

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman WILSON for leading the Special Order on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. I will agree with him; the Lord has blessed me with living in one of the most beautiful places in the world, the Fifth District of North Carolina. I am very, very grateful for it.

Last week, tax day was, for once, an occasion to celebrate because this was the last time Americans filed under the broken 32-year-old Tax Code. Next tax season, they will file under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act passed by this Congress last December.

Across the Fifth District of North Carolina, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act has already relieved North Carolinians who are cashing bigger paychecks and benefiting from the country's lowest unemployment rate since 2000. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, North Carolina added 9,000 jobs this February alone. And thanks to lower rates for individuals and small businesses under the new code, North Carolinians are keeping more of their hard-earned money. And as Congressman WILSON points out, it is their money, not the government's money.

This year, married couples in the Fifth District who take the new standard deduction could receive a tax cut to the tune of \$1,834. For the over 52,000 taxpayers of the Fifth District who have small business income, these tax savings are not crumbs, as my colleagues on the other side of the aisle falsely assert. A restaurant owner in Mount Airy recently told me that allowing immediate capital expensing under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act empowered her to purchase a new \$20,000 piece of equipment for her business.

You spoke of the Business Roundtable. The Business Roundtable reports that 68 percent of business leaders similarly expect their capital spending in the next 6 months to be at its highest in 15 years. This increased purchasing power for the backbone of our economy is evidence that progrowth tax cuts work.

Continued growth is also expected by the Congressional Budget Office. The CBO estimates, for every one-tenth percent increase in GDP, nearly \$270 billion is added to revenue over 10 years. After years of malaise under the Obama administration, even modest increases in GDP growth caused by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will substantially contribute to a leveling off of the deficit. And for the first time since 2008, the CBO's budget and economic outlook revised its upward economic potential for 2018. Under current conditions, it notes that 3.5 percent growth is possible.

In further good news, Fifth District businesses share this optimism and are investing more in their employees and communities. Just last week, as part of its initiative to invest in community health with its tax savings, BlueCross and BlueShield of North Carolina gave \$1 million to Winston-Salem State University's nursing school. North Caro-

lina is projected to have the second largest nurse shortage in the Nation. This investment will develop the Fifth District's medical workforce and increase access to high-quality healthcare, especially in rural areas.

This is just one of the many examples that illustrates how philanthropy has fostered and communities are developed when the government scales back.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that House Republicans kept our promise to bring about more jobs, fairer taxes, and bigger paychecks for hardworking Americans; but I am more proud of the hardworking men and women in the Fifth District who are seizing the opportunities unleashed by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to create wealth and serve their communities.

Again, I thank Congressman WILSON for his leadership on this Special Order and for allowing us to correct the record that has been distorted about this bill and bring to the American people the facts about this wonderful Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairwoman VIRGINIA FOXX for her comments. And I thank her, as an educator, for educating the American people and bringing to the attention of the American people the real facts of the benefits of the tax cuts.

Congress today appreciates that Americans should keep their hard-earned tax dollars, and it is shocking to hear the other side of the aisle say that they would repeal the tax cuts if they get a majority in the House come November, resulting in tax increases on American families, destroying jobs. Sadly, I suspect a lot of families and businesses being highlighted today will be shocked—but maybe not so shocked—to hear that Democrats are campaigning on raising taxes, destroying jobs.

I sincerely hope that Americans across the country know that Republicans will continue to do all that we can to our ability to increase take-home pay to families, reduce the tax burdens on seniors, and create more efficient and effective government that works for you and provides opportunities for the young people of America.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Carolina?

There was no objection.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

REFORMING U.S. CANNABIS POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CURBELO) for 30 minutes.

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am here this evening to emphasize the importance of reforming our Nation's policies concerning cannabis. This issue has grown to be increasingly bipartisan over the years, yet some in this administration have largely ignored the rising public support for legal, State-regulated cannabis.

□ 2030

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ), a distinguished colleague from the panhandle.

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from the Sunshine State of Florida for yielding, and I am so grateful that we have been able to find some areas of common ground in this Congress on the issue of cannabis reform.

I am very proud, Mr. Speaker, to announce that, in the coming days, I will be joining the Judiciary chairman, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), in introducing legislation that enjoys support from across the ideological spectrum, and it will do several important things:

First, it will increase the number of people who are growing medical-grade cannabis for research purposes.

