

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

Reverend Dan Spexarth, St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Wichita, Kansas, offered the following prayer:

O Lord, our God, we ask You to abundantly bless these dedicated public servants and assist them in their tireless work on behalf of all Americans.

Give them clear minds to know Your will and understanding hearts, like King Solomon, to govern this vast people.

Fill them with courage and resolve and deep humility. Help them to listen attentively to one another and to work diligently with one another to find solutions to the challenges we face as a Nation. So many have worked so hard for so long. Let them not be dismayed or disheartened.

May the Prince of Peace protect the brave men and women of our military, deployed throughout the world. Please watch over their families here at home.

We give You praise, O Lord, and we give You thanks for our many blessings, especially our most precious gifts of life and liberty. We pray.

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. LAMALFA. 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. LAMALFA. 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The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.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 Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WALDEN 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 REVEREND DAN SPEXARTH

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I have the great privilege to introduce the House to our guest chaplain, Father Dan Spexarth of Wichita, Kansas. As an ordained minister for more than 30 years, Father Spexarth has served six parishes in our community, including St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church in Wichita since 2008.

Father Spexarth was born and raised on a wheat farm near Colwich, Kansas. And after graduating from the seminary, we are fortunate Father Spexarth returned to our community.

Father Spexarth has been a tireless servant of God, leading an active parish committed to serving those in need in our community and throughout the world. As Congress addresses many complex issues facing our Nation, I am humbled by the opportunity to host Father Spexarth and thankful that we can join together in prayer for our country.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming Father Dan Spexarth, and thank him for offering today's opening prayer in the U.S. House of Representatives.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

PARDON STEVEN AND DWIGHT HAMMOND

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

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to raise an issue that would "shock the conscience." Those are not my words. Those are the words of a distinguished Federal judge when he refused to sentence two ranchers in my district to 5 years in prison. Judge Hogan looked at the case and he said: That is not right. It would "shock the conscience."

This Friday, the younger of those two ranchers will mark his fourth year in prison for starting a fire—by the way, fire on the range, high desert, is a management tool. They were using it for that purpose. They were tried. They were convicted. They never should have been sentenced to this.

The Obama administration came back and resented them to 5 years for 139 acres. We burn hundreds of thousands of acres every year. The government starts fires that burn onto private land. Nothing seems to happen.

It is time for the President to review this situation and to grant a pardon to

Steven and Dwight Hammond, pull them back together with their families. They have served long enough.

This is an issue that shocks the conscience. It is time for real justice, and President Trump can administer that.

AMERICA IS MEASURED BY GOODNESS AND PASSION

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

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, the communities I represent in Buffalo and western New York have a long, proud tradition of welcoming immigrants and refugees from all over the world. We are a city of good neighbors in a Nation of immigrants.

The Trump administration's imposition of a Muslim travel ban, proposals to build a wall, and egregious policy to terrorize kids and tear families apart appeals to the tribal instincts of the weak and the paranoid among us.

Americans respect the rule of law, hard work, and hard truth. We are measured as a Nation by power and strength, certainly, but equally by goodness and compassion.

These are the values that made America great again, again, and again.

CONGRATULATING MIKE EARL SMITH FOR WINNING THE TRIPLE CROWN

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

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, the Triple Crown is one of the most significant achievements in all of sports, but especially in the sport of horse racing.

In fact, it is such a rare achievement that only 13 times since 1875 has it been accomplished. This year, Mike Earl Smith, also known as "Big Money Mike," jockeyed his thoroughbred horse, Justify, to achieve the Triple Crown.

Now, the Triple Crown, in order to win it, you must win the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness Stakes, and the Belmont Stakes all in the same racing season. And Mike did just that. It was only the second time in the last 40 years that it has occurred.

Mike is the oldest jockey to ever win the Triple Crown. He was born in Roswell, New Mexico, and raised on a farm outside of Dexter, New Mexico. He has been racing since age 11. He won his first professional race in 1982 at the Downs at Santa Fe.

At one point, he broke his back and returned from that. In 2003, he was inducted into the National Museum of Racing Hall of Fame; in 2013, into the New Mexico Sports Hall of Fame. Winner of nearly 5,500 races, these three this year set Mike into the history books.

Congratulations, Mike.

RECOGNIZING THE FOOD BANK OF EASTERN MICHIGAN

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, today I want to recognize the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, an incredible non-profit organization in my hometown of Flint that is working to end hunger in the communities across my district. Each year, the food bank distributes more than 28 million pounds of food through 22 counties.

In addition to providing that assistance, the food bank is doing important work to study poverty in America. It is clear through their work that the way we measure poverty in America doesn't give us the full picture. The way we look at poverty is incomplete.

