

even before we were sworn in, my freshman colleagues and I were stuck in Williamsburg in a snowstorm. When we were stuck together, we decided to come up with a new course for our class and a new initiative called the Commitment to Civility—thanks to my colleagues, MIKE JOHNSON especially, for this brainchild.

From that day forward, we all agreed, and all of us except, I think, I believe three Members on the Democratic side, signed this with the hope of us finding a different course, finding some more civility and some more work across the aisle.

To this day, I have tried to live up to that commitment. Every bill that I have introduced that is originally sponsored, I have done with the bipartisan support of my Democratic colleagues. We have endeavored to work together on a number of initiatives, whether it is soliciting advice from other committees or the President or any kind of letter to the agencies that we represent.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say thank you to all my colleagues who signed this and who continue to live up to our commitment to civility.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in encouraging that H. Res. 400, Creating a National Day of Civility, be recognized.

□ 1745

COVERAGE OF PREEXISTING CONDITIONS

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, President Trump, along with his Republican choir here in Congress, is sabotaging your healthcare.

First, his administration put hurdles to enrollment by slashing outreach for insurance signup efforts, and then he just announced he was slashing navigator funding. Now the administration cut off key payments to insurers that helped stabilize insurance markets.

This Republican Congress repealed the requirement that everyone have insurance, which puts further strains on costs in the healthcare system. Meanwhile, Republicans in States across our Union are urging Federal courts to rule health protections for 130 million people with preexisting conditions unconstitutional.

Ohioans are staring down an 8 percent increase in premiums for 2019, and what is the Trump administration doing? Sabotaging people's healthcare.

His Supreme Court nominee has now questioned the constitutionality of key elements of coverage in the Affordable Care Act.

There are bipartisan solutions to help Americans facing the daunting task of paying rising healthcare costs. This Congress must choose people over the profits of big pharmaceutical insurance companies. Human lives hang in the balance.

MR. TRUMP SHOULD TESTIFY

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

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, Robert Mueller is conducting a criminal investigation. Mr. Trump's attorney doesn't want him to testify.

Rudy Giuliani has taken three outrageous positions: He has claimed that Mr. Trump doesn't have to testify if he doesn't think the prosecutor has a good basis for the investigation; that Mr. Trump doesn't have to testify if he doesn't think the prosecutor is being objective; and that Mr. Trump doesn't have to testify if the prosecutor doesn't already have sufficient evidence of a crime.

On this poster is a picture of Mr. Al Capone. He was forced to testify before a grand jury. Mr. Capone didn't think that there was a basis for that investigation, and Mr. Capone didn't think that the prosecutor was objective. But he testified under oath, as did President Bill Clinton, because no one is above the law. No one is immune from a subpoena, not Mr. Al Capone, not Mr. Donald Trump.

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

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS HURT THE MILITARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TAYLOR) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days 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 Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, we are here tonight to speak about how, for far too long, Congress has passed continuing resolutions that have devastating effects on our military and national security apparatus. They have hurt our maintenance, readiness, training, and contracting, causing a cascading and negative effect in extending our deployment schedules, which hurt our strong military families, who are the very foundation of our force.

Indeed, Secretary Mattis said in January 2018:

As hard as the last 16 years have been, no enemy in the field has done more to harm the readiness of the U.S. military than the combined impact of the Budget Control Act's defense spending cuts and operating under continuing resolutions.

Madam Speaker, Congress has passed continuing resolutions for 9 out of the past 10 years.

I will say, Madam Speaker, that I am encouraged, skeptical, and hopeful that Congress will move toward regular order this year and forego a continuing resolution for the defense of this Nation later this year: encouraged, because the Senate has expressed they will take up defense appropriations and move it to the floor for the first time in years; skeptical, because I am a realist, and they will attach another bill to it, which will make it tougher to get passed; hopeful, because I am an optimist. We all know it is the right thing to do, and we are pushing to make it happen.

Madam Speaker, I have the great honor of representing the district with more military and veterans than anywhere in the Nation. If anything is going on in the world, our men and women are there on the front lines, fighting for families, fighting for friends, fighting for freedom.

We, in Congress, owe them better. We must do better. We must get our acts together and lead with the courage and the spirit of our Nation, and the courage and spirit of those men and women in uniform who stand watch for us every single day.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER).

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia for his service. If you don't know, SCOTT TAYLOR enlisted in the Navy SEALs in 1997, got out, and then went back to Iraq in 2005. In Ramadi, as a Navy SEAL sniper, he was injured. And here he is now.

