

When it comes to American leadership, we pulled out of the Paris climate accord, we ended the Cuba appeasement, we condemned and decertified the Iran deal, and Guantanamo Bay is still open with no threat of closing.

By changing the rules of engagement, trusting our generals, and unleashing our military might, he has overseen the total destruction of the ISIS caliphate. The entire world is safer because of American leadership. Through his words and deeds—most recently with Jerusalem—the world sees America leading with moral clarity and confidence again.

Mr. Speaker, tonight I will have the privilege of hearing the State of the Union that I have been waiting to hear for 7 years. Tonight we will look at an economy and a State of the Union that is as strong as Pittsburgh steel.

Our economy is roaring, and America's optimism is soaring. Our citizens are becoming more prosperous. Our law enforcement is becoming empowered and not undermined. Our military is growing stronger by the day. Our international credibility is being restored. Our friends, once again, trust us; and our enemies, once again, fear us. The whole world knows that we will also put America first.

But this is just the start. There is still much work left to be done. But as of today, the facts say it all: America is winning again.

MILITARY PAYCHECKS

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is nice to have the United States economy starting to win again. It was a great tribute to the President's leadership that we got a tax bill done that is already reaping fantastic benefits for so many across the country.

It is rather amazing to see people in some parts of the media who have taken surveys already to see if people have benefited from a tax bill that actually applies to the taxes due at the end of this year even before they get their February paycheck that will actually reflect those savings. But I guess if your goal is to undermine the President at every turn rather than to be fair and impartial media, that is the kind of thing you do in January. You do it quickly before individuals have a chance to say and know how much the tax bill will improve their lives.

It is also rather amazing to hear people from this body refer to a \$1,000 bonus as crumbs. One would think you would have to basically be a multimillionaire to think of \$1,000 as crumbs. But for those of us who cashed out most everything we had in order to come be a servant in Congress, \$1,000 is still a lot of money. It will pay a lot of bills. It is good for American families and individuals that they are able to do that.

I do want to call attention to something that my friend, Mrs. HARTZLER,

referenced, and that is the threat of paychecks not coming to our military when they are in harm's way protecting our very freedoms that allow us to debate and push through legislation.

Going back to 2011, I saw the military used as pawns in order to force—or try to force—Republicans to vote for a bad continuing resolution that broke many of our promises. I had encouraged the Speaker, at that time, that we needed to do something to make sure that our military—the military pay—was treated as our Social Security paychecks were treated where they are on automatic pilot, and even if there is a shutdown, those checks continue to go out.

I know that is a surprise to some of our seniors because, in the last administration, the President and others continually told people that, if there was a shutdown, the Social Security checks would not be going out. Unfortunately, that was just a problem of ignorance, and, of course, there is no House rule that objects to our pointing out ignorance of a fact. But the fact is Social Security checks go out automatically. If someone is entitled to an increase in their Social Security check, that does not occur until after the shutdown is over.

After I saw that the Republican Speaker, back in 2011, after being warned that we shouldn't use our military pay as leverage to get people to vote for a bill that they shouldn't vote for, I actually filed a bill before that CR came due that would ensure that the military was paid as Social Security. If you are entitled to a promotion or additional pay, that doesn't come until the shutdown is over.

That bill has again been filed in this Congress. The name is the ASAP bill, Armed Services Always Paid. We need to go ahead and bring that bill to the floor, push the Senate to do the same thing, and put our military's pay on automatic pilot. They would never have to worry.

Having served in the military, in the U.S. Army, for 4 years, I know our military is being paid better than we were back when I was on Active Duty. But even still, I know too many in our military who are barely getting by on what they are paid. The last thing they need is to be in harm's way dodging bullets or IEDs or rocket-propelled grenades and have to be worrying whether their loved ones back in the United States are going to have the check so that they can pay their car payment and their home payment.

Let's pass this ASAP bill immediately.

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 40 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

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: We give You thanks, O God, for giving us another day.

As You make available to Your people the grace and knowledge to meet the needs of the day, we pray that Your spirit will be upon the Members of this people's House, giving them the richness of Your wisdom.

Bless the Members of the majority party as they prepare and gather these next days. May they, with those who accompany them, travel safely and meet in peace.

Bless also the minority party as they prepare for their own gathering. May these days be filled with hopeful anticipation.

Bless also the President as he visits the people's House to address the Nation this evening.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

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 gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PANETTA 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

AMERICANS ARE BETTER OFF

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the differences are stark between President Obama's first year in office and President Trump's first year in office. If you just listen to the liberal media, you would think our country is worse off under President Trump. However, if you follow the facts, Americans are far better off.

In 2009, 4 million jobs were lost. In 2017, 1.7 million jobs were created.

Gross domestic product in President Obama's first year went down 2.8 percent. It was up 2.3 percent last year.

Unemployment in 2009 increased from 7.8 percent to 9.9 percent. It fell in 2017 from 4.8 percent to 4.1 percent, a 17-year low.

The Standard & Poor's stock market index was at 1,115 President Obama's first year. It recently hit 2,673.

