

Brian is known around the State as a great businessman, a public servant, and a statesman. However, Brian will tell you, his most important job in life is being a husband and a father. Brian and his wife, Marty, have three daughters: Jarrett, Lucy, and Amy Porter. The Kemps are a family tightly bound by their strong faith, their commitment to public service, and a love for their community, their State, and their country.

From the backhoe to the boardroom, Brian Kemp understands how to successfully create jobs, recruit startups, grow companies, and make deals to provide opportunities for hardworking Georgians.

To communicate his commitment to further growing Georgia's thriving economy, and to ensure all Georgians have the opportunity to live, learn, and prosper, Governor Kemp has made the theme of his governorship "Putting Georgians First." I believe Governor Brian Kemp will work for all Georgians, and I look forward to working with him as he leads Georgia forward.

Congratulations, Governor Kemp.

HONORING MAYOR GREG PETTIS

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

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Mayor Greg Pettis, a leader and devoted advocate for our desert communities in California's 36th Congressional District, who unexpectedly passed away recently on January 15.

I had the privilege of working with Mayor Pettis to fight for equality and social justice for the people of the Coachella Valley.

Mayor Pettis set an example as a public servant committed to protecting the rights of all his constituents.

During his decades of service to our communities, Mayor Pettis never wavered in his advocacy for civil rights, improved transportation, and access to healthcare.

□ 1015

As Cathedral City's first openly gay public servant and longest serving council member, Mayor Pettis was a trailblazer and a role model.

Every day, Mayor Pettis brought his passion for helping others to the call to public service. He helped our valley build a public library, combat drug addiction, and expand affordable housing.

Through his leadership and kindness, Mayor Pettis will live on in the memory of his brothers, Stephen and David Pettis, and the friends, neighbors, and families whose lives he touched.

RECOGNIZING SUPERVISOR MARION ASHLEY

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Supervisor Marion Ashley on his retirement after more than 35 years of public service.

Supervisor Ashley has served the people in Riverside County since 2002 with leadership, integrity, respect, and

enthusiasm. He grew up in Riverside County, California, and like me, has had the privilege of returning home to serve.

To see his positive impact on the cities of Banning, Beaumont, Calimesa, and others, you only need to look around. You will see medical centers, public parks, wildlife conservation areas, and fire stations that exist thanks to his advocacy.

In retirement, I hope Supervisor Ashley will enjoy spending more time with Mary, his wife of more than 60 years, and their 6 children, 19 grandchildren, and 9 great-grandchildren.

On behalf of communities across Riverside County, it is my honor to congratulate Supervisor Ashley on a well-earned retirement.

RECOGNITION OF BERGAD SPECIALTY FOAMS & COMPOSITES ON EXPANSION

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a tremendous business in Armstrong County, Bergad Specialty Foams.

Bergad Specialty Foams is a leading producer of polyurethane foams. It recently celebrated the completion of a 50,000-square-foot building expansion.

This is phase 1 of a long-range facility expansion, which will increase production capacity to meet customer demand for its growing line of specialty foams. It will also allow the company to accommodate the production of several new product lines.

The expansion includes state-of-the-art CNC cutting equipment and streamlined fulfillment and shipping areas, in addition to a secure manufacturing area to accommodate the requirements of the consumer technology industry.

Mr. Speaker, Bergad Foams makes specialty cushioning materials that span several markets, including medical, cosmetic, oil and gas production, high-end consumer electronics, and transportation and aircraft.

I congratulate Paul Bergad, president of Bergad Incorporated, on the outstanding business he has built in Armstrong County, Pennsylvania.

When they broke ground on this project, he refused the ceremonial golden shovel and, instead, fired up his excavator to take out the first bucket of dirt. Clearly, Mr. Bergad is a man who isn't afraid to roll up his sleeves and get to work.

With this new addition, the manufacturing area totals more than three acres under one roof, making it one of the largest manufacturing facilities in the county.