I thank the gentleman for doing this. Like all or most Navy SEALs, the gentleman does great when the camera is on him. As a Congressman, the camera is always on him, so he does very well in this job.

I would like to bring up one point that really struck me, because of the Budget Control Act and the continuing resolutions. The former Speaker of the House, when we passed this 9 years ago, looked us in the eye and said: This will never pass. It is too horrible. This will never happen. It is too horrible for the military. It hurts it too badly.

That is what the former Speaker of the House said. When he looked the Armed Services Committee in the eye and told them that, a lot of the Members proceeded to vote "yes" on the Budget Control Act, and that put us where we are now.

Let me tell you where the Budget Control Act has put us. In 2017, you had about 80 servicemembers die in training. That doesn't include drunk driving or falling off a cliff. But in training in the United States, all four branches of service, you had more than 80 servicemembers die last year just training.

You had 21 servicemembers die in combat. So you had 21 service people die in combat zones where they are getting shot at and fighting the enemy, and more than 80 people died back here at home just training.

The Budget Control Act and the continuing resolutions that we have been

doing have literally made it safer to go to war in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Philippines. Name your place, it is safer than training here at home. It is safer than getting in a C-130 and flying here at home. It is safer to do it overseas.

That is a sad state for our American military, and it is a sad state of affairs for this Congress.

What Mr. TAYLOR said is absolutely right. The Senate needs to work on this. We are going to pass it. We are going to get a clean bill back from them.

It would be fantastic to be able to move forward and get out of these continuing resolutions and stay out of them. Once we started this, again, it took 9 years to get to where we are now, where we are finally getting out of it with the deals that this Speaker has made and with what this Senate has done.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman again for his service and for doing this Special Order this evening.

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California, who is also a combat marine. I won't hold it against him. He is a marine, and we are appreciative of him being here and of his time in Iraq and Afghanistan in defending what we hold dear.

He is a leader on military and defense issues and national security issues here in Congress, so we truly appreciate his service then and now.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER).

Mrs. HARTZLER. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman TAYLOR for hosting this very important, special event tonight.

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I have heard too many testimonies after testimonies talking about the dangerously low level of our military's readiness.

Years of budget cuts, coupled with continuing resolutions, have prevented and delayed the modernization of our airplanes, ships, and basic equipment, while at the same time reducing the readiness of our troops around the globe.

Here is the stunning and sobering reality: Today, we have the smallest Army since before World War II, the smallest Navy since before World War I, and the smallest Air Force we have ever had. Only 50 percent of our Nation's fighter and bomber forces are able to fly, fight, and decisively win a highly contested fight, much like our forces would encounter with China and Russia.

Get this: Less than half of the Navy's aircraft can fly due to maintenance and spare parts issues. Think about that. Less than half of the Navy's aircraft can fly due to maintenance and spare parts issues.

Budget cuts and increased operations have depleted America's supply of precision ammunitions. Simply put, we are running out of bombs.

Two Navy destroyers were involved in collisions that will take years to repair, resulting in the tragic deaths of 17 sailors—17 sailors of the 80 that my colleague from California, Representative DUNCAN, just shared about, where we lost 80 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines in training accidents last year.

We lost 17 in this accident dealing with the two Navy destroyers. I saw the impact of this accident personally in September when I toured the USS *Fitzgerald* as part of an Armed Services fact-finding mission. I stood in the room where seven sailors died when their ship collided with a commercial freighter a little after 1 in the morning, tearing a huge hole in the side of the ship and flooding their room where they were sleeping with water in a little under 2 minutes, giving them very little time to escape.

It was heart-wrenching to see, and it was heartbreaking to think about the pain that the families will feel for years to come.

Sadly, these accidents were not due to an enemy attack. They were due to training lapses and poor leadership, which was exacerbated by high demand of services, combined with lack of funding for needed ships and lack of training caused by defense cuts and sequestration.

In some cases, we found out sailors are working 100 hours a week just to keep up with the training requirements and the current operations.

Our men and women in uniform deserve better. We cannot expect our sons and daughters to volunteer for the military only for them to be placed in harm's way without the proper equipment or adequate training to ensure they return home to us safely.

