

Tribal Council before serving as president for a short time.

He had many ambitious plans to assist at-risk youth, create good-paying jobs, and expand programs to improve safety in Tribal communities.

President Bluehouse will always be remembered for his commitment to the Navajo people and for ensuring the Federal Government upheld its obligations to the Tribe.

My prayers are with his family and loved ones and the entire Navajo Nation as they mourn his passing and celebrate his life.

IT IS TIME TO OPEN UP GOVERNMENT

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Speaker, it is time to open up government. We can no longer think that we are not having an impact on our economy. We can no longer think that the safety of Americans who fly in our skies or eat the food in America is not at risk. We can no longer imagine that the millions of families who are being impacted are not suffering.

It is time. This is the greatest Nation on Earth. It is the only one in my entire lifetime that I have seen that has closed down government. Our counties don't do it; our States don't do it; our cities don't do it. But the greatest Nation on Earth can find a way to close down government?

This should never, ever happen in our country. We should never put our citizens through this. We have the money to pay the staff. We have to find ways to get out of this problem and never let it happen again.

RECOGNIZING MICHAEL WISNER

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 commend a Franklin High School graduate from Venango County on earning a prestigious fellowship.

Michael Wisner, who graduated from Franklin High School in 2015 and is expected to graduate from Princeton University in June, has been awarded the Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellowship following a nationwide contest.

The fellowship is funded by the U.S. Department of State and administered by Howard University right here in Washington.

The Rangel Graduate Fellowship is a program that aims to attract and prepare outstanding young people for careers in the Foreign Service, where they can help formulate, represent, and implement U.S. foreign policy.

The Rangel program selects outstanding fellows annually in a highly competitive nationwide process and supports them through 2 years of graduate study, internships, mentoring, and professional development activities.

Michael is completing certificates at Princeton in African studies, history

and the practice of diplomacy, and Latin American studies.

He spent a summer abroad in Greece and a semester abroad in Argentina, where he worked as an English as a second language instructor. Since 2016, he has taught English as a second language at the resource center of Catholic Charities in New Jersey.

Impressively, he also worked with Engineers Without Borders to design and install a water system in Peru. As part of the project, he co-led a 12-person team to author a Spanish language water system manual for community use.

During his time at Franklin High School, Michael was committed to academics, sports, and community activities. He was named salutatorian of his class. He played football and was captain of the team. He was also a wrestler and attained the rank of Eagle Scout with Boy Scouts of America.

Michael is the son of Tom and Nancy Wisner of Polk, Pennsylvania, in Venango County.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for American men and women who are committed to serving this country at home and abroad. I have no doubt that Michael will excel in his fellowship and help promote positive change globally. I congratulate Michael Wisner on this outstanding achievement, and I wish him the best as he pursues this opportunity.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to share the stories of hardworking Granite Staters who are feeling the pain of this shutdown on its 26th day.

Middle-class families in New Hampshire are suffering because politicians in Washington can't complete the most basic task of governing. They are fed up with the gridlock and endless delays. They are exhausted by the partisan political excuses. They just want us to do our jobs and reopen the Federal Government.

This weekend, I met with an air traffic controller from Derry. He told me that his coworkers are not going to be able to pay their mortgages and keep up with household bills if the shutdown goes on any longer. He explained that they are intensely proud of the service they provide to the American people and simply want to do their jobs and get paid on time. Is that really too much to ask?

Mr. Speaker, let's reopen our government for the sake of every Federal employee who works tirelessly to keep the traveling public safe.

Two fire departments in my district, in Goffstown and Hampton, have applied for SAFER grants through FEMA. They needed the process to begin in December in order to get approval at town meetings in March. The

shutdown has blocked the review of these applications.

Mr. Speaker, let's reopen our government so local fire departments and first responders can get the resources they need to protect our communities.

The spiraling effects of this shutdown are becoming more apparent each and every day. The Manchester Transit Authority is concerned about whether they will be able to keep buses running, since they haven't been able to draw on Federal funds since December.

In addition, crisis centers in New Hampshire haven't been able to access the funding they typically receive from the Office of Violence Against Women to assist survivors of sexual and domestic violence. That is completely unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, let's reopen our government so people can get to work on time and local organizations can continue to support victims of crime and abuse.