Phase 2 of the expansion is expected to begin in about 18 months and will add an additional 35,000 square feet to the facility. With these expansions, Bergad Incorporated said they expect to hire an additional 30 employees.

Mr. Speaker, this is very welcome news in Armstrong County, where Bergad Specialty Foams has its laboratory, manufacturing, fabrication, tooling, warehousing, and sales division, all located at its Kittanning facility.

Since Bergad Specialty Foams opened operations there in 1999, the mission has been to "exceed, not meet" the standards of the industry and the expectations of its clients. Mr. Speaker, the ever-expanding product lines and expansion surely note that Bergad Specialty Foams is not only living up to its lofty goals, but surpassing them.

I wholeheartedly congratulate Mr. Bergad on this outstanding achievement, and I wish him the best as his company continues to flourish in Armstrong County.

NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. DELGADO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DELGADO. Mr. Speaker, today I rise, pleased that the government is reopened and determined to not repeat ourselves in 3 weeks.

A poll taken last weekend found that 6 in 10 Americans believe the country is headed in the wrong direction, and nearly 70 percent have negative opinions on the state of the Nation. These findings are grim, but can anyone in this Chamber blame our fellow citizens for their skepticism?

The longest shutdown in American history brought fear, confusion, and financial harm on upstate New York and our entire country—\$11 billion worth of economic loss, according to the CBO. And here is what that looked like back home in upstate New York:

The Small Business Administration stopped processing new loans to potential small business owners, slowing the engine of American enterprise;

The FDA stopped routine food safety inspections, putting Americans at risk at their own dinner tables;

The Department of Agriculture stopped administering farm support programs, which include subsidized home loans and tariff relief payments, putting additional financial stress on farmers in upstate New York already suffering from our Nation's ill-conceived trade wars;

The Department of Housing and Urban Development stopped processing mortgage extensions or housing loans, leaving 100,000 rural homeowners at risk of eviction;

The EPA suspended the cleanup efforts at Superfund pollution sites, including in places like Hoosick Falls, with poisoned groundwater.

When the shutdown began, the EPA stopped returning calls from the New York Department of Environmental Conservation. I held two townhalls during the shutdown and opened up our phone lines on weekends in order to remain accessible to those in my district who need an advocate in Washington.

I heard from constituent after constituent about the negative repercussions of the shutdown.

I heard from store owners who couldn't accept EBT cards because their SNAP vendor license expired with no possibility of renewal.

I heard from Federal employees, more than 4,200 of whom I am proud to represent in Congress, who worried about losing their dental and vision insurance.

I met with members of the U.S. Coast Guard, the only military personnel who went without pay during the shutdown.

And I heard from small business owners, more than 27,000 of whom live in my district, about the effect of the shutdown on their bottom lines.

All of this for what purpose?

From day one, I joined any colleagues in vote after vote to reopen the government on a bipartisan basis.

It is incumbent on Congress to ensure that the government remains open when the current spending package expires on February 15.

The border wall is a monument to division that, according to experts, is ineffective and wasteful. Holding the government hostage over it was wrong. Indeed, not a single Member of the House body—Democrat or Republican—representing a border district is for the construction of a wall.

When discussing the need for improved border security, we must move past fear-driven partisan politics which seek only to divide us and paralyze our democracy. Moreover, we cannot allow ourselves to fall short of our constitutional obligation as Members of Congress.

Let us not forget that our Founding Fathers began with the legislative body in Article I of our Constitution. This is the one body that represents the will of the people, legislatively.

Our work should not be contingent upon the whims and desires of another branch of government meant to only execute the laws our body is obliged to legislate. This is not how to preserve a democratic order anchored in the separation of powers and sustained by healthy checks and balances.

To be clear, now is not the time to run away from our responsibility as a coequal branch of government. Democrats and Republicans, alike, need to come together and have an evidence-based and transparent debate on the question of border security, have a vote, and then send legislation to the President. It shouldn't take a costly shutdown and a threat of another looming one in order to accomplish this.

