

of your unconstitutional executive order, which will make us less safe and only serve to embolden our enemies.

Short of that, we will have to take other actions, including legislative directives, resolutions of disapproval, even exploring the power of impeachment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

ACTING ON AMERICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, last week, President Trump traveled to Philadelphia to address the Republican Conference. He talked about his pledge to spend \$1 trillion on our crumbling infrastructure, and he expressed frustration that it is not part of the first 100 days' agenda of the Republican leadership. I share that frustration. It is never on the agenda for the Republican leadership to invest in American infrastructure.

We did manage to pass a bill through the last Congress—the FAST Act—that was a decent continuation of our investments, but it lacked funding dramatically, and at the end of 5 years, our infrastructure will be in worse condition. So I share the President's frustration.

He also said, “fix it first.” Last week, I talked about harbors. It is easy to take care of the harbor issue. All you have to do is spend the tax for the purpose for which it has been collected, but the Republicans don't want to do that.

Today I am going to talk a little bit about rail—in particular, the Northeast Corridor. We had a report by Amtrak that assessed the needs on this corridor, which is shared by freight and rail and carries a phenomenal number of people and goods every day. Over 2,200 Amtrak commuter and freight trains work some portion of this route every day. However, it is in a state of serious disrepair.

One of the most critical areas is in Baltimore, the Baltimore and Potomac Tunnel. It was an investment made by the Government of the United States of America. It began during the Civil War and finished just after. It has held up. That is a pretty amazing amount of time, but it is at the point of failure now, and if that tunnel fails, it will choke off all of the movement of goods and people from Washington, D.C.—points south—to the northeast. It is a major economic engine—a hugely populated area of the United States of America.

The tunnel fix has gone through an environmental impact statement; so they can't drag out with, “Oh, it is those darned regulations and environmental restrictions. We can't get it done.” No. We can get it done. We have

got a plan. We have got an engineering design. All we need is the money—the investment—by the Government of the United States. Now, we have a Speaker who says, “Oh, if it is worth doing, the private sector will do it.” No. This is an asset which serves both private and public interests, and it needs a Federal investment. That is \$4 billion.

If you go all the way up to Boston, you are looking at over \$30 billion: bridges—critical bridges—that are 100, 110, 120, 130 years old and that are falling apart. It is time for some action here.

If we go a little further north, up to New York, we have the Hudson River tunnel, which is another engineering miracle. The Hudson River tunnel was completed in, oh, 1909. Then, of course, even though that has held up pretty well, it was flooded during Hurricane Sandy, and the salts that got in there are accelerating the erosion of that tunnel, and it is near the point of failure; so we would no longer be connected to New York City through the Hudson River tunnel. There are 200,000 passengers who use that every day. That would be a blow not only to the New York and regional economy, but to the national economy should that tunnel fail.

Other countries are making these investments. I was in Japan last year. They have a rail system that they built 40 years ago. It has run on time for 40 years. It has had no accidents for 40 years, and it travels at about 200 miles an hour. We, the great United States of America, can sometimes get trains up to 20, 30 miles an hour—at critical sections of this rail infrastructure—but we do not have time for that. First, we have to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Then we have to cut taxes for the wealthiest among us, and maybe they will build the tunnels and bridges and name them after themselves. I don't think so. They will be buying more super yachts and expensive places to go on vacation.

It is past time for this Congress to act in making critical investments in America's infrastructure. Yesterday, I unveiled a clock which tracks the cost of delays and congestion to the economy and to the people of the United States on a daily basis because of deteriorated infrastructure. The clock is ticking. It is time to stop that clock and rebuild our country.

□ 1030

DANTE SAWYER GOODBYE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank a long-time staff member in my office, Dante Sawyer, who, after nearly 4 years of service to the families of the Second Congressional District, is moving on to new opportunities to work in the office of Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx.

It will be a tall task replacing Dante in my office, but I am comforted and take pride in the fact that Dante will make a huge difference in a new capacity.

