

I am working on these issues, but I realize that this has to be a comprehensive approach to opioid abuse.

The Purdue company launched OxyContin with a marketing campaign that attempted to counter this attitude and change the prescribing habits of doctors.

□ 1045

Many people know OxyContin. The company funded research and paid doctors to make the case that concerns about opioid addiction were overblown and that OxyContin would safely treat an ever-wider range of maladies. Sales representatives marketed OxyContin as a product to start with and to stay with. Remember that. A product to start with and to stay with.

Millions of patients found the drug to be a vital salve for excruciating pain, but many others grew so hooked on it, that between doses they experienced debilitating withdrawal.

If we are going to do real opioid reform, this must be a standup of the pharmaceutical companies, and they cannot be defended.

In addition, we have to understand that those languishing in jail that have suffered from criminal penalties for crack cocaine—crack—there now should be a compromise for their release. Opioid reform must include all of the neighborhoods of America, not just some.

JENNIFER KEPNER WAS MOST COURAGEOUS AND INSPIRING

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

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the life and legacy of a wonderful person, an incredible wife, loving mother, exceptional citizen, and one of our Nation's finest servicemembers, Jennifer Kepner.

Jennifer passed away on October 18, 2017, at the young age of 39. She lived in my congressional district in Cathedral City, California. My heart breaks for her family and loved ones. She is, by far, one of the most courageous and inspiring people I have ever met. She put family, country, and community before self.

At 23, Jennifer answered the call to serve our Nation as a medic and a staff sergeant in the United States Air Force. She served for 6 years, from 2001 to 2007, and helped save countless lives on the battlefield.

After being honorably discharged at the rank of staff sergeant, Jenn continued her life of service, helping patients in our local communities as a radiology technician at Desert Regional Medical Center in Palm Springs.

She led a healthy and full life in so many ways. Her many hobbies included CrossFit, hiking, camping with her family, quilting, and even painting.

All who met her remember her love of country, her determined spirit, her passion for serving others, and her devotion to family.

Despite her healthy lifestyle and no other risks, in 2016, Jennifer was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, a terrifying diagnosis for anyone, let alone a young mother.

After exhaustive work to investigate the potential causes of her cancer, her oncologist linked Jennifer's exposure to burn pits in Iraq as the only identifiable and plausible risk for her cancer.

Burn pits are commonly used by the military to eliminate waste in Iraq and Afghanistan. The large burn pit at Balad Air Base in Iraq, where Jennifer was stationed for 6 months in 2006, covered 10 acres and burned over 240 tons of trash each day, including everything from computer parts, medical waste, plastics, and chemicals; some items we wouldn't allow to be burned in open air in our neighborhoods here in the United States. Yet, in a crowded camp of thousands, our men and women in uniform are exposed to giant plumes of black smoke.

After learning of the potential link between her exposure while she served our great Nation and her cancer, she went to the VA seeking answers and help. After being denied medical assistance and benefits from the VA initially, Jennifer reached out to the advocacy group Burn Pits 360 and my office.

Along with others, and as a team, we helped her navigate the complicated VA process, cut through the red tape, and get her the benefits that she had earned.

I visited Jennifer at her home. During our kitchen table talk, she told me about her daily struggle raising two small children while battling pancreatic cancer. She was brave and had an optimistic attitude.

She told me what it was like living every day in Iraq right next to the burn pits—the smoke, the smell, the irritated cough, and the sickness that followed.

Her main concern was to ensure her husband and children were going to be okay after she passed. Her second concern was for her fellow veterans who, like her, were exposed to burn pits. She wanted to bring awareness to what she called "the Agent Orange of our generation." Imagine that. During the toughest battle of her life against an aggressive cancer, she elevated her family and fellow veterans above herself. Her advocacy was for us to prevent future exposure to burn pits and serve veterans who have already been exposed.

That is why we are here, to honor Jennifer and fight for her, her family, and fellow veterans. We must find a solution. Unfortunately, it is too late for Jennifer, but we can fight in her honor.

I was there with Jenn; her husband, Ben; children, Aida and Wyatt, at her bedside hours before she passed away, and I am honored to call Ben my friend.

On behalf of my wife, Monica, the 36th Congressional District, and our entire Nation, we join together as a

community to grieve with you, Ben, little Aida and Wyatt, and to honor your wife, your mother, and the life of Jennifer Kepner. We are awed and humbled by Jennifer's life of patriotism and service, and her life and her love of family.

Jennifer, we thank you for your service and sacrifice.

Mr. Speaker, Jennifer's memory will never be forgotten.

A CIRCUIT BREAKER IS NEEDED FOR PROPOSED TAX CUTS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the exercise my Republican friends are going through with their budget and tax cut proposal would be amusing if the consequences were not so serious.

Coming to Congress, I worked hard to earn a position on the House Ways and Means Committee, which has been the focal point for critical decisions in the past dealing with tax reform, with Social Security. I respected its historic role and the way that its members worked together in a thoughtful and bipartisan basis.

Unfortunately, unlike what has happened for other major tax reform efforts, currently there has been no effort for laying the groundwork, working with people in both parties, dealing with the hard decisions that are necessary for tax reform that will move our country forward. My Republican friends refuse to deal with the heavy legislative lifting necessary for true reform.

