

Mr. Speaker, no other school has won, even, any more than three national championships in any 10-year period.

This year's victory is an extraordinary record which further cements Coach Saban's status as one of the greatest college football coaches of all times.

Likewise, I want to congratulate the players. As Coach Saban said, this was a true team victory. From running backs Bo Scarbrough and Damien Harris to wide receivers Calvin Ridley and Devonta Smith to defensive powerhouses Minkah Fitzpatrick and Raekwon Davis to true freshman quarterback Tua Tagovailoa, every player stepped up to the challenge and demonstrated resilience and grit for all four quarters and into overtime.

I also want to recognize quarterback Jalen Hurts. While he did not finish the game, Jalen led the Tide all the way to the national championships twice, with an impressive 25-2 record in his two seasons. Thank you to Jalen for his leadership and his gracious sportsmanship and being such a good sport throughout the whole game.

Finally, I want to commend the Georgia Bulldogs on a fantastic season and a hard-fought championship game. Coach Kerby Smart and the Dogs were a worthy opponent, and I know that they will give us a run for our title next season.

My friend Representative JODY HICE, who represents the University of Georgia, made a friendly bet with me before the game, and he will honor his wager this week. On Thursday, he will join me on the Capitol steps wearing a Bear Bryant houndstooth hat, as well as an Alabama tie, to commemorate and celebrate Alabama's victory.

He will also serve Georgia barbecue to my staff for lunch. I thank JODY for being such a good sport.

In closing, I want to again congratulate the University of Alabama Crimson Tide on their 17th national football title. What a game. And as we say in Alabama: Roll Tide.

ADDRESSING THE PENSION CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MCKINLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCKINLEY. Mr. Speaker, gradually, many of America's largest multi-employer pension funds are slipping into insolvency, threatening the retirement income of millions of Americans. Funds such as the United Mine Workers of America, the Central States Pension Fund, the Boilermakers, the IBEW, and over 50 others are in critical condition.

Failure of these funds would leave retirees who have paid their dues throughout their entire career without the income that they were expecting and promised.

This pending economic crisis for families could mean a loss of hundreds of billions of dollars in funds and must be avoided.

I have worked with representatives of the coal miners and the construction building trades preparing a resolution. If we fail to act soon, our options become increasingly limited and extremely expensive.

For example, the UMWA pension fund has been predicted to collapse by 2022, or sooner. But the real culprit to their pension crisis comes not from Wall Street, the management of the operations, but from right here in Washington. Environmental regulations aimed at putting coal out of business have resulted in the loss of over 470 coal mines, 350 coal-fired generating plants, and 86,000 coal jobs as a result of the bankruptcy of mining companies.

Some have suggested that the funds could fall into the Pension Benefits Guaranty Corporation, but the Pension Benefits Guaranty Corporation says it, too, is underfunded. Assuming the liability of one or more of these troubled funds will lead to their own insolvency.

H.R. 3913, the American Miners Pension Act, would allow their funds to recover by borrowing funds that will be paid back. It is important to emphasize this point. The loans are designed to be paid back. It is not a bailout.

A bipartisanship Pension Protection Caucus that I co-chair with Representatives RICHARD NOLAN and DEBBIE DINGELL shares this common goal of raising attention to this crisis before it is too late.

Congress must come together and find a bipartisanship solution that works for all of these critical funds and takes care of the families that need peace of mind.

So on behalf of the American coal miners, the Teamsters, the builders, bakers, boilermakers, and many others, we must act now.

□ 1030

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS A
THREAT TO JUSTICE EVERY-
WHERE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am always honored to stand here in the well of the House. Today is no exception. I love my country, but I am not proud of my President.

Mr. Speaker, I am saddened to say that the level of discourse in our country has been brought to an all-time low. There are people who were very much concerned when the President indicated that there would be a ban on persons from certain countries, a ban on Muslims, if you will.

There were people who were saddened when they learned that the President was of the opinion that members of the LGBTQ community could not serve in the military.

There were people who were saddened by the President's comments about SOBs playing football. Others were dis-

heartened by the President's comment with reference to Charlottesville and some very fine people being among the racists, the bigots, the KKK.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the latest commentary has really caused an international uproar. People around the world cannot believe that the President has made his latest comments. Mr. Speaker, these comments are words that are hurtful and harmful, but this is just not another person making these comments. This is the President of the United States of America.

The President of the United States of America has the ability, the power, and the wherewithal to do more than simply speak these words. These words can be converted into policy, into policy of the United States of America.

The Muslim ban comments, there was an attempt that is still going on to ban Muslim persons from certain countries.

The comments about Charlottesville were encouraging persons who were there, many of whom were interacting with persons of color, minorities, and Jewish people on their jobs and in other places. It encouraged them to continue to do those dastardly things that they do and had in mind when they were saying: "Jews will not replace us."

The comments that were made about the s---hole, or s---house, the kind of profanity that ought not emanate from the Presidency, those comments were made as there was an effort afoot to deal with immigration, to draft an immigration policy.

The President can put his comments into policy. The President can drive policy with these ugly comments. The President's comments are not only hurtful when you hear them, but they are hurtful to people who have to suffer when they become policy.

Mr. Speaker, I refuse to accept what the President is doing. I refuse to accept it because if you tolerate something, you will not change it. You will do little to change it. I am going to do everything that I can to change it, and it is within my power as a Member of the Congress of the United States of America to bring Articles of Impeachment against this President for what he has done. I have done it before, and I will do it again and again and again. I will not allow it to happen unchallenged.

