

That is why the Army Corps of Engineers, along with Federal, State, and local agencies, have worked to develop a plan to protect the lives and livelihoods of Staten Islanders by building a seawall.

Federal, State, and local funding for this project already have been secured. All that remains is for Congress to pass my bill to allow for this critical construction to begin. I made a promise when I was sworn in that if something matters to the folks who live in my district—my constituents—well, then it matters to me. That is why I am here today, and that is why I will fight to pass this bill.

I commend my predecessor, Congressman Dan Donovan, who introduced similar legislation in the previous Congress, which passed the House on a bipartisan basis, demonstrating that, when we want to, we can unite in order to enact legislation that saves American lives.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues in Congress to act swiftly on this legislation so that we can allow construction to begin as soon as possible and bring some peace of mind to families worrying about that next storm, worrying that they are going to lose their homes.

In this time when government is shut down, it is damn time that we show the people of Staten Island, of South Brooklyn, of New York City, New York State, and the American people as a whole that government can do something positive.

DO WE HAVE A CRISIS ON THE SOUTHERN BORDER OR NOT?

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, first of all, we all are thinking about those loyal, hardworking Federal employees who are caught in the middle of the challenges that we face here in Washington. As with other battles, these employees will be paid for their time away from the workplace while they are on furlough.

So what is this all about? Do we have a crisis on the southern border or not? I would caution my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to use real numbers.

Are 400,000 illegal immigrants last year across the southern border too few or too many?

Are the 500 homicides by illegal immigrants in Texas over the past decade too few or too many?

Maybe the new Homeland Security Committee could hold a hearing and vet out all of these numbers. There is a problem with that: The committee is not organized yet, so they cannot meet. I would hope that they would, so we could put the facts on the table.

I look at the clips of large groups of illegals trying to rush the border. What has kept them from illegally entering? Well, the fence, the wall, the barrier. A wall system works. Sections of the bor-

der where fencing and walls have been built have seen a decrease in illegal immigration.

San Diego first built its wall in 1992. Illegal traffic dropped 92 percent over the past 23 years.

El Paso built their fence in 1993. Illegal traffic dropped 72 percent in 1 year and 95 percent over 22 years.

Tucson's wall was built in 2000. Illegal traffic dropped 90 percent over 15 years.

The wall in Yuma was built in 2005. Illegal traffic dropped 95 percent over 9 years.

Since walls work, they have historically held bipartisan support. In the fiscal year 2007, the DHS appropriations bill provided more than \$1 billion for fencing along the southwest border. It passed 412–6. Speaker PELOSI, Majority Leader HOYER, Majority Whip CLYBURN, and Homeland Security Chairman THOMPSON were among the “yes” votes.

Former President Barack Obama, in a Senate floor speech from the Secure Fence Act in 2006, said: “It will authorize some badly needed funding for better fences and better security along our borders, and that should help stem some of the tide of illegal immigration in this country.”

The Secretary of Homeland Security under Obama, Janet Napolitano, reiterated: “You've got to have a system. You've got to have a system down there that includes boots on the ground, that has to include technology and fencing and infrastructure as part of the overall system.”

It is time that we work together to compromise to reopen the government and secure our southern border. We can do this. I believe in this form of government, and I believe in this institution. Let's get to work.

America is an extraordinarily compassionate nation. We welcome immigrants seeking the opportunity to build a better life here, as well as refugees fleeing war, oppression, and poverty around the world. But even as we do this it is only appropriate that it is done legally.

AMERICAN OPTIMISM

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

Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas. Madam Speaker, during one of the most divisive times in American history, I rise today in a moment of American optimism.

In this freshly minted 116th Congress, the most diverse in our history, I welcome all new Members, young and old; Democrats and Republicans; from the North, South, East, or West; male or female; gay or straight; Jew or gentile. And I ask you to join me in this journey of optimism.