Congress must work to fix this problem. The 2-year budget agreement passed earlier this year increased the defense spending caps to allow our Nation's military to begin the rebuilding process. Congress took action for fiscal year 2018 by investing in critical military programs, such as increased funding for Navy ship and aircraft depot maintenance, providing an additional 24 F/A-18 Super Hornets to address the Navy's strike fighter shortage, and increased Active Duty end-strength for all the service branches.

However, our work is far from over. It is vital that we pass on-time appropriations for fiscal year 2019. Our military cannot adequately restore readiness without on-time appropriations. It is our responsibility as Members of Congress to ensure that the Department of Defense receives appropriations for fiscal year 2019 by this October 1.

The House has already passed our version of the Defense Appropriations bill, and I hope our colleagues in the Senate will act swiftly to ensure the Department of Defense is funded on time. We need their help to make this happen, and we owe it to our sailors and our servicemen everywhere.

Time is running out. We have an opportunity to get this right, and I urge the Senate to act swiftly and quickly.

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Missouri, who is a strong, principled, conservative voice on the House Armed Services Committee and a huge supporter of our military and national security apparatus. I thank the gentlewoman for her service here and, of course, to our military, and for her good work.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN).

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague and my next-door office mate. The south wing of Cannon is well guarded.

Of course, the third verse of the "Marines' Hymn" says that when all the rest of us get to heaven, they will find that the gates are guarded by United States marines. But I guarantee you, there are some snipers up there somewhere, making sure that the marines don't get taken from behind.

We have a term, or had a term because I am no longer involved with the Pentagon on a direct basis, but while working there over a long period of time, there was a term called BLUF, B-L-U-F, bottom line up front. So the bottom line up front from my remarks today is that CRs, continuing resolutions, seriously inhibit and in some cases, prevent long-term planning, training, and readiness.

We have a term that you will hear now used by the military on a daily basis: We have to be ready to fight tonight. That is not tonight next week. That is not tonight next month. That is right now and around the globe.

□ 1800

When you have a mission like the U.S. military does to protect not only our citizens here but those citizens in countries of our coalition partners around the world, we have to be able to fight tonight, and we have to be able to fight as a coalition force around the world. When you are not ready, you are not a good partner. Continuing resolutions consume time, they consume resources, and they increase the overall cost of warfighting.

DOD's mission is to protect all of our citizens by successfully executing operational war plans. These operational plans change over time due to evolving threats. Continuing resolutions prevent DOD from maintaining momentum in keeping ahead of those changing threats. Warfighting is not like a sports team where you can go 18 and 1 for the season and still claim victory. That 1 has to always be in the zero column for our military.

Training and readiness go hand in hand. The readiness comes in two forms: personnel readiness and equipment readiness. When you think about the time it takes to train a young soldier, sailor, airman, marine or coast-guardian, that can't be done overnight. Long-term planning goes into that individual training. That individual training morphs into unit training so that individual part of a unit is

ready to go and defend our Nation's interests at home and abroad.

Equipment readiness is a challenge, because when you cannot plan long term for your buys of parts, whether they be for aircraft, ships, tanks, whatever it happens to be, again, your cost goes up.

We have the responsibility as the Congress to give our Department of Defense and the Secretary of Defense the tools they need to keep our country safe. Continuing resolutions seriously hinder our capability to complete that mission.

I strongly urge the Senate to act swiftly and come to the realization that a continuing resolution is not an answer going forward for the safety and security of our country, all of its citizens, our families, and our coalition partners who rely on us when times get in dire straits.

So, Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak with you tonight, and I just want to end with one real-time, real-life anecdote.

Forty-six years ago yesterday, July 11, 1972, we saw the evidence of a successful evolving threat in Vietnam when the worst, most devastating helicopter shoot-down of the entire Vietnam war occurred. Sixty-two people perished in one CH-53 helicopter in the northern I Corps. We had not had the capability to adjust our tactics because the SA-7 missile had been introduced. That is how quickly life can change on the battlefield.

We as the Congress need to do everything possible to ensure that that doesn't happen to our Nation's warriors.

Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague not only for his service, but for his friendship.

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I would certainly like to thank the gentleman, Congressman, general, and marine—marine nonetheless—for his fantastic service to this great Nation, both then and now, as a colleague, as a fellow veteran, and as a neighbor in the Cannon building on the south end there. I thank the gentleman for his service and his steadfast support of our military men and women.

