

aggressive naval resurgent activities, as well as other combatant commands around the world.

So the wisdom of my predecessor, and certainly the State of Connecticut, to site a Navy base—a submarine base—now, today, in a place that is very strategic in terms of critical regions of the world is still paying important dividends for our national defense.

As I am standing here today, there is a ceremony that is taking place to commemorate Congressman Brandegee's vision, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles' participation, and all the great service that has taken place in the wake of that historic moment.

So to all of you up in the State and to all of the 10,000 sailors that serve at the Groton Navy Base today, I thank you for keeping this incredible legacy and important future mission alive because our national defense depends on it.

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 10 o'clock and 31 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Chaplain Scott Foust, U.S. Air Force, Arlington Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia, offered the following prayer:

Gracious Lord, when King David of old faced a seemingly insurmountable mountain of problems to solve, questions to answer, and obstacles to overcome, he uttered a brief yet powerful prayer: "Hear my cry for help, my King and my God, for to You I pray."

Similarly, after our very first President and Commander in Chief took his very first oath of office, he must have felt the weight of the daunting task before him, so he went off script and uttered a brief yet powerful prayer: "So help me God."

I can only begin to imagine the weight of care and the gravity of concern that this body carries, day after day, publicly and privately. With that in mind, before this session begins, we pause to acknowledge our utter dependence upon You, O God, and we humbly echo that powerful sentiment with this brief prayer: Help us, Lord. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's pro-

ceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. 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. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. 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 gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HIGGINS of New York 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.

WELCOMING CHAPLAIN SCOTT FOUST

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Chaplain Scott Foust for his opening prayer and message this morning.

Scott resides in Virginia's First District and serves as an Air Force chaplain at Arlington National Cemetery. He has answered the call to serve by helping Air Force families lay loved ones to rest at Arlington National Cemetery, both through coordinating funeral arrangements and providing grief counseling. He served as a pastor for 12 years before receiving a direct commission in 2007.

God calls on us to serve Him in many ways, and I commend Chaplain Foust on his service to our Nation, our airmen, and their families. I pray for Christ's guidance as the House convenes and we try to do His will in serving the American people.

May God always bless Chaplain Foust and his family as they continue to spread Christ's Word and remain a light within the community.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIANFORTE). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

THANKING GEORGE ELLIS FOR DEDICATED SERVICE TO PENNSYLVANIA

(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. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Mr. George Ellis for his dedicated service to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

At the end of March, George retired as the executive director of the Appalachian Region Independent Power Producers Association. He served in the role since 2015.

The organization has accomplished much during that time, and a lot of credit goes to George for his dedicated efforts and service.

George started his career in 1974 as a staff member, and shortly thereafter, became executive director of the House of Representatives' Mines and Energy Management Committee.

In 1982, George accepted the position of executive vice president of government affairs with the Keystone Bituminous Coal Association, which in 1988 became the PA Coal Mining Association.

In 1996, George was appointed president of the Pennsylvania Coal Association before joining ARIPPA in 2015.

Mr. Speaker, George Ellis has been a highly respected resource in the Pennsylvania coal industry, and his knowledge and dedication are unparalleled. He has had a long and outstanding career, and I wish him the best in his well-deserved retirement.

STUDENTS ARE UNITED IN THEIR FIGHT TO GET WEAPONS OF WAR OFF OUR STREETS

(Mr. HIGGINS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, 8 weeks ago, a lone gunman entered the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, and in just 6 minutes, killed 17 students and staff and injured 17 others: 1 shooter, 6 minutes, 17 dead, and 17 injured.

In the weeks since, I have stood alongside students at the March for Our Lives in Buffalo, New York, sat down and listened to students from schools across western New York, and participated in a town hall panel discussion by Students for Action.

These students are respectful of the Second Amendment and of those good, law-abiding citizens of gun ownership.

Congress can learn from the thoughtful, reasoned, respectful, and passionate approach demonstrated by each of the students I have encountered. They have come from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and different communities, rural, suburban and urban, but they are unified in their fight to get weapons of war off our streets and to end mass school shootings.

Mr. Speaker, we can come together to save lives.

COMMENDING SERGEANTS CHARLES JEFFERS AND GERALD "JAKE" STOFKO

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

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the careers of Sergeants Charles Jeffers and Gerald "Jake" Stofko of the Johnstown Police Department.

Sergeant Jeffers valiantly served the Johnstown community for 48 years, forging a legacy of bravery in public service.