In fact, my Republican friends now have given up on tax reform. They are rushing through, in a matter of days, not reform but as big a tax cut as they can possibly get, predicated on strong-arming their Members with narrow control in Congress and disregarding the fundamentals of responsible budgeting.

The budget resolution that the House will soon be considering by the Republicans to enact their tax cut via the process known as reconciliation is a fantasy. Read it carefully. It is predicated on increasing our national debt \$1.5 trillion, when previously they promised that their tax reform would be budget neutral.

It is predicated on \$4 trillion of unspecified budget cuts that will be concentrated on Medicare, Medicaid, and the other programs that Americans care the most deeply about.

The proof for this fantasy is the fact that even though Republicans have an ironclad grip on the appropriations process in both the House and the Senate and they don't have to worry about filibusters, they don't need any Democratic votes at all, but they still cannot summon the courage of their convictions to implement the beginning of this strategy.

It doesn't have to wait for 2 or 4 or 10 years. They could start now with the

budget cutting that they are relying upon for this fantasy budget, but they know that the American people won't stand for it and their own Members wouldn't vote for those cuts now even though there is nothing stopping them.

That is why it is absolutely essential that, even if they are modestly successful with this reckless agenda, that we take steps to prevent the resulting fiscal train wreck, because we have seen deficits explode in the past where rosy projections about economic growth and stern budget cuts fail to materialize.

The landmark 1986 tax reform legislation, the last time we had real tax reform, by the way, predicated on bipartisan cooperation and a lot of hard work, had no discernible impact on economic growth, even though it was, in fact, worth it.

As a result, I will be offering stand-alone legislation and amendments in the Ways and Means Committee to establish a circuit breaker that will suspend the tax cuts if the rosy projections fail to materialize. If deficits explode and budgets are not cut according to their plan, then the American people should be spared the economic chaos by calling a timeout and rolling back these reckless proposals, allowing us to catch our breath and hopefully develop better policy based on bipartisanship and facts, not fantasy.

America deserves a far-better vision than the Republican budget fantasy and the reckless tax cuts that they are pushing so hard to enact. At a minimum, we should have a circuit breaker to stop it if they can't follow through on their promises.

AMRO FABRICATING CELEBRATES 40 YEARS

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 40th anniversary of AMRO Fabricating Corporation, whose Riverside manufacturing facility is adjacent to the March Air Reserve Base in my district.

AMRO is a small business manufacturer that plays an important role in supporting NASA, the Department of Defense, and our community.

Under the guidance of CEO Michael E. Riley, the grandson of founders Michael K. and Thora A. Riley, this family company is helping to develop a strong and skilled workforce in southern California.

AMRO is partnering with the State and Federal Government on projects that place high school and college students in internships and apprenticeships, which prepare them for a successful future and support our local economy.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the AMRO team on this milestone, and I am proud to represent this terrific small business that is doing such great work for our community and for our Nation.

THE BIG BANKS ARE MAKING BIG BUCKS

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, once again, I am honored to stand in the well of the Congress of the United States of America, although I am sad to bring the news that I shall share with you.

I am saddened by something that has happened in this Congress. The big banks are making big bucks. They are doing very well, and they just received a big bonus from Congress.

The big bonus is this: if you do business with them, you will have to participate in arbitration, and you won't be allowed to sue them to resolve your dispute by way of litigation. Congress has decided that the big banks making the big bucks can force you to go to arbitration, and you will have to pay a fee to negotiate your way through the arbitration process. I think that there is something wrong with this picture.

There is something wrong with this picture when we realize that one bank—and I will just single one out, I won't go through all of the entirety of the industry, but one bank, Wells Fargo, one bank, opened 3.5 million accounts in the names of persons without their consent. In the names of customers, 3.5 million accounts without the consent of customers.

□ 1100

This one bank, Wells Fargo, paid \$185 million as a part of the resolution. This one bank, Wells Fargo, paid \$80 million for enrolling customers into auto insurance that they didn't need. One bank, Wells Fargo, paid \$2.8 million in refunds to customers. One bank, Wells Fargo, in 2012, illegally foreclosed on servicemembers' homes and autos—one bank, Wells Fargo—and for this, they paid \$311 million. This was about \$125,000 per servicemember.

So we find ourselves in a circumstance where banks that do these ugly things to customers won't have to go to court. They won't have to face a jury. They will simply require the customer to negotiate with them. I find this quite shocking, to be quite frank with you, and I am very saddened by it, because I know that, if you take from the bank, you will go to court. But, apparently, Congress has concluded that, if the bank takes from you, you go to the bank and negotiate.

It is a sad state of affairs.

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 11 o'clock and 1 minute a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas) at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Christopher Girata, Saint Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church, Dallas, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, we thank You for the gift of this life and ask Your blessing upon the world You have made. Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble.

Give to the people of our country a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance that we may use our liberty in accordance with Your gracious will. Guide all who govern and hold authority in this Nation, and kindle in every heart that true love of peace.

Make our lives a sign of Your love to this broken world, that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness, heal guilt, and joy conquer despair. Grant that the bonds of our common humanity, by which all Your children are united one to another, may be so transformed by Your grace that Your will may be done on Earth as it is in heaven.

All this, we ask in the name of God, our creator, redeemer, and sustainer.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. PITTINGER 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.