Second, it will end the gag rule at the VA that precludes physicians from being able to consult and speak with their patients about the laws in their particular States.

Third, it will create a safe harbor so that some of the finest medical institutions and universities in this great country will be able to research and partner with private sector entities to determine the potential that medical cannabis can have to improve people's quality of life.

And finally, this legislation will end the prohibition from having commercial, for-profit entities working in concert, in collaboration with some of those very universities and medical institutions.

So my hope is that by focussing first on the issues that bring us together, we will be able to advance legislation to democratize medical cannabis research, and that, ultimately, can unlock cures and unlock potential for a generation of Americans that shouldn't be lied to by their government about the potential health benefits of cannabis.

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership, his honesty, and his sincerity on this issue, and I am proud to say that I have cosponsored this legislation.

Now I will yield to one of the original cosponsors of Mr. GAETZ's legislation and one of the great leaders in this institution on this issue for many years, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), who has been educating colleagues and the American public on

cannabis. Tonight, I am pleased to be joined by him here on the floor and to yield to him.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Florida's courtesy in permitting me to join him on this Special Order this evening. I appreciate the partnership that we have had on the Ways and Means committee and dealing with these issues publicly.

It is true, I cosponsored the legislation that our aforementioned friend, Mr. GAETZ, referenced. I have been cosponsoring and introducing legislation like this for years. In fact, my Veterans Access Amendment actually passed both the House and the Senate last Congress, only to fall victim behind the scenes of, I think, misguided action on the part of leadership.

I am pleased that we have been able to retain the Rohrabacher-Blumenauer amendment that protects State legal medical marijuana, and I look forward to working with my colleague, as I know he wants to extend those protections to all State legal efforts.

I want to say, as somebody who has spent a lot of time moving around the country working on these State campaigns, working with the industry, working with advocates, that I appreciate Mr. CURBELO's advocacy, that he is moving out of his district being involved with this conversation nationally and looking for opportunities to strengthen the position on the floor of the House.

We are in a situation now, Mr. Speaker, where we have virtually every Democrat who now supports these simple, commonsense reforms, and, in no small measure due to my friend from Florida's persuasive efforts, there are several dozen Republicans, and that number is sure to grow either before or after the next election.

This is an issue that we have watched slowly take shape. I was in the Oregon Legislature when we were the first State to decriminalize back in the 1970s, but there was sort of a hiatus for about 20 years.

There was Richard Nixon's ill-advised and, I think, unfortunate and unfair war on drugs, the Schedule I categorization of marijuana. If we were doing it over again, probably it wouldn't be scheduled at all, but tobacco would be Schedule I because it is deadly and addictive.

In the course of the last 6 years, we have watched what has happened at the State level accelerate. It has been medical marijuana since 1996. But starting in 2012 with Colorado, Washington, and, more recently, we had initiatives in Oregon, in Alaska, in the District of Columbia, we had nine States vote in 2016, and eight of them approved reforms.

I am excited to watch this accelerated progress. In fact, I think what we have seen over the last 6 weeks is unprecedented. We are watching people in both parties be able to identify things they can get behind and move forward.

We see survey research demonstrating that this is no longer a highly divisive partisan issue.

The majority of Americans support legalizing adult use. Increasingly, there is evidence that a majority of Trump voters support adult use. Medical marijuana is like the Fourth of July. It is almost universally accepted, and I think the gentleman's district, in voting on medical marijuana in 2016 in Florida, was overwhelmingly supported.

So now is the time for us to move forward. We have a bipartisan Cannabis Caucus, and I appreciate the gentleman participating in leading this. We have almost three dozen pieces of legislation. We had, this last week, a couple of things that I think were rather noteworthy.

The former Speaker of the House, John Boehner, who opposed our efforts for years, has now evolved on this issue, and he now has actually joined the advisory board of a firm in Massachusetts. Both of us are familiar with them, looking at the leadership in the industry.

We have watched Donald Trump, in the last 10 days, sort of clarify what he said on the campaign trail in 2016, that the States ought to be free to do this. He is reaffirming that and undercutting the attempt by his Attorney General Sessions to cast a pall over the State legal efforts.