Today is the beginning of the rest of our history, the history of the opportunity we have before us to solve the Nation's critical issues that are happening today, the everyday problems that our people live with, in our diverse land.

Let us never forget who we are and the greatness we have shown the world. Let us never forget that this is the America that freed slaves, granted religious freedoms, fed the hungry, and welcomed the stranger; the America that spread democracy and freedom around the globe; the America that freed Europe and defended others from bullies and foes; the America that gave the world electricity and light. We put the first man on the Moon, flew the first woman across the pond, and created the internet and the iPhone and, yes, Facebook and Twitter, too.

We gave the world baseball and proudly root for our Olympians who lead the world in medals. We entertain the world with Hollywood, MTV, and American pop, hip-hop, Tejano, country, rock ‘n’ roll, and jazz music. We bring smiles and joy to children around the world through Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse.

We are also the country of the Mayo, Johns Hopkins, MD Anderson, and Cleveland clinics.

And all of this is while enjoying the largest economy in the world.

This is the America the world longs to be, and this is the America we have the responsibility to be, the America the world is still patiently and optimistically waiting and watching to see the next great thing we do. We are the America that came together in solidarity after 9/11. We are still that America.

To the young in this country, I promise you, you are going to be okay. There is a lot of reason to be optimistic, because I still believe that everyone serving in this body sincerely loves this country and, at the end of the day, rises to the occasion to do what is right for it.

There is nothing greater than staying united, conserving our creativity and work ethic while respecting our differences. The world is counting on us.

To you, America, I toast. I toast with a freshly brewed double espresso from Starbucks—yes, another American gem. That, my friends, is what makes America great. God bless the USA.

LONGWORTH-GARNER SPIRIT OF BIPARTISANSHIP

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

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Madam Speaker, first, let me associate myself with the gentleman from Texas and his fine remarks about the strengths of this country and how this country has led the world in every way and is the envy of the world. I thank the gentleman from Texas for his inspirational remarks on this House floor.

Madam Speaker, I look forward, too, with optimism to the 116th Congress. I refuse to be pulled down by the vortex of negativism and profanity that is engulfing social media and cable television programming. Instead, I am

grateful for the opportunity to work to pursue policies that improve our Nation.

Madam Speaker, I spent my first two terms in Congress building relationships with my colleagues, in both the House and the Senate and in both political parties. I have done this based on my experiences that I had in the 1980s as a staffer on the Senate Banking Committee, as well as my 4 years of service in the executive branch in the administration of President George H.W. Bush.

I value political leaders reasoning together to find common ground to tackle our Nation's policy challenges, large and small.

In this context, I host periodic, bipartisan dinners. I call these the "Longworth-Garner Dinners," so named for Nick Longworth from Cincinnati, Ohio, Speaker of the House from 1925 to his untimely death in 1931, and his great friend, Congressman Jack Garner from Uvalde, Texas, minority leader much of the time when his friend Nick was Speaker.

These two men could not have been more different. Longworth was from a patrician family who settled in Cincinnati in the early 19th century, and he was married to Teddy Roosevelt's oldest daughter, Alice.

"Cactus Jack" Garner was a rough-and-tumble small-town lawyer from Uvalde who rose to be a successful county judge and then became a terrifically successful Member of the U.S. House. As Garner put it, "I was the heathen, and Nick was the aristocrat."

Longworth and Garner came to Congress at the same time in 1902. Both served with distinction; both rose to the top of their political parties; and both were terrific friends.

When Longworth was sworn into speakership for the last time in April of 1929, he paid tribute to his friend, the minority leader and future Speaker, by saying: "The gentleman from Texas and I entered Congress together 26 years ago. That he is a better man than I, in the estimation of his constituents, is made clear by the fact that his service has been continuous, whereas mine was interrupted by a vacation of 2 years, by no means of my own motion. During all these years, our friendship has been continuously abiding, and our affection, esteem, and respect, the one for the other, is and has been, I am proud to say, mutual."