As Members of both parties from both Houses begin budget negotiations in a conference committee, I ask that they remember the hardships endured in recent weeks not only by the Federal employees who went without pay in upstate New York, but also by business owners, farmers, and so many others in our region who were harmed because of ripple effects of the shutdown.

The government must not close again. My district and our country can't afford another shutdown. It is our collective responsibility to ensure we do not find ourselves on February 15 at the start of yet another shutdown.

In short, I urge this body to do as envisioned by our Founding Fathers, get to work, and do our job.

IN RECOGNITION OF COLONEL PETER NEZAMIS

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Colonel Peter Nezamis of Belleville.

It was recently announced that Colonel Nezamis will be promoted to brigadier general and will lead the Illinois Air National Guard, where he will lead over 3,000 personnel.

He commanded the Air National Guard's 126th Air Refueling Wing at Scott Air Force Base, which received the Outstanding Unit Award, under his guidance.

Colonel Nezamis has commanded numerous expeditionary operations and flew over 275 combat and combat support hours. He first joined the Air National Guard in 1986 and has served our State and Nation over 30 years.

Colonel Nezamis, we know you will serve the State and Nation to the best of your ability, and congratulations in your new role.

ENHANCING AGRICULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILITARY VETERANS

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I also rise to bring awareness about a coming crisis in our Nation's agricultural workforce.

According to USDA, the average age for a farmer is now 58 and has been on the rise for over 30 years. Our Nation faces a shortfall of 700,000 agricultural workers over the next 20 years.

How can we reverse this trend? According to the Department of Labor, 45 percent of armed servicemembers are from rural America. Many of our returning heroes struggle to find employment after serving our Nation.

Agriculture is a sensible solution to fill the economic gap our veterans face. That is why I joined with my friend and colleague on the House Agriculture Committee, AL LAWSON of Florida, to introduce the Vets to Ag Act. Our bill streamlines the process for veterans getting apprenticeships in the agricultural industry.

Despite dysfunction in Washington, we are still fighting for bipartisan, commonsense solutions to help our farmers and our veterans. I encourage my colleagues to support this bipartisan effort.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION MONTH

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I also rise today in recognition of Human Trafficking and Prevention Month.

Human trafficking cases are on the rise nationwide. As the grandfather of 11 grandchildren, I am angry about

that. My appreciation goes out to members of law enforcement who are on the front lines combating these crimes and making our communities safer.

Programs like the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign help combat human trafficking. The program works to make sure, if trafficking victims are taken over the border, they are rescued or have a resource that they can turn to for help.

These are important steps, but there is still so much more work remaining. Both parties must work together to do our part in wiping out this evil before it does any more harm.

□ 1030

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

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

Mr. CURTIS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the Transparency in Student Lending Act.

College education can be a life-changing investment, but it can come at a tremendous cost. Right now, 44 million Americans collectively hold \$1.5 trillion in student loan debt. The Federal Government lends 90 percent of these dollars. However, unlike other lenders, the Federal Government does not provide students with complete information about the total cost of their loan, leaving borrowers unaware of hidden costs and fees until they enter the repayment phase. I have introduced this bill to require complete information be provided to students before they take out a loan.

Mr. Speaker, I represent the youngest congressional district in the United States, and many of my constituents are struggling with student debt. With this legislation, we can help young people make fully informed financial decisions for their families and their futures.

VENEZUELA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to call on all of those who support freedom and democracy to stand with the long-suffering people of Venezuela. We have finally reached the tipping point where freedom for the Venezuelan people hangs in the balance.

On Friday, President Trump recognized the duly elected leader of the National Assembly, Juan Guaido, as the constitutional interim President of Venezuela. Shortly afterward the vast majority of Western Hemisphere nations affirmed their recognition of the Guaido government.

On January 10 the OAS passed a resolution, Mr. Speaker, that refused to recognize the illegitimate Maduro regime, and OAS Secretary-General Luis