a long-term legislator.

In two clicks online, Mark Shields could have learned that BILL CASSIDY and his wife are both doctors who have provided healthcare for people around the world. Those are called credentials. Senator CASSIDY also served in the State senate, three terms in the U.S. House, and is now in his third year in

the United States Senate. He is obviously an experienced legislator.

Where is the balance? Where is the truth? And the liberal national media wonder why their credibility with the American people is at a record low.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today during National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.

Madam Speaker, our Nation's veterans are 22 percent more likely to commit suicide than their nonveteran peers. This trend is troubling, and we all must work to reverse it.

The Department of Veterans Affairs started a new campaign this month called Be There. The campaign emphasizes small actions, such as calling an old friend, checking on a neighbor, or inviting a colleague to go for a walk. These small gestures may have a real impact on someone who is struggling or feeling alone.

Suicide rates are especially high in rural areas, where veterans may experience isolation or limited access to VA care—often for mental health concerns. That is why I introduced the VETS Act, which seeks to build on the VA's existing telemedicine program. It allows veterans to receive mental healthcare from anywhere. This will give our veterans greater access to the care they so desperately need.

Madam Speaker, our servicemen and -women answered the call of duty. When they return home, it is our turn to be there for them.

COMMENDING THE MOSER GROUP AND WINGATE UNIVERSITY ON HURRICANE ASSISTANCE EFFORTS

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

Mr. PITTENGER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of The Moser Group and Wingate University for their extraordinary organizational and grassroots efforts to help victims of Hurricanes Irma in Florida and Harvey in Texas. This week, these two organizations will load two 18-wheeler trucks to deliver supplies directly to the affected areas.

Commitment to charity and compassion for victims of national disasters is truly what makes America great.

In North Carolina, we know all too well about the consequences of hurricanes: 98,000 homes and 19,000 businesses were destroyed by Hurricane Matthew, from which we are still recovering.

Organizations like The Moser Group and Wingate University are key to re-

covery efforts across the country. They are to be commended. Madam Speaker, God bless them as they continue to help people in need.

HOW THE FIRST AMENDMENT WORKS

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

Mr. TROTT. Madam Speaker, over the weekend, I spent a little time watching football. I am happy to say that my Michigan Wolverines won their game; sad to say that the Detroit Lions lost to the Falcons, but, hopefully, they will have a good season.

There was also quite a bit of controversy this weekend about who was standing and sitting for our National Anthem at sporting events. We do not need to concern ourselves with this issue, and the reason is because the First Amendment works.

Here is how the First Amendment works: A little over a year ago, a quarterback in the NFL chose not to stand for the National Anthem. I personally disagree with that statement, but it was his choice under the First Amendment. The fans booed. The fans could have clapped; they could have booed. Many fans booed. The owners listened, and now that quarterback is not employed in the NFL.

That is how the First Amendment works. What we should concern ourselves with is how soon 3 million people in Puerto Rico are going to get water and electricity, why millions of Americans are uncertain regarding their healthcare, and what we are going to do about North Korea.

Madam Speaker, that is what we need to focus on in this House. That is what we were sent to do.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 3 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 8 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1504

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BARTON) at 3 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.