When I first came to Congress and was deciding who I wanted to represent me in the field; who I wanted to serve the families I care so much about; and who had the compassion, presence, and leadership abilities to make a difference back in Chicago, I knew that Dante was the difference maker that I needed.

Dante has a million dollar mind and an irreplaceable heart. He is the pulse of the people with a gift for public service.

It is no secret that the Chicagoland area has been rocked by gun violence and economically distressing circumstances. And there is much that needs to be done for the families of Chicago. It is sad that January of 2017 has started off with just as many shootings as January of 2016—and 2016 was the most violent year for Chicago with nearly 700 gun deaths last year.

But Dante holds the belief that I do, that nothing stops a bullet like an opportunity. And each year, he has been a lead staffer on my team in coordinating a youth job and resource expo in the Second Congressional District.

Through this work, Dante has helped me leave a mark in offering economic opportunity, mentorship, and job readiness training to thousands of Chicagoland youth, helping to ensure the success of the next generation.

He will be gone from my office, but his service continues. Congratulations, Dante, and continued success to his wonderful wife and his brilliant daughters, Jordan and Payton.

I am honored to have the privilege to have worked with you. And on behalf of the families of the Second Congressional District, thank you so much for a job well done.

CHICAGO GUN VIOLENCE

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, last month, as I mentioned, Chicago suffered just as many gun shootings as the year before, and 2016 was a record-setting month itself.

I have come to the floor countless times to draw attention to this epidemic. Last week, President Trump threatened to send in the Feds in response to the carnage. It was very disheartening to hear and see on the news that my colleagues made jokes at their Republican retreat last week about this.

This morning, he spoke at the National Prayer Breakfast. In that vein, I remind him of the Gospel of Matthew: violence begets violence; hate begets hate.

The proper response is not threat of more force, increased demonization, or further withering of police-community relations.

More cops on the beat alone is not the solution. It is mentorship, job training, and increased economic development.

Nothing stops a bullet like an opportunity. I keep an open invitation to President Trump to visit my district so he can learn this himself and speak to those in the trenches, and those victimized by gun violence, instead of just demonizing in 140 characters from the safety of the White House residence.

REAFFIRM INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCES

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Our international alliances are vital to U.S. security. Allies like Australia have never failed to answer the U.S.'s call for help. For decades, Australia and the U.S. have cooperated on everything from military and intelligence to diplomacy and trade.

Yet, now, as we face increasing tensions in the Asia Pacific, President Trump seems determined to promote instability and uncertainty.

To assist with the rebalance to Asia, the United States has 2,500 marines stationed in Darwin. This forward posture allows the U.S. greater operational flexibility and military integration with Australia.

I encourage President Trump to coordinate more closely with the State Department so he can fully understand the delicate balance of international affairs.

Historical tensions between countries like Taiwan and China, and India and Pakistan require particular attention to historical precedents and agreements.

The U.S. will gain nothing by projecting uncertainty or hostility toward our allies. They have sent their sons and daughters off to war on our behalf and formed bonds on the battlefield that will never be forgotten.

I urge my colleagues to reaffirm our international alliances and reject efforts by the administration to undermine decades of peace and security.

HONORING DR. CAROL MITCHELL

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

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to commemorate African American History Month by honoring one of the exceptional Americans who resides in our district in Omaha.

Dr. Carol Mitchell's career of public service and her dedication to education has made her a true hero and an inspiration to us all.

Dr. Mitchell was born and raised in, what was at the time, a segregated Port Arthur, Texas. Her identical twin sister, Bishop Sarah Davis, graduated as covaldictorians from Lincoln High School in Port Arthur. After graduation, she attended North Texas State University in Denton. North Texas State University afforded Dr. Mitchell her first educational experience with an integrated school.

During this time, Carol had the fortune of studying chemistry and geology at Morris Brown College and at Emory University through summer education programs.