Madam Speaker, the regular use, as you have heard, of continuing resolutions impacts commanders at all levels. You have heard about more training deaths than combat deaths. I have to tell you at the service and major command levels, commanders are not allowed to start new programs, increase rates of production, or begin new military construction projects. As you move to lower echelons of command, it forces leaders into making risk determinations related to readiness and training.

Consider, Madam Speaker, Oceana Naval Base. You heard the gentlewoman from Missouri talk about parts and maintenance and half of the Navy airplanes not being able to fly. Oceana Naval Base, which resides in my district, if it were a country, it would be

the seventh largest airforce in the world.

The Air Force Combat Command is also in my district. Flying hours for many of these units have been far below the needed hours for units prepping for combat deployments.

As you heard, many of the aircraft are grounded because of maintenance and not being able to get to parts. It has taken years and will take years to recover. We are certainly not there yet.

Air National Guardsmen who volunteer at the beginning of the year are only able to have orders cut for the duration of the continuing resolution if it happens. This sometimes reduces the level of their benefits, such as their basic housing allowance. They are eligible to receive less than that because the orders get broken into separate pieces.

This really affects the ones at the lower rank, the enlisted, like what I was, those who may have military families. Again, hurting our military families which is the strong basis of structure for a strong force.

Let me give you another example. While returning from a deployment, approximately 90 airmen had unanticipated changes in their itinerary which caused additional expenses to be incurred. Since these expenses were not authorized prior to the new fiscal year, these members were not reimbursed for more than 60 days after their return. Some of the unpaid expenses ranged from just a few dollars to \$7,000 for one young airman.

Imagine, Madam Speaker, if you are a young airman, E-3, E-4, and you have a family, \$7,000 is a lot of money. It could be the difference between paying the mortgage and keeping the lights on back home, contributing to the stress of our military families.

In the weekend of January 20, 2018, there was a scheduled training weekend. The expiration of the continuing resolution caused a last-minute cancellation of an event impacting 950 airmen. Fifty of the airmen who traveled out of Langley Air Force base, also in my district, before the order was given to cancel were immediately sent home without accomplishing any training events. They may never be able to get that training back as they prepare to go to combat for this Nation.

There are some other negative impacts that we don't hear about often. The Virginia National Guard is second contributing to the war effort amongst other guard units around the country. The Reserve components make up 47 percent of our Nation's operational forces, yet they are required to cease operations during a continuing resolution while Active Duty counterparts continue training. Forty-seven percent, Madam Speaker, of our operational forces have to shut down during continuing resolutions.

Let me read a couple things that I got from the Virginia National Guard.

During the most recent shutdown that happened, 3 days, was inac-

curately reported in many media outlets as having minimal impact, to the contrary Virginia National Guard faced the following: They had last-minute notification of inactive duty training for 2,211 personnel, resulting in the absence of anticipated monthly income, which equated to 4 days of Active Duty pay.

Notifications to more than 630 full-time soldiers and airmen that their potential employment would be temporarily terminated were sent out. That affects retention. \$28,000 worth of contract actions were canceled, and a projected \$7,500 in subsequent loss as a result of these cancellations.

Missed training opportunities. During the most recent shutdown, the National Guard lost training opportunities totaled \$7.7 million, affecting expected income for 58,000 soldiers and airmen and 37,000 Federal technicians.

Aside from those losses, that contributes to mission and morale impacts. Again, the Virginia National Guard is second in the Nation contributing to the war efforts, and the Reserve components make up 47 percent of the Nation's operational forces.

Madam Speaker, we have to do better for our military apparatus. I just want to reiterate to you that I have the great honor of representing the district with more military and veterans than any congressional district in the Nation. If there is anything going on in the world, if Mother Freedom needs to be defended anywhere in the world, then our men and women are there on the front-lines fighting for family, for friends, and for freedom.

We in Congress and the Senate owe them better, and we have to do better. We have to get our acts together. We have to lead with the courage and the spirit that they have. We can make it happen, and we should push and push until we got it done.

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

PETER STRZOK'S TESTIMONY ON CAPITOL HILL

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, it has been an interesting day here on Capitol Hill. Madam Speaker, the hearing was still going on when I was just in the Cloakroom, where we had an FBI agent, one of the top supervisors, he had been in charge of foreign counterintelligence as well, and then after his outrageous bias and comments through text messages came to light, Robert Mueller relieved him from the Trump investigation and left the others who were just as biased. But it was an incredible day.

For somebody who has not just shown bias, but outrageous animus, disgust, disdain, and deploring people who voted for Trump by their smell, he