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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Gracious and merciful God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

As the 115th Congress draws near a close, we are reminded by Scripture that for every thing, there is an appointed time:

A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
A time to mourn, and a time to dance. . . .

A time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces. . . .

A time to be silent, and a time to speak.

In the people's House there is also a time to win an election and a time to lose; a time to be sworn in and a time to retire.

While it may be difficult to go through such transitions, we know, as did the author of Ecclesiastes, that the time does come to say good-bye to those who will be missed dearly for, indeed, in electoral politics, that is just the way it is.

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.

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

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

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a

quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. TORRES 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 five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HAPPY TRAILS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it has been the honor of my life to serve in Congress.

Today, I am reminded of why I came here in the first place. Thomas Jefferson said it quite well: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of happiness . . . Governments"—that would be us—"are instituted among Men" to secure those rights.

Mr. Speaker, that is our mission statement: Congress is the protector of freedom and liberty. Congress must make sure that the bell of Liberty rings loudly and strongly, for the American bright star is the beaming

beacon of hope: the hope that all oppressed peoples yearn to possess.

So, in my final words as a Member of Congress in this House of Representatives, Congress must hold fast to these truths: that in God we must trust and be faithful servants of the sacred constitutional principles of freedom of religion, speech, press, and assembly, for this is our eternal duty.

Happy trails.

And that is just the way it is.

HONORING HELEN WITTY

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate my constituent Helen Witty on being named the national president of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, also known as MADD.

Helen, along with her husband, John, experienced the ultimate tragedy when their 16-year-old daughter, Helen Marie Witty, shown in this photo with her brother John was killed by a young drunk and drugged driver while she was rollerblading on a bike path near her home in Pinecrest in June of 2000.

It was not long after that nightmare that Helen joined this magnificent organization where she was able to channel her unbearable loss into a forward-looking outlet where she could be a champion for her daughter's legacy, while also making an effective and positive impact on society.

Although 18 years have passed, it seems like just yesterday that we lost our bright, beautiful Palmetto Senior High School honors student who became a beloved treasure in our hometown and who is still widely talked about and referenced throughout our community today.

Helen, congratulations on this incredible achievement, and this opportunity is rightfully deserved to spread your message that it is a crime to drive drunk and drugged.

□ 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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South Florida is fortunate to have Helen, and I am confident that Helen Marie is looking down from Heaven and could not be any more proud of you.

Thank you, amiga.

SAUDI WAR CRIMES IN YEMEN

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, millions of American families will be enjoying the bounty of our great Nation at this very special time of the year without realizing that their tax dollars are subsidizing Saudi war crimes in Yemen.

It is estimated that every 10 minutes, another Yemeni child dies from starvation, disease, or bombs made in America. President Trump has basically delegated his policy in this region to the Saudis, even after the murder and dismemberment of an American resident directly linked to the crown prince. That has not been enough to alter American policy.

So today, once again, a number of us are calling directly and respectfully on Speaker PAUL RYAN to stop the blockade on behalf of President Trump and allow this House to vote—vote now—on what has already been approved by the United States Senate on a strong bipartisan basis, a resolution to withdraw U.S. support from the Saudi forces in the murderous war in Yemen.

Let's stop America's role in the worst humanitarian disaster in the world today.

FAREWELL

(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. Mr. Speaker, it is not easy to summarize 32 years in Congress, but I will try.

Politics comes from the Greek word "polites," meaning citizens, and they are the source of our country's strength.

What I remember most, what was especially meaningful, what made me feel fortunate were the colleagues I served with, the people I worked with, and the constituents we helped.

To my colleagues, thank you for your public service. You didn't have to leave families behind or spend extra hours every week in a car or on a plane, but you did it with a genuine desire to advance America's worthy interests.

To my staff members, past and present, in the D.C. and Texas offices and on the committees I chaired, thank you for your dedication and for advising me on legislation and votes and for assisting thousands of constituents.

To my constituents, thank you for trusting me to represent you all these good years. It has been a wonderful honor.

THE WALLS IN BAGHDAD HAVE COME DOWN

(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, The Wall Street Journal last week reported that the "Baghdad Blast Walls Come Down." It explained that "the Iraqi Government marked the first anniversary of the Islamic State's defeat Monday by reopening parts of Baghdad's Green Zone." Iraqi forces, along with support from the U.S.-led alliance, reclaimed the last of Islamic State territory last December.

The article notes that "the changes at the Green Zone reflect declining violence across Iraq that is particularly tangible in Baghdad, and further states that: 'Over 1,000 streets in Baghdad have been reopened during the past 2 years, with 70,000 segments of concrete blast wall removed. The number of civilians killed across Iraq by terrorism, violence, and armed conflict in November fell to its lowest level in 6 years, according to the United Nations.'"

As a grateful dad who has had two of my four military sons serve in Iraq, I am particularly happy for the Iraqi people.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and may we never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA IN PROSPECT PARK

(Ms. WILD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WILD. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, volunteers across the country honored fallen servicemembers on National Wreaths Across America Day. While the focal point of this national day of remembrance is the laying of wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery, ceremonies also took place at local cemeteries across the country.

I had the honor of participating in a wreath-laying ceremony in Prospect Park, Pennsylvania, a tiny borough no more than a mile square, in Delaware County. On a raw and rainy Saturday, 2 weeks before Christmas, nearly 50 community members turned out to lay wreaths upon veterans' graves at an historic cemetery atop Prospect Hill. Among those honored was George Wood, a soldier who lost his life at Gettysburg on July 7, 1863.

As we stood in the drizzle, listening to "Taps," I thought about the many ways in which people served their communities. Obviously, those who serve in our Armed Forces commit to providing the ultimate service. But on that hilltop last weekend, there were so many others willing to spend the time to step up with their neighbors, honor the sacrifice of others, and bring a community together.

I want to recognize Joyce Foresman-Capuzzi, the nurse who learned about

the Wreaths Across America program and brought her neighbors together to have it in Prospect Park. I want to recognize Reverend Chris Hensley Terrell, the pastor of Prospect Hill Baptist Church, which hosted the event.

But the event wouldn't have been the success that it was without the participation of other volunteers, the members of the Prospect Park Borough Council, the Prospect Park Volunteer Fire Department, and local veterans and their families. There was also great support from the local elementary school principal and students at Prospect Park Elementary, many of whom helped lay wreaths.

I want to thank all these community members for allowing me to participate in their ceremony, and I thank them for their service.

SYRIA

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

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise on the House floor to object to President Trump's decision to withdraw all U.S. troops from Syria.

I encourage the President to remember the poor decision of the Obama administration in 2011, when the United States announced its withdrawal from a "stable Iraq." ISIS is not defeated and may have as many as 30,000 fighters remaining in Syria. Atrocities being committed by the brutal dictator, Assad, and his henchmen, including Russia and Iran, will now continue with impunity. This opens the door for Iran to consolidate gains.

I am especially concerned with the tragic consequences this will have months and years down the road. The United States policy in Syria must ensure the lasting defeat of ISIS, roll back Iranian influence, and achieve a political solution to the crisis.

I echo the late John McCain and his message from 2011, as it applies today. This decision is a "sad case of political expediency supplanting military necessity."

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 88, SHILOH NATIONAL MILITARY PARK BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT AND PARKER'S CROSSROADS BATTLEFIELD DESIGNATION ACT; PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 24, 2018, THROUGH JANUARY 3, 2019

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1180 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1180

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to take from the