

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

God, Father of us all, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Please send Your spirit upon this assembly, that the men and women who serve the United States in contentious times such as these might better work together for the benefit of our Nation. This is not easy, so bless them with Your wisdom and give them the patience and understanding to rise to the demands of their calling.

So also we ask Your blessing upon our world, where so many live and, unfortunately, die in nations and regions cursed by violence and division. We are mindful, O God, of the descendants of Abraham in the Middle East. Imbue them with the grace to see their brothers and sisters in one another. Lord, have Mercy.

Lord, be with us this day and all days, and 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 Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CONAWAY 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.

HONORING REPRESENTATIVE BILL PASCRELL

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

Ms. SHERRILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor our colleague, Representative BILL PASCRELL, for whom the fire headquarters in his hometown of Paterson, New Jersey, is being renamed.

Representative PASCRELL has been a tireless champion of our country's firefighters. In 2000, he led the passage of the FIRE Act, the only Federal program to deliver grant funds directly to local fire departments. In 2015, he helped secure a \$7.5 million grant for the Paterson Fire Department, which prevented a dangerous reduction of forces. He is co-chair of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus.

Just this month, I proudly cast my vote for Representative PASCRELL's amendment to increase funding for the Firefighter Cancer Registry to ensure

our firefighters can get the care they need.

As a representative of New Jersey and as an American, I am grateful for all the work the Congressman has done to ensure protection and care for the brave men and women who put their lives on the line to keep our communities safe.

Though I regret I cannot be there with him this morning in Paterson, I congratulate Representative PASCRELL on this well-deserved honor.

OBSERVING ALZHEIMER'S AND BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month.

As a member of the Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease, I am grateful to continue supporting families facing Alzheimer's. Additionally, I appreciate the BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act that President Donald Trump signed into law in December last year.

Currently, there are more than 5 million Americans who live with Alzheimer's, with 16 million family members and friends who serve as caregivers. It is inspiring to know that 313,000 caregivers in South Carolina provide over 352 million hours of unpaid care.

South Carolina has extraordinary facilities to provide exemplary care for Alzheimer's patients in a friendly environment, including Carroll Campbell Place of Lexington Medical Center, honoring our late Governor.

Support and research are provided by the Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's, with walks held annually in more than 600 communities nationwide, with Taylor Wilson organizing the Midlands events.

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

WISHING MARK WILLIAMS GOOD LUCK IN HIS FUTURE ENDEAVORS

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

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, it is with a bittersweet heart today that I rise to recognize my current chief of staff, Mark Williams.

Mark will finish 16 years of service with the House of Representatives and be moving on to the private sector. He has been my chief for 4½ years. He served, faithfully, Todd Rokita, Sam Johnson, and myself. He is one of those quiet professionals who makes this place work.

He is a consummate professional, and I am a better Member of Congress because of his wise counsel, his advice,

his hard work, and his dedication to my team and our team.

I wish he and his wife, Noel; son, Nolan; and daughter, Katherine all the best and Godspeed in this next endeavor. They will be missed. Although we won't see them on a day-to-day basis, they are still a part of Team Conaway and also my family.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Mark good luck. We love him.

WELCOMING CONGRESSIONAL ART COMPETITION WINNER CINDY LAM

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today, I welcome Cindy Lam to the Capitol. Cindy is the winner of Pennsylvania's 15th Congressional District Congressional Art Competition.

The annual art competition organized by the Congressional Institute showcases the artwork of high school students from across every congressional district in the country.

Cindy just finished up her sophomore year at DuBois Area Senior High School earlier this month. Her artwork entitled "Self" is a prism-colored pencil drawing.

Cindy's artwork was selected, by an independent panel of judges, from 68 entries, which is one of the largest groups of students to participate in the 15th District's Congressional Art Competition. All the winning pieces will be displayed for the year in the Cannon tunnel, where they will be viewed by Members of Congress, staff, and many visitors of the Capitol every day.