President Trump's policies are helping more Americans get back to work, pay less in taxes, and build their retirement and savings accounts. These are the facts.

Mr. Speaker, Americans can accurately say they are better off today than they were 8 years ago, or even 1 year ago.

BUILD BRIDGES, NOT WALLS

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

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Madam Speaker, 2017 was a year marked with division and distraction, a disservice to Americans seeking solutions to real challenges facing our Nation.

My hope is that the new year provides an opportunity to move away from divisive discourse and toward constructive dialogue and real outcomes. This year, we can take real steps to strengthen Medicare and Social Security, as well as ensuring access to quality and affordable healthcare for all Americans.

This year, we can promote job growth and success for all Americans by making smart, targeted investments in education and scientific research, as well as preparing our workforce for the 21st century.

This year, we can commit ourselves to building a foundation for a stronger America by making investments in our Nation's roads, waterways, infrastructure, and communities.

Madam Speaker, as we consider the State of the Union, this Congress has two choices: build walls or build bridges. Bridges lead to better healthcare, to better jobs, to a better economy to make America great again, and again, and again.

ECONOMIC REVIVAL

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

Mr. ROTHFUS. Madam Speaker, today is State of the Union day, and it is an opportunity for the Nation to hear from the President on the progress we have been making and the challenges that lie ahead.

One thing I am looking forward to is hearing about how the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and the regulatory reforms we have seen over the past year are causing our economy to roar back to life, creating more jobs and putting more money in people's pockets.

Fifty-five years ago, President Kennedy delivered a State of the Union that recognized the power of tax cuts that put money back into the private sector. Talking about the economy, President Kennedy said: "To achieve these greater gains, one step, above all, is essential . . . a substantial reduction and revision in Federal income taxes."

I am glad President Trump and Congress have followed President Kennedy's and President Reagan's model. The economic revival happening today is not only lifting incomes, it is what is going to generate the tax revenues that will help us meet the challenges that lie ahead. That is something for all Americans to celebrate.

REMEMBERING DARBY WORTH

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

Mr. PANETTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and remember Darby Worth, an activist, a community member of my hometown, and most importantly, she was one of the teachers at my elementary school.

Mrs. Worth, as I knew her, worked 20 years at Tularcitos Elementary School, the school where I went and my daughters go today. Now, I didn't know that at the time, but many years ago before she was a teacher, she was well versed in environmental and social activism.

By the time she did take up teaching, she had already traveled to San Francisco many times to protest the Vietnam war. Well after she retired from Tularcitos, Darby was unrelenting in her commitment to social justice, women's rights, challenging corporate power, and, yes, fighting climate change.

She had many movements that she was behind, and it is understandable considering that she felt strongly that everything is interconnected. That is why, at 90, she was already planning and fighting the county to be buried in her front yard.

Madam Speaker, I am not sure if she was laid to rest in that location, but I do know that Mrs. Worth will always be remembered not for just being a teacher to children, but because of her interconnectivity to all of us. She was somebody that we all learned from.

CELEBRATING MAPLE LEAF FARMS' 60TH ANNIVERSARY

(Mrs. WALORSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Maple Leaf Farms on celebrating 60 wonderful years. This family-owned operation has been a staple in northern Indiana and the U.S. duck industry since 1958.

While 60 years of successful operations is a tremendous accomplishment, Maple Leaf Farms' expansion,

production capabilities, and newest global ventures speak volumes to the dedication and ingenuity of the Tucker family. I am proud to learn of the strong business model and outstanding leadership of the Tuckers that has led Maple Leaf Farms to handle 10 million ducks a year and supply products worldwide.

It is truly an honor to represent such passionate and committed Hoosier farmers as the Tuckers. I am grateful for the positive contributions they have made to our community.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Second District Hoosiers, I want to thank Maple Leaf Farms for strengthening Indiana's farming community, and I wish them all the best in their next 60 years.

GIVE HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS RELIEF

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

Ms. GABBARD. Madam Speaker, too often when we think about human trafficking as a tragedy, we think about it as something that goes on in someone else's country, in some other place other than our home.

Most people are surprised to find out that thousands of men, women, and children right here in the United States are enslaved by human trafficking every year. In my home State of Hawaii, an estimated 1,500 to 2,500 victims are impacted each year with girls as young as 10 and 11 years old recruited and kidnapped from malls, beaches, and schools.

So as we work to confront and stop perpetrators of human trafficking, we also need to change the way that we treat survivors of this heinous crime. Because even after the horrors that these individuals go through of rape, physical abuse, kidnapping, and so much more, these survivors are too often charged as criminals themselves, thrown in jail, and shackled with a criminal record that follows them wherever they go.

We need to end this cycle of criminalization and give survivors an opportunity to heal and move on with their lives by passing the Trafficking Survivors Relief Act.

Madam Speaker, as Human Trafficking Awareness Month comes to a close, I urge my colleagues to join me, to pass this important legislation and empower change for those who need it the most.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH—A STORY OF HOPE

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, Tonya was 13 years old when she met Eddie. They struck up a relationship and the two moved in together in Dallas, Texas. But what seemed to be a "normal" relationship turned out not