

distinction, Principal Merfeld will be considered for the Principal of the Year award.

As principal of St. Michael-Albertville Middle School West, and after 16 years with the St. Michael-Albertville school district, Principal Merfeld has built a legacy as an educator and as a leader. He goes above and beyond, serving on the district's finance advisory committee and co-chairing a working group that aims to expand math opportunities for high-achieving middle school students.

To Principal Merfeld, thank you and congratulations. Minnesota's Sixth District is grateful for dedicated educators like you.

CAPITAL ONE

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Capital One, its executive team, and its employees for their generosity and commitment to our local communities.

Since 2012, Capital One has generously donated over \$80,000 to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Minnesota to support the mission of enabling young people to reach their full potential.

In particular, a Capital One grant to fund Project Learn helps advance the goal of equipping our kids with coding skills to meet the needs of the future. Capital One recognizes the importance of STEM- and tech-related skills to the future of our Nation, and I thank them for investing in our Nation's future leaders.

Thank you, Capital One, for your commitment to the young people of central Minnesota. We are grateful for your team in our community.

RECOGNIZING ANOKA RAMSEY ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association, a volunteer service organization, committed to providing opportunity for students across all skill levels to play and compete in recreational athletics. Comprised of coaches, parents, directors, commissioners, and board members, the organization serves nearly 40,000 Minnesotans each year.

For over 40 years, Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association has sought to provide character development through competition. Selfless volunteers have donated over 300,000 hours planning, coaching, training, maintaining fields, working concessions, and overall operations to ensure that our kids have the opportunity to participate in sports like baseball, basketball, football, lacrosse, softball, volleyball, wrestling, tennis, and soccer.

To the volunteers of the Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association for your decades of service, thank you.

CONGRATULATING ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY WRESTLING

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the St. Cloud State University Wrestling team for winning this year's NCAA Division II National Championship. The young men on this team strive every year for excellence,

and for the third time in the last 4 years, it paid off. But this year was special.

For the first time in Husky history, the team also clinched four titles in one season. The Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference title, the National Duals, and Regional and National tournament titles were all achieved. The perseverance and success of our Husky wrestlers reminds us all that when you commit to excellence and you work hard, the results will follow.

Congratulations to the outstanding student athlete wrestlers of the St. Cloud State Wrestling team for your remarkable achievement and another memorable season.

RECOGNIZING TEACHERS, COACHES, AND FIRST RESPONDERS

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding teachers, coaches, and first responders who saved the life of my constituent, Ryan Monahan of Big Lake, Minnesota. Ryan, who is only 15 years old and a student at Monticello High School, unexpectedly went into sudden cardiac arrest after a basketball practice.

The quick thinking and preparedness of the people around him saved his life. A call was immediately placed to 911 and five heroic coaches and teachers worked together to use the automated external defibrillator to revive Ryan. We are grateful to all who helped save Ryan's life.

Ryan was lucky. Unfortunately, more than 7,000 Americans lose their life to sudden cardiac arrest every year. It is my hope that Ryan's story serves as a reminder to all of us of the value of being prepared for an emergency like this.

Our local community back home in Minnesota is so grateful to those who reacted so swiftly, as well as all of the first responders who saved Ryan. Thank you all.

NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

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

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last week was National Small Business Week. The end of the week brought, appropriately, not just good news, but great news:

Unemployment is now below 4 percent for the first time in nearly 20 years.

164,000 new jobs were created last month—24,000 new jobs in manufacturing and 17,000 new jobs in construction.

Nearly 3.2 million new jobs have been created since the election of November 2016;

We currently have 6.6 million job openings in the United States. This is an all-time high.

Wages for small business workers increased last month by 3¼ percent. That

is the strongest rate of increase in over 2 years.

All this, plus:

Female unemployment is at its lowest level since 2000;

Black unemployment is at its lowest level ever;

Hispanic unemployment is at its lowest level ever;

Consumer confidence is at its highest level since 2004;

Job market confidence is at its highest level ever; and

Small business confidence is at its highest level ever.

Because of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, since February, 90 percent of American workers—that is nine out of 10 American workers—have been opening bigger, less-taxed paychecks. They have more take-home pay, which means that they get to keep more of their hard-earned money to spend the way they want to spend it, not the way Washington wants to spend it.

More than 530 companies, and counting, have reinvested billions and billions of dollars into their businesses and our Nation's economy. As a result, more than 4 million American workers, and counting, have received major bonuses and/or pay raises and/or benefit increases.

This includes employees at local companies in western Pennsylvania like Erie Insurance, who gave their workers a \$1,000 bonus, and then another \$1,000 to their retirement plan. NextTier Bank did the same thing, \$1,000 to their workers. And PNC Bank, as well. There are a lot of good people who work for national companies, like Home Depot and Walmart. Walmart alone employs 4,000 people in western Pennsylvania.

Energy bills have gone down for more than 87 million of our fellow citizens in 48 States. That is an incredible lowering of their cost of living.