For his part, on the untimely death of Longworth in 1931, Garner, who did become Speaker, said: "He was an aristocrat; I am a plebeian. Perhaps . . . our different rearing intensified our interest in each other. I have lost one of the best friends of a lifetime, the country a good citizen, and the Congress a most valued legislator."

It was "Cactus Jack" and Nick who cooked up the tradition in room H-128 of the U.S. Capitol. Each afternoon, no matter how much fighting took place on the floor of the U.S. House, they retreated to H-128, which they nick-

named the "Bureau of Education," to have a drink and "strike a blow for liberty."

Room H-128 went on to even greater fame, as longtime Speaker Sam Rayburn from Texas continued this tradition that he had witnessed as a young Member.

The purpose of my Longworth-Garner Dinners is to get to know each other, to understand what our goals and objectives are for our constituents and how we can work effectively together on the House Financial Services Committee.

Madam Speaker, I will continue the tradition of Longworth and Garner in the 116th Congress. I look forward to working hand-in-hand and shoulder-to-shoulder with my colleagues in both parties and on both sides of the U.S. Capitol to move this country forward and seek a better Nation through our partnership.

END GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. HAALAND) for 5 minutes.

Ms. HAALAND. Madam Speaker, I rise to urge President Trump and Senate Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL to reopen the Federal Government. Let's be clear: the crisis is not along our Nation's southern border. The real crisis is getting people back to work.

I cannot stand by silently while nearly 800,000 Federal workers, thousands of which are in New Mexico, won't receive a paycheck, and countless, innocent people suffer because they will not receive essential services from the Federal Government.

The government shutdown impacts the State of New Mexico more than almost anywhere in this country. The government shutdown directly affects more than 6,000 Federal employees throughout New Mexico. These dedicated public servants are not getting paid, but they still need to pay the rent, put food on the table, and they still need to make payments on their car loans and student loans.

Almost 50,000 residents of New Mexico's First Congressional District depend on SNAP benefits to feed their families. The government shutdown means that SNAP benefits are threatened.

As someone who relied on government assistance programs when I was raising my daughter as a single mom, I have been there, and I know that it is devastating for these people to worry about how they are going to pay for their next meal and take care of their families.

Our Indian tribes, pueblos, and nations who rely on Federal funding for aging services and Indian Health Services for medical care, are already being impacted by this shutdown, and the suffering will grow greater as the shutdown drags on. If this shutdown continues, 62 percent of Indian Health

Services will be forced to cease offering services, and 54 percent will be forced to lay off essential staff. This is a recipe for disaster.

On the Navajo Nation in my State, people have been trapped in their homes without food, water, and medicine because the government has failed to fund the Federal maintenance to plow snow from the roads.

The Department of Agriculture's Food Distribution Program on Indian reservations runs out of funding at the end of this month. This program provides nutrition assistance to nearly 90,000 Native Americans.

Madam Speaker, I voted to pass legislation through this House that Democrats have put forward to reopen the government. What we need now is Senator MITCH MCCONNELL and President Trump to show that same kind of leadership and act on these bills, which the Senate already passed last year, and reopen our government.

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 11 o'clock and 2 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: Thank You, O Lord, for giving us another day.

Lord, You are ever present, the source of all wisdom and self-giving love. The Sacred Scriptures reveal Your continued guidance in human affairs. We thank You for the many blessings granted this Nation throughout its history.

In these early days of the 116th Congress, we seek Your mercy and rely on Your revelations to guide and protect this legislative body. With renewed standards of ethics and a deeper commitment of accountability, may all who serve in public office be Your steady instruments in unifying, protecting, and guiding the American people of this democracy to increasing virtue, greater prosperity, and witness to goodness for the world.

We thank You, again, for the inspiration of our Nation's Founders and the legacy they left us. May the Members of this assembly and all Americans be worthy of that legacy.

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

Amen.