



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 2019

No. 102

## House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BEYER).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
June 18, 2019.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DONALD S. BEYER, Jr. to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Mariel Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2019, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

### AMERICANS SUPPORT THE GI BILL

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, 12 days ago, the eyes of the world were focused on the beaches of Normandy,

France, to observe the 75th anniversary of the D-day invasion. It was a solemn moment to rightly honor the sacrifice and courage of the combined Armed Forces of the Allied Powers, who, from that moment, launched the final, decisive assault that eventually destroyed the Axis Powers' murderous stranglehold on Europe and Asia.

Mr. Speaker, another 75th anniversary surrounding the epic effort to save democracy will occur in 4 days, this Saturday, June 22. On that day 75 years ago, President Franklin Roosevelt signed into law the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, more commonly known as the GI Bill. That landmark measure would provide both college tuition and a stipend for returning servicemembers who, as FDR said at the time, "have been compelled to make greater economic sacrifice and every other kind of sacrifice than the rest of us."

Even though the war would rage on for another year, leaders in Washington wisely recognized that millions of young soldiers, sailors, and airmen would soon be returning back into civilian life; and for their sake and for the sake of a healthy postwar economy, creating this educational pathway made tremendous sense.

In the 75 years since the GI Bill was signed into law, it is now recognized as one of the most successful pieces of domestic legislation ever enacted. The postwar economic boom and the blossoming of the American middle class have both been attributed, in part, to the GI Bill.

Many renown Americans, including Bob Dole, Johnny Carson, Harry Belafonte, William Rehnquist, and Clint Eastwood, were beneficiaries of the GI Bill.

Economic studies have shown that, for every dollar the government spent on the GI Bill, our economy saw nearly \$7 in return of additional economic output in tax revenues from income growth.

Despite its stellar performance, the relative strength of the GI Bill deteriorated in the late 20th century. By 2008, it was clear that tuition assistance and living stipends had not kept pace with the rising cost of a college education.

As a freshman Congressman in the House Armed Services Committee at the time, I heard from returning Iraq and Afghan vets who were forced to choose between dropping out of school or shouldering the burden of daunting student loans. To fix this decline, we passed the Post-9/11 GI Bill, which was signed into law by George Bush on June 30, 2008.

The updated law boosted tuition to match the cost of a 4-year public university in servicemembers' home States and increased the living stipend to keep faith with the original law. It also allowed GI benefits to be transferred to a spouse or dependent child, a groundbreaking change which transformed the value of military service for families.

After the bill signing, I flew to Iraq in late 2008 for a committee visit and vividly recall being surrounded by soldiers bursting with questions about when and how the new law would be implemented. Since then, it has become clear that the transferability of the GI Bill has been an enormous morale booster and a valuable incentive to enlist and remain in service.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Trump Department of Defense announced a new policy last July which would arbitrarily cut off servicemembers with more than 16 years of service from transferring their Post-9/11 GI benefits to eligible family members. We were told at the time that the Department viewed this as a shrewd cost-cutting measure.

However, revoking transferability breaks our commitment to our most dedicated and seasoned servicemembers and their families. In addition, in a tight, lean labor market, it remains

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g.,  1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

critically important to attract and retain the best qualified individuals for military service.

I believe it sends exactly the wrong message to some of our most seasoned servicemembers who may have married late in life or started their families later, to make them ineligible for incentives, to continue their service to our Nation.

Two weeks after the Pentagon released this policy, 83 of my colleagues in the House joined me in a letter that I wrote to Secretary Mattis objecting to this change and calling for its reversal. So far, DOD has refused to budge.

Mr. Speaker, I have some good news to report today. With the cutoff due to go into effect next month, the House Armed Services Committee last week unanimously passed my amendment to the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, which would block the Secretary of Defense from restricting GI Bill transferability based on a maximum number of years of service.

As Congress took action 75 years ago to create the GI Bill benefit, today it is our job to restore the hard-fought modernized GI Bill of 2008. That is even more the case today at a time of an All-Volunteer Force. If a servicemember demonstrates that they are ready, able, and willing to continue their service to our Nation, we should uphold our end of the commitment.

To paraphrase President Roosevelt's words 75 years ago when he signed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, protecting transferability today "gives emphatic notice to the men and women in our Armed Forces that the American people do not intend to let them down."

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CLAY) at 2 p.m.

#### PRAYER

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

During these coming weeks of House business, we ask Your special blessing upon the Members of this assembly who return from a long Father's Day weekend. Issues of national security, trade, and the welfare of our citizens stand in the balance of the deliberations of these days.

May each Member be filled with a surfeit of wisdom, patience, and equa-

nimity that these weeks of appropriations might issue forth in solutions that benefit the Nation.

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

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. DAVIDSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. DAVIDSON of Ohio 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.

#### HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 10 a.m. tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

#### RECOGNIZING GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Gun Violence Awareness Month.

All month members of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force will be coming to the floor to remember those we have lost and to call upon the Senate to take up H.R. 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act.

More than 100 days ago, Democrats and Republicans came together to pass legislation which is supported by more than 90 percent of the American people. Since the beginning of the year, more than 6,500 people have been killed and more than 12,500 have been injured by someone using a gun. Yet, the Senate refuses to allow a simple up or down vote.

On Thursday, activists from around the country will be holding a day of action to call on the Senate leadership to take up universal background checks. No more thoughts. No more prayers. They want action, and they want a vote.

The Senate should do the right thing. The Senate should pass H.R. 8.

#### NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION CREATES JOBS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to ad-

dress the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the National Nuclear Security Administration announced a \$5 million investment in workforce development at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina to create jobs.

We are grateful that the Undersecretary for Nuclear Security at the Department of Energy and Administrator of NNSA Lissa Gordon-Hagerty announced the investment through the Workforce Opportunities in Regional Careers with the Savannah River Site Community Reuse Organization for Aiken Technical College, Augusta Technical College, University of South Carolina Aiken, Augusta University, and the University of South Carolina Salkehatchie.

I thank Rick McLeod, David Jameson, Dr. Sandra Jordan, Dr. Forest Mahan, and Congressman RICK ALLEN. We appreciate their commitment to partnership and look forward to continuing to work together.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

#### HONORING U.S. ARMY RANGERS

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

Mr. DAVIDSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, United States Ranger history predates the Revolutionary War. However, June 19 marks the 77th anniversary of Major William Darby formally organizing and activating the 1st Ranger Battalion.

I rise today to honor the exceptional Americans who have volunteered as Army Rangers, fully knowing the hazards of their chosen profession. One of the greatest and most humbling honors of my life has been serving our Nation in uniform, and particularly, serving in the Army Ranger regiment.

The Army Ranger legacy is as old as the Republic, going back to Francis Marion, to Daniel Boone, to great Americans like Command Sergeant Major Douglas Greenway, and on to current Active Duty members.

It wasn't until after the Civil War—more than half a century without military Ranger units—that the U.S. Army Rangers were officially born. Seventy-five years ago, fighting on the bitter and bloody beaches of Normandy, Rangers gained their motto: "Rangers lead the way."

Since Pointe du Hoc, Rangers have led the way, from the Japanese POW camps, to theaters of war, including: Korea, Vietnam, Panama, Operation Desert Storm, Somalia, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and the great war on terror.

Today, I honor the elite soldiers serving our country as U.S. Army Rangers.