According to the International Energy Agency, the United States is on track to be the world's largest oil producer by 2023. The significance of this is that we no longer have to be held hostage by bad actors around the world when it comes to energy. We will be the biggest exporters of energy in the world. And when we ask other people not to buy from these folks because of their intentions of how to use that money, we can replace what they are not able to buy there with our own homegrown energy. That is an incredible advantage.

Thanks to the most recent National Defense Authorization Act—now, think about this—our sons and daughters who serve in uniform are going to be enjoying their largest pay increase in 8 years.

The facts are clear: America is winning again.

Speaker RYAN was addressing a group the other day, and I want to quote him, because I think this is so appropriate for where we are today: "We are working on reforms to get more people out of poverty and into the workforce. We

need to make sure that workers have the right skills they need to get a job and a good career.”

I am talking about a family-sustaining career, a community-building career, a career that actually allows us to dream.

Right now, our economy is thriving. Americans are right to feel good about how things are going. We have not seen those kinds of optimistic statistics in such a long, long time.

□ 1045

So we are going to keep pushing. We are going to keep pushing to close the skills gap. We are going to close the opportunity gap. We are going to make sure that all these jobs that are being made available are being filled with workers who are getting great careers and good lives and going from poverty and welfare to work.

The dignity of being able to get up in the morning and go to work, to take care of your families, to take care of your community, to take care of your churches and schools, what an incredible lift that is for the American people.

Listen, our Better Way agenda is about one thing and one thing only: it is about building stronger families, about building stronger communities, about building a stronger America. It is what we are in the middle of executing and implementing right now. We are really excited to see the great economic news that comes as a result of all these things that we have been working on.

I want you to think about something, Mr. Speaker. Never, never in at least a decade has America been winning the way we are winning today in every way and every day. America is truly winning again, and we are making America great again.

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 46 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

Reverend Andrew D. Singleton, Jr., Victory Apostolic Church, Matteson, Illinois, offered the following prayer:

We worship You, heavenly Father, for Your greatness, goodness, and glory that even the heavens cannot contain. Though You are King of Kings and Lord of Lords, You have given the responsibility of leading this country to these men and women of the House of Representatives.

May they each be led by Your spirit in every legislative decision they

make, for You are the ultimate law-giver and judge.

As they seek Your guidance, give them the wisdom, courage, integrity, faith, and unity necessary to find solutions to the multiple and complex issues facing America today. Those destiny determining issues include, but are not limited to: poverty, racism, injustice, violence, and the ever-looming threat of war.

Only as a nation under God, whose people trust in God, will America be strong and carry out its creedal principles of truth, liberty, and justice for all.

I pray God's continued blessings upon you all.

In Jesus' name, 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Gabrielle Cuccia, one of his secretaries.

WELCOMING REVEREND ANDREW D. SINGLETON, JR.

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome Reverend Andrew D. Singleton, Jr., pastor of Victory Apostolic Church in my hometown of Matteson, Illinois, as today's guest chaplain.

For more than 20 years, Pastor Singleton has been a powerful and positive force in our community working to improve the lives and futures of our neighbors while tending to their spiritual needs.

Pastor Singleton has a unique gift of communicating a message of faith, justice, and equality across generations. I could not be prouder to welcome him and his inspirational voice to Capitol Hill, especially at this critical time for our Nation.

I hope his words serve as an example and challenge to this Congress to redouble our efforts to uplift and empower families and communities.

Thank you, Pastor Singleton, for joining us and leading us in prayer.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

RECOGNIZING LUPUS AWARENESS MONTH

(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 in recognition of Lupus Awareness Month because nearly two-thirds of the public know little to nothing about the disease beyond the name.

Lupus is a drastically unpredictable disease. It has no known cause, no known cure, and it can be fatal. An estimated 1.5 million Americans are currently living with lupus, including my lovely stepdaughter, Katharine; and millions more have sadly lost their brave battle with this disease.

I have been proud to work with the Lupus Foundation for many years to raise awareness about lupus and support efforts that bring us one step closer to solving the mystery of this dreadful illness.

I encourage my colleagues to join us in the Congressional Lupus Caucus to help advance lupus research and treatment. Through new scientific breakthroughs, we will better understand this disease and help patients living with lupus.

Mr. Speaker, let us “Pump Up the Purple” this May during Lupus Awareness Month and fight for a day when no one will be diagnosed with lupus.

GROWING OPTIMISM AND CONFIDENCE FROM MONTANA SMALL BUSINESSES

(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 report that optimism among Montana small businesses is strong and on the rise. I recently concluded a tour of Montana's Main Street businesses; and as I listened to business owners, they described their growing confidence.

They talked about how progrowth reforms, which this Congress and our President delivered, are providing them and their small businesses greater certainty. They described how cutting taxes and cutting red tape are leading them to invest, create Montana jobs, and grow.

Their confidence and optimism match the national trends. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Small Business Index, which gauges optimism, hit new records in the second quarter. A survey from CNBC, which measures small business confidence, remains near its record high for the first quarter.