Dr. Mitchell and her sister, who also attended North Texas State University, were the first African Americans initiated into the North Texas Green Jackets, a student community service organization further cultivating Dr. Mitchell's love for public service and education.

In 1970, after graduating from North Texas State University with a bachelor of science in secondary education, Dr. Mitchell married her husband, Glenn Mitchell, and moved to Omaha, Nebraska. In Omaha, she continued her work in public service, teaching science and chemistry for 15 years at Omaha Burke High School, culminating as the supervisor of all science education for the entire Omaha public school system.

In 1991, Dr. Mitchell took an instructor position at the University of Nebraska Omaha, and for the next 22 years, Dr. Mitchell educated future science teachers in the college of education. It was during this time that Dr. Mitchell earned her doctoral degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Dr. Mitchell's public service went far beyond just the Omaha and Midwestern region, to include work and study abroad. Among her many postdoctoral accomplishments, she twice had the honor of working at Oxford University in England and through her service with the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and she conducted Summer Science Institute courses in chemistry and biology for students and teachers and countries across Southern Africa.

Since 1991, she has received 21 awards, including the STEM Legacy Award from the Empowerment Network earlier this year, and the UNO Alumni Excellence in Teaching Award in 2009.

Dr. Mitchell has led a vibrant and inspiring life of public service in education and has worked to enrich the lives of all of her students and coworkers through her love of science and education.

Her many accolades and awards throughout her life as a student, educator, and public servant attest to the legacy she has left.

Though starting life with the challenges of a segregated community, she has persevered to obtain the epitome of success and enhance our communities and Nation. Undoubtedly, Dr. Mitchell has had a lifetime of influence, and her legacy will endure for many generations to come.

IMPORTANCE OF ANIMAL WELFARE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today we are starting efforts to reformulate the Animal Protection Caucus here for this Congress. I have been pleased for several years to serve as the

co-chair. Last Congress, it was with our friend Congressman MIKE FITZPATRICK from Pennsylvania—a bipartisan effort involving over 130 men and women in Congress who are dedicated to efforts of animal protection.

The welfare of animals says a lot about us. Animal abuse is often a precursor to domestic violence. We find that the health and welfare of animals in our communities speak to the environmental protections. We find that people who are able to deal meaningfully with animal welfare have a chance, in many cases, to have benefits that go far beyond what you would imagine.

Animals have a capacity to have a calming influence on people. We see this as volunteers bring pet rabbits to nursing homes to be able to deal with people. Animals have a way of reducing people's blood pressure. It is a great symbiotic relationship.

Here in Congress, we have a wide variety of areas that we can work on together to advance animal protections. We have strengthened laws against animal fighting. We have raised awareness about the barbaric practice of horse soring injuring them to produce the distinctive gait. We promote humane treatment of animals in agricultural research, to be able to reduce the harmful effects on animals in production of cosmetics.

We have bipartisan legislation that would allow people to have their animals at domestic violence shelters, or for emergency services.

One of the things that was most jarring for me, illustrated by what happened with Katrina—2005 hurricane in New Orleans—that there were times where people would not abandon their home because they were afraid of what would happen to their puppy.

We have seen women who are in a situation of domestic violence refuse to leave their abuser because they are afraid of what is going to happen to their kitten that would be left behind.

I am pleased that, in this Congress, the Republican co-chair is going to be my friend Congressman VERN BUCHANAN from Florida. VERN brings to this issue personal passion, energy, and new ideas. And I am quite confident we will continue the efforts with the caucus to be able to promote animal welfare, promote understanding on Capitol Hill.

We have had, on a monthly basis, bipartisan briefings of legislation with Republican and Democratic cosponsors that garner broad support. And I am hopeful together that this can be, in a time when there is more than a little contention and controversy—that this is an area that we can come together to work on, on Capitol Hill.

We are supported by organizations like the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Animal Welfare Institute, Born Free, The Humane Society; representative of the over 25,000 organizations across the country that are dedicated to animal protection.