We have watched the minority leader in the Senate, Mr. SCHUMER, come out supporting comprehensive legislation. I would note, for the record, it was very similar to what my colleague in the Senate, on the Senate Finance Committee, RON WYDEN and I introduced last year in a comprehensive fashion, but that is great. The more, the merrier.

What we want to do this Congress is to be able to do some simple things. The legislation that we have worked on together to allow State legal marijuana enterprises to get rid of the pernicious 280E so they can deduct their business expenses, I appreciate the gentleman's leadership and focus on that.

We ought to eliminate the restrictions that prevent robust medical research on cannabis. The Federal Government interferes with the research. There is no longer any reason for that.

And in working on this, literally, for decades, I have never met a single human being who thinks there is anything to be served by forcing State legal marijuana enterprises to be conducted on an all-cash basis.

These are things that we can change, regardless of whether or not people favor full legalization. These are simple, commonsense steps that have bipartisan support, and I look forward to working with the gentleman on that and then as we take this to the people.

We will be voting on it in Michigan, probably in Missouri. Looks like there will be a ballot measure in Utah. Other States are looking. I think the momentum is building.

I can't say enough about how much I have enjoyed working with the gentleman on these issues. I look forward to continuing that partnership so these simple, commonsense provisions that are actually supported by a majority of the people in the House and the Senate are allowed to be voted on.

I hope that he can work his persuasive ways with the Republican leadership to eliminate those roadblocks and allow the House to work its will. America will be better for it. Americans will be freer, and there will be economic opportunity, health opportunities, and less destruction of lives with ill-conceived efforts to criminalize behavior of otherwise law-abiding adults.

I thank the gentleman for his sponsorship of this conversation this evening, permitting me to be a part of it, and our partnership. I look forward to accelerating those efforts in the months ahead so that we can mark significant progress yet in this Congress, and next Congress, get it all taken care of.

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I truly admire and appreciate my colleague. He is a man of principle, but he is also someone who is always at the table trying to find common ground, trying to see how this institution can work better, how we can all work together for commonsense solutions, for what, in this case, so many Americans are asking of this institution: to allow each State to come up with its own laws, its own regulations for this industry.

So I thank my colleague very much for spending a little time with us here this evening and also for all of his work over many years, because, as he said, many in this institution are coming around on both sides of the aisle. But it is Mr. BLUMENAUER who, for a long time, led these efforts, and it was always an issue of consensus, the way it is today. So thank you very much to my distinguished colleague.

Mr. Speaker, nine States and the District of Columbia have legalized the recreational use of marijuana, and medical marijuana is legal in an additional 29 States, including my home State of Florida. Over 70 percent of Florida voters supported legalizing the use of medical marijuana in the 2016 elections, including 80.3 percent and 68.3 percent in the two counties I represent, Monroe and Miami-Dade, respectively.

As a matter of fact, the President was in Monroe County Thursday, and many people greeted him in the streets. Many of those were supporters, considering 80 percent support in that district of this issue.

On Friday of last week, a report published by the Florida Department of Health indicated the State's medical marijuana patient registry has risen to 100,576 people, a dramatic increase from the 23,350 patients registered in June of 2017. This milestone also happens to coincide with the opening of Miami Beach's first medical marijuana dispensary, Surterra Wellness.

Despite overwhelming support from the public and medical community, however, legitimate businesses such as Surtterra face financial and legal uncertainty because of a witch hunt opened up by Attorney General Sessions last year. To make matters worse, he is now hamstringing scientific research to analyze the medical applications of cannabis.

I, along with my colleagues from both sides of the aisle, have taken a multipronged approach to improving our country's irresponsible and ill-advised laws on cannabis. Congressman BLUMENAUER and I are addressing the industry's significantly disproportionate tax burden through the Small Business Tax Equity Act, legislation which provides tax parity to marijuana businesses operating in compliance with State law.

I am also working with the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GARRETT) to urge the Department of Justice to order the Drug Enforcement Administration to immediately approve additional registrations for the bulk manufacture of cannabis for exclusively federally-approved research purposes.