Today, Cindy is participating in a reception where she and fellow winners from across the country will be honored for their talented work.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Cindy and all the students who participated in the competition.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 3 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 7 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1500

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of North Carolina) at 3 p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Miss Kaitlyn Roberts, one of his secretaries.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 24, 2019.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on June 24, 2019, at 11:14 a.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 559.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

CHERYL L. JOHNSON.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

BOOSTING RATES OF AMERICAN VETERAN EMPLOYMENT ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2109) to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in awarding a contract for the procurement of goods or services, to give a preference to offerors that employ veterans.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2109

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Boosting Rates of American Veteran Employment Act” or the “BRAVE Act”.

SEC. 2. PREFERENCE FOR OFFERORS EMPLOYING VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding after section 8128 the following new section:

“§ 8129. Preference for offerors employing veterans

“(a) PREFERENCE.—In awarding a contract for the procurement of goods or services, the Secretary may give a preference to offerors that employ veterans on a full-time basis. The Secretary shall determine such preference based on the percentage of the full-time employees of the offeror who are veterans.

“(b) ENFORCEMENT PENALTIES FOR MISREPRESENTATION.—(1) Any offeror that is determined by the Secretary to have willfully and intentionally misrepresented the veteran status of the employees of the offeror for purposes of subsection (a) may be debarred from contracting with the Department for a period of not less than five years.

“(2) If the Secretary carries out a debarment under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall commence debarment action against the offeror by not later than 30 days after determining that the offeror willfully and intentionally misrepresented the veteran status of the employees of the offeror as described in paragraph (1) and shall complete debarment actions against such offeror by not later than 90 days after such determination.

“(3) The debarment of an offeror under paragraph (1) includes the debarment of all principals in the offeror for a period of not less than five years.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 8128 the following new item:

“8129. Preference for offerors employing veterans.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentlewoman from American Samoa (Mrs. RADEWAGEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 2109.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2109, the Boosting Rates of American Veteran Employment Act, or BRAVE Act.

We know that overall veterans’ unemployment rates are below the national average, and that includes a 3.5 percent rate for our younger post-9/11 veterans. However, this hides an alarming statistic: nearly one-third of veteran jobseekers are underemployed at a rate 15.6 percent higher than non-veteran jobseekers.

Both parties agree that men and women returning from our most recent conflicts deserve to come home to a reliable, good paying job. We owe them that.

We can start right here in the Federal Government. The VA establishes long-term contracts with private companies for medical equipment, construction supplies, services, and more.

Currently, the VA gives a preference for these contracts to veteran-owned small businesses.

The BRAVE Act would expand this contracting preference to allow the VA Secretary to give a preference to companies that actively employ veterans, a policy that would incentivize companies to hire more veterans, already a smart approach for companies, because veterans bring to a job the skills they earned and learned in their years of invaluable military training.

This bipartisan bill would not add any additional costs or burdens to the

taxpayers. It allows for the debarment of any company that knowingly misrepresents its proportion of veteran employees in order to receive a contracting preference.

The BRAVE Act represents a win-win for the private sector, the Federal Government, and most importantly, veterans themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Representative RICE for her hard work on this excellent bill, and Ranking Member ROE for beginning work on this bill last Congress. I urge my colleagues to support it today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2109, introduced by Representative RICE of New York.

Mr. Speaker, to improve employment opportunities for veterans and business opportunities for the companies that employ them, H.R. 2109 would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, to consider the number of veterans who would be employed by a potential contractor and give the company that employs certain veterans credit for doing so during the contract approval process.

The bill would also allow VA to debar any contractor who willfully and intentionally misrepresents the number of veterans they employ.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to President Trump and Republican pro-growth policies, the veteran unemployment rate is at a near historic low of 2.7 percent.

I firmly believe that we should encourage businesses to provide job opportunities to veterans as well as provide VA with the authority to consider veteran hires when making contracting decisions. This legislation emphasizes that.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative RICE for her work on this bill, which has my full support. I urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 2109.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Miss RICE), my good friend, who is a member of the Veterans’ Affairs Committee and a member of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, and the sponsor of H.R. 2109.

Miss RICE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2109, the Boosting Rates of American Veteran Employment Act, which I introduced along with PAUL COOK from California.

The BRAVE Act is commonsense, bipartisan legislation that will authorize the VA Secretary to give preference to contractors with high concentrations of full-time veteran employees when awarding Federal contracts.

First, this bill will reward companies that actively hire and invest in veterans, companies that seek out veterans and give them opportunities to bring their unique skills and training