I know that there are many who would say that this is not appropriate, but I can only say, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," since we are just now removed 1 or 2 days from Dr. King's celebration. We are still celebrating him in my neck of the woods. But injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

If we allow this injustice to persist, then what is happening and said in the White House is going to impact every house in this country. We must take a stand against this President and his bigoted comments.

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

REPEAL MEDICAL DEVICE TAX

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

Mr. CURTIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the burdensome medical device tax. Originally passed as part of the Affordable Care Act, this ill-conceived tax places a 2.3 percent sales tax on manufacturers of medical devices.

Although Congress successfully suspended the tax, it, unfortunately, went back into effect on January 1, 2018, and is beginning to derail much of the progress we have made to foster job growth and innovation.

The medical device industry has a significant impact in my State's economy. It employs more than 4,000 individuals. Merit Medical Systems, Inc., a local Utah company, believes this tax could cost them over \$7 million, having a devastating impact on their ability to expand jobs and continue medical research.

The current situation is a lose-lose for everybody. Not only does it increase medical healthcare costs, the tax is stifling job growth of our best medical technology innovators and slowing the cutting-edge research that leads to breakthroughs in patient care and treatment.

Surely, we can do better for the American people. I call upon my colleagues to join me and, together again, repeal this tax once and for all.

MEDICAL DEVICE TAX BURDENS HOOSIERS

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

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, after a 2-year delay, one of the worst parts of ObamaCare went back into effect at the first of this year. The medical device tax prevents Indiana companies from innovating, expanding, and hiring. This tax was created when ObamaCare was created, and that result has been a burden for the tens of thousands of Hoosier workers all over the State, including those in Warsaw, Bloomington, Mishawaka, and Indianapolis. It must be repealed.

This tax is bad for patients because it drives up the cost of much-needed medical devices, and it is bad for workers because it makes America's medical device industry less competitive around the globe.

Fortunately, this week, some relief may soon be on the way. After weeks of debate and a lot of work, the government funding bill we are voting on this week would provide immediate relief by repealing the medical device tax for another 2 years.

This result will be good for Hoosier workers and good for Indiana's econ-

omy. In the long run, repealing the medical device tax will provide certainty in the marketplace and help keep good-paying jobs in Indiana.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the 2-year repeal of the medical device tax in the bill this week, and then continue working to find a long-term solution by permanently repealing the medical device tax.

WESTERN HEMISPHERE ELECTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, the Western Hemisphere is set to see many key Presidential, parliamentary, and municipal elections this year, and those will have far-reaching implications.

Sadly, one place where we know we won't see elections is in my native country of Cuba. The Cuban people continue to be denied the right to choose their own leaders. The system in Cuba is a farce. The President of Cuba—using that term loosely—is selected by the National Assembly, and the National Assembly is selected by the regime in what can only be described as a circle of corruption.

Raul Castro claims that he will step down and allow for a transition of power in April. The reality is, even if there is a so-called transition, the balance of power will remain with Raul Castro and the Cuban people will continue to suffer.

The U.S. must not give Castro any concessions until we see the regime meet the basic conditions laid out in our laws, U.S. law. We want to help the people of Cuba work toward freedom of expression; freedom of assembly; and free, fair, and transparent elections.

Then there is Castro's protege in Venezuela: Maduro. Venezuela is set to hold elections this year, but with Maduro in power, there is little that we can expect. Even if elections are held, Mr. Speaker, we know that it will be a fraudulent process, just as the municipal elections were last year.

Maduro's grip on the supreme court and the supreme electoral tribunal make it impossible for the voice of the people to be heard. The administration has, thankfully, taken action against Maduro regime officials, but there is so much more that we can do, Mr. Speaker. There is a severe food and medicine shortage in Venezuela as a result of Maduro's failed and oppressive socialist policies.

That is why ELIOT ENGEL and I introduced and the House passed last month the Venezuelan Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Democratic Governance Act. Our bill mandates a strategy from the USAID to provide humanitarian aid to the people of Venezuela. The bill also aims to fight widespread corruption among Venezuelan govern-

mental officials. I hope that our colleagues in the Senate will take action and pass this measure so we can get help to these individuals rapidly.

Mr. Speaker, Brazil is another country that has important Presidential elections this year. With public opinion at an all-time low, increasing public debt, and high-profile corruption allegations reaching the highest levels in Brazil, the country is at a crossroads.

In December 2016, the Department of Justice reached a plea agreement with Brazilian conglomerate, Odebrecht, for at least \$3.5 billion in global penalties to resolve charges of bribery and what has amounted to be the largest case of its kind in history.

Last January I wrote a letter to then-Attorney General Lynch urging the DOJ to disclose the names of the officials referenced in the Odebrecht case. I again followed up this month, but, unfortunately, the Department of Justice will not disclose the names of officials in Latin America that it knows to have been involved in these corruption schemes. It is very troubling because many of these officials could very well be standing for elections in the region this year.

Mr. Speaker, we worked so hard over the years to help root out corruption in these countries, and it would be a shame to set progress back if these corrupt officials are allowed to continue to act with impunity.

We will also see critical Presidential elections in Colombia this year. Colombia is still at a pivotal point in the aftermath of the failed agreements between the government and the terror group, FARC. Colombia still has a way to go in bringing justice to the victims of the FARC. With members of the FARC, a terror group, aspiring to government positions, I worry that FARC terrorists will soon be elected officials. Their so-called peace deal allows these terrorists to run for public office.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, this year will be a crucial year. It is crucial for the United States to be engaged and for election observation missions to monitor the electoral process closely to ensure that they are indeed free, that they are fair, and that they are transparent.

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 42 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.