Compliant manufacturers are attempting to provide State and Federal Governments and medical professionals with fact-based research on cannabis' effects, both adverse and therapeutic, but their applications to do so aren't being assessed. It is difficult for me to comprehend the logic behind blocking scientific research to analyze the medical applications of cannabis because I believe it is critical for policymakers to possess objective data on the effectiveness of cannabis as an alternative treatment for anxiety, depression, pain, psychosis, post-traumatic stress disorder, opioid addiction, and epilepsy. We owe it to American patients to open up the field of research on this.

Now, the only logical explanation I can think of is that the Attorney General knows the facts of this field of research won't support his policies or the witch hunt he and his Department have been conducting on legal State-regulated operators across the country.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drug overdoses claimed nearly 68,000 lives throughout the United States in 2017 alone, with over 45,000 of those as a result of opioids, legal drugs.

An aptly timed article was published this morning by CNN Chief Medical Correspondent Sanjay Gupta in which he details the results of his investigation into the benefits of cannabis over the course of a 5-year study.

□ 2045

Though admittedly skeptical at first, after dedicating countless hours with both patients and scientists scattered throughout the globe, Dr. Gupta began to view the plant in a different light: as a source for healing instead of a gateway for substance abuse.

At the conclusion of Dr. Gupta's in-depth examination, he came to the de-

duction that "not only can cannabis work for a variety of conditions such as epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, and pain; sometimes, it is the only thing that works." Referenced in this article is an analysis conducted by researchers from the RAND Corporation, and supported by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, which showed an approximated 20 percent decline in opioid overdose deaths between 1999 and 2010 in States with legalized medical marijuana and functioning dispensaries.

Mr. Speaker, this analysis is similar to countless others I have heard that prove cannabis can quell both the disease of addiction and the pains associated with it. Now, some may view this investigation and others as if they are anecdotal, and to them I say, "Let's find out." Let's stop hamstringing Federal research of the issue and let's let the facts speak for themselves.

As I have said before in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, the best ally that illegal operators like drug cartels and drug traffickers—who do not pay taxes, who target children, who have no safety standards for their products—the best ally they have are the policies that the Attorney General has embraced. Because by continuing to hamstring Federal research, over tax, and stoke uncertainty, legally operating businesses that are State regulated, that pay taxes, that are helping patients who are suffering, can no longer compete. And when these businesses can no longer compete, people turn to the black market.

So inadvertently, I hope, the Attorney General is actually doing a great favor to the criminals operating outside the law by punishing law-abiding Americans trying to control the substance and make it safer.

So I am here today to, once again, call upon this administration to not just allow, but encourage, meaningful reform on our Nation's cannabis policies. On this issue, we have an opportunity to reinforce the 10th Amendment and ensure the Federal Government does not overstep its boundaries and supersede the will of the States. On this issue, we have an opportunity to afford businesses selling legal products the chance to contribute to our economy and create jobs, while simultaneously crippling the criminal enterprises empowered by and prospering under the Attorney General's policies. And perhaps most importantly, we have an opportunity to change—and possibly even save—the lives of Americans suffering from opioid addiction and other diseases and conditions.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of colleagues in this Chamber who say people should be able to buy whatever health insurance or get whatever kind of health coverage they want, and the government should interfere as little as possible, and I agree. But on this issue, there seems to be a hypocrisy, and many colleagues want to impose a Federal view or a Federal perspective

on States, on the people of States like Florida, who have already decided explicitly and clearly and overwhelmingly.

So I thank my colleagues who joined me here tonight, and I truly look forward to the day where this institution can legislate in a way that respects the people of Florida, respects the people of Oregon, respects the people of Colorado, and American citizens in 36 States in the union, who have spoken loud and clear.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 49 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2150

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SESSIONS) at 9 o'clock and 50 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4, FAA REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2018; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3144, PROVIDING FOR THE OPERATIONS OF THE FEDERAL COLUMBIA RIVER POWER SYSTEM; AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM APRIL 30, 2018, THROUGH MAY 4, 2018

Mr. WOODALL, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-650) on the resolution (H. Res. 839) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4) to reauthorize programs of the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3144) to provide for operations of the Federal Columbia River Power System pursuant to a certain operation plan for a specified period of time, and for other purposes; and providing for proceedings during the period from April 30, 2018, through May 4, 2018, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 51 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, April 25, 2018, at 9 a.m.