Sergeant Stofko's 25-year-long career with the Johnstown Police Department is one marked by excellence and dedication. Spending the majority of his career working the midnight shift, the Johnstown residents could sleep soundly knowing that Sergeant Stofko was on watch.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank and congratulate these brave officers for their combined 73 years of service and commitment to protecting the people of Johnstown. I wish them both the best as they move forward into the next chapter of their lives.

REPUBLICAN TAX GIVEAWAY INCREASES DEBT BY \$2.1 TRILLION

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the Congressional Budget Office revealed that the Republican tax giveaway to corporations and the wealthiest Americans will increase our debt by \$2.1 trillion.

Over the next 10 years, our debt will equal 105 percent of our gross domestic product, according to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

And the Republicans' idea to close this gigantic increase in the deficit is to make massive cuts to Medicare, Social Security, and Medicaid. They want seniors to sacrifice their retirement security and their dignity in order to pay for a Republican tax giveaway.

President Trump's budget for fiscal year 2019 cuts \$500 billion from Medicare, \$1.4 trillion from Medicaid, and \$72 billion from Social Security disability insurance, and that still isn't enough to balance the budget. So they will, of course, continue to propose cuts to education, veterans, working people, and other critical resources for families across America.

This is shameless. The American people are going to see right through this. A gigantic tax cut for the richest people in this country, the most powerful corporations, and now the Republicans are trying to make seniors pay for it by cuts to Medicare, Social Security, and Medicaid. Shame on them.

MONTANA IS BENEFITING FROM THE TAX CUTS

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

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to let colleagues know that the tax cuts are working in Montana.

For the last 2 weeks, I met with hard-working Montanans who are benefiting from tax cuts.

Owners of the Billings Flying Service are investing in new equipment, as well as more research and development.

Workers at the UPS facility in Missoula are receiving expanded benefits and more money in their paychecks.

The owner of KFC restaurants throughout Montana gave employees a raise, boosted starting wages, and plans renovations for many of its facilities.

Owners at Loenbro in Great Falls are increasing benefits and investing in new equipment.

A farmer near Bozeman plans to double his food processing staff from 6 to 12.

Mr. Speaker, the tax cuts are working in Montana and throughout the country. They are leading to job creation, bigger paychecks, greater investment, higher wages, and economic growth. We must remain focused on policies to encourage growth, optimism, and the American Dream.

THE FARM BILL MUST PROTECT NUTRITION PROGRAMS

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

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, every day, over 162,000 people in my county of Mecklenburg are considered food insecure. Worse, 47,000 of those are children who risk going to bed hungry every night.

No one should have to wonder where their next meal will come from.

In 2015, I founded the Adams Hunger Initiative to bring together a coalition of advocates in Mecklenburg to end hunger in our community.

For over 3 years, we fought to protect important anti-hunger programs like SNAP, expand public-private partnerships, and find creative ways to the systemic issues that leave families hungry.

The coalition will visit Capitol Hill to continue advocating for our priorities.

During National Nutrition Month, we sent a letter to the chairman and ranking member of the House Agriculture Committee urging protection for SNAP benefits in the upcoming farm bill.

Thirty-five thousand households in Mecklenburg and 20.3 million nationwide rely on SNAP to put food on their family's table.

As Congress considers the next farm bill, we must protect nutrition programs for those who need them most

and ensure that no one in Mecklenburg or in America goes hungry.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR EQUAL PAY DAY

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of Equal Pay Day.

The Equal Pay Act became law more than 50 years ago, and today women comprise almost half of the American workforce. They serve in our hospitals, schools, and our factories. They are executives at major corporations. They are doctors, they are lawyers, and they serve in countless other occupations that make our economy one of the greatest in the world.

Yet, women are still disadvantaged by the gender wage gap. They are compensated at only 80 cents for every dollar earned by a man.

This must not continue. It is unjust, it prevents a fair and productive economy, and is something that we need to close, this gap. Closing the wage gap is an economic imperative.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIANFORTE) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 11, 2018.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on April 11, 2018, at 10:56 a.m.:

That the Senate agreed to S. Res. 455. Relative to the death of the Honorable Daniel K. Akaka, former United States Senator for the State of Hawaii.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

□ 1215

ELECTING A MEMBER TO A CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Republican Conference, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 814

Resolved, That the following named Member be, and is hereby, elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY: Mr. Rothfus.
The resolution was agreed to.