Many families in Michigan technically are above the Federal poverty level, but those families struggle to meet their basic needs, like a roof over their head, enough food on the table, and paying their utility bills.

Congress has to do more to end poverty in this country. Instead of cutting childcare programs, healthcare, and ending tax incentives like the Earned Income Tax Credit, let's help families be self-sufficient. Let's focus on creating good jobs, raising their wages, supporting families with income that allows them to not focus just on the basic needs.

This is something that we have to do. We are the richest country on the planet. We ought to be able to end poverty in America.

CONGRATULATING THE LANCASTER CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL TEAM

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

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Lancaster Catholic High School baseball team today.

The Crusaders baseball team recently claimed its first baseball championship in school history. After a remarkable 20-5 season, the Crusaders won the Lancaster-Lebanon Section 4 and District 3 titles, setting themselves up for a run at the State championship.

Sure enough, the Crusaders defeated South Side 5-1 in the PIAA 3A Championship.

In addition to the Crusaders' great offense, the highlight of the game was senior Dillon Marsh's dominating pitching performance. Marsh, who has committed to playing at the University of Kentucky next year, pitched a complete game, striking out 11 batters without allowing a single walk.

This game continued his excellent postseason performance, during which he surpassed the 100 strikeout mark for the season and threw a no-hit shutout in the State semifinals.

In summarizing his victory and the celebration with his teammates, Marsh simply stated: "It was just pure happiness."

Congratulations to the Lancaster Crusaders baseball team, the coaches, the families, and everyone at the school and in the community who supported this team along the way.

DEFEND PROTECTION OF PREEXISTING CONDITIONS

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, from his very first day in office, President Trump has worked to sabotage and repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Despite being unable to pass a repeal bill, President Trump hasn't stopped working to make it harder for people with preexisting conditions to afford coverage. Last week, HHS announced that it will allow the sale of short-term junk insurance plans that don't provide essential coverage and exclude people with preexisting conditions. Meanwhile, Attorney General Jeff Sessions argues that such protections are unconstitutional.

Mr. Speaker, it is hard to understand why the President, who promised wonderful healthcare for all, is so committed to attacking the most popular parts of the Affordable Care Act.

Constance, a constituent from my district, wrote, back during the repeal debate, that: "The ACA saved my life, as I would not be able to afford my healthcare without it."

Mr. Speaker, we in Congress need to be doing more to protect people like Constance and all of those who have been diagnosed with a preexisting condition.

We need to be doing more, not less

AGENT ORANGE DISABILITY BENEFITS FOR BLUE WATER NAVY VIETNAM VETERANS

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend my colleagues in this House for passing H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act. The legislation makes 90,000 Vietnam sea-service veterans eligible for disability pay for health issues that could possibly have been caused by Agent Orange exposure.

The truth is, we don't know for sure how many have been exposed to Agent Orange, but we owe them the benefit of the doubt that we give to Vietnam servicemembers who have served on land as well.

It is a long time coming. They pleaded with us for years to pay attention to Agent Orange, and it has been obscured for a long time. It is well-documented that some of these soldiers weren't treated very well when they returned home to this country. They finally are going to receive the respect and the care they deserve.

I want to thank our chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Dr. Phil Roe, as well as the author of this legis-

lation, my California colleague, DAVID VALADAO, for their tireless work on making this happen.

Countless veterans have developed health issues as a result of Agent Orange exposure, and it is about time we set this right for our blue water Navy vets who are eligible for these benefits that they need and their families pleaded for.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad we finally got this done for them.

RECOGNIZING LAKOTA TIMOTHY

(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 recognize an outstanding student from Coudersport, Pennsylvania, who received an award from the Potter County Conservation District for being an outstanding FFA student.

Miss Lakota Timothy is this year's recipient of the Henry Staiger Agriculture Education and FFA Award. Henry was an agriculture teacher for many years in Potter County and was instrumental in developing the conservation district.

Each year, this award goes to the most involved and outstanding Spud Growers FFA student from Coudersport High School.

Lakota is the daughter of Scott and Wendy Timothy of Sweden Valley. Throughout her FFA career, she has been involved in numerous leadership and development events, including: forest evaluation, land evaluation, environmental and natural resources, dairy evaluation, livestock evaluation, and public speaking.

She also has presented at Kindergarten Ag Day and other community events where she teaches elementary students about various agricultural topics.

Mr. Speaker, Lakota has been an excellent role model to both her peers and younger students who are interested in agriculture.

I congratulate her on this outstanding achievement and wish her the best of luck in the future.

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OPIOID EPIDEMIC

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, the opioid epidemic is taking lives at a staggering rate. In my home State of Arkansas—that has a relatively small population—more than 400 people lost their lives directly attributable to opioids in 2016, and the numbers continue to climb.

Congress has the power to prevent a major source of illegal opioids. Plain