The President says this shutdown is necessary to protect the American people, yet every story I hear in my district demonstrates this shutdown is making us less safe. The longer our government remains closed, the less secure our country will be.

Mr. Speaker, this shutdown has shown us the worst of Washington, the dysfunction and the political gamesmanship that has no regard for people's lives. But it is also bringing out the very best of people in my State, their sense of decency and patriotism, their willingness to lend a helping hand to neighbors in need.

Granite Staters have been banding together to help Federal workers in a variety of ways, from offering no-interest loans to offering food donations. The Wood Island Life Saving Station Association is giving gift cards to Coast Guard personnel in Portsmouth to help them make ends meet while they work without pay.

People in our communities are coming together to support everyday Americans who are the victims of this shutdown, so why can't our leaders in Washington do the same?

To my colleagues from across the aisle, to our colleagues in the Senate: End this shutdown now. Let's move forward with the people's business. We need to reopen the government, and we need to do it before this bad situation gets any worse.

SUPPORTING EGYPTIAN COPTIC CHRISTIANS

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

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on National Religious Freedom Day to announce that I am reintroducing my resolution in the House in support of the Coptic Christians in Egypt.

I sponsored a nearly identical resolution last Congress, and I truly appreciate the support I received from more than 50 of my House colleagues who co-sponsored that resolution.

Egypt and the United States are important partners in the fight against terrorism in the region. Egypt's role at Camp David has led to some of the closest ties between the United States, Egypt, and Israel in their history.

I am reintroducing this resolution because the Egyptian Government can do more to protect its Christian citizens.

I have great respect for President el-Sisi, someone I have had the opportunity to meet with on two occasions, and I applaud the changes and message that el-Sisi has made in the areas of religious tolerance and plurality.

He continues to say and do the right things at the top level of government: having a good relationship with the Coptic Pope, attending mass on multiple occasions, getting some churches reconstructed while constructing the largest Christian cathedral in the Middle East in the new administrative center outside Cairo, and holding terrorists accountable for their atrocities.

But, Mr. Speaker, there is more to do. I stress to the Egyptian foreign affairs officials when I meet with them that this is not an attack on President el-Sisi. To the contrary, I acknowledge the support and partnership and friendship that we have with Egypt. But there is more that can be done in the area of protecting religious freedom and human rights, especially in the rural parts of the country.

The State Department's 2018 religious freedom report on Egypt names Minya province as a particular area for concern. The Egyptians routinely claim that they have no minorities in Egypt. "We are all Egyptians, and we all take our water from the Nile," is something that is frequently said.

But from my studies and in my view, there is a population in Egypt that does not have the same protections of rule of law as others. The country must do better in places like Minya province.

Following Secretary Pompeo's recent visit to Egypt, Hamza Hendawi of the Associated Press wrote: "El-Sisi's widely publicized policy to staunch sectarianism, however, has done little to protect Christians in rural Egypt, where Muslim extremists frequently attack their homes and businesses or force them to leave their homes after violent disputes."

"Critics and activists say discrimination against Christians there is often tolerated by local authorities and branches of the security agencies."

Mr. Speaker, my resolution calls on the Egyptian Government to end this culture of impunity for attacks on Christians and to undertake the arrest, prosecution, and conviction of individuals who carry out attacks on Copts and other Christians in Egypt. It calls on the government to hold accountable these local government officials who fail to enforce the law.

I stand with Secretary of State Pompeo and support his message that: "More work certainly needs to be done

to maximize the potential of the Egyptian nation and its people. I'm glad that America will be a partner in those efforts."

However, as the second highest recipient of American military aid in the world, the United States Government must use the tools that it has to hold our allies to a higher standard, if they are to continue to receive our aid.

I encourage Egypt to live up to the legacy of Camp David at home, working to achieve what former President Anwar Sadat called "permanent peace based on justice."

Today in America, we commemorate Virginia's 1786 adoption of Thomas Jefferson's Statute for Religious Freedom. In his proclamation today, President Trump urged all Americans to help "secure this blessing both at home and around the world."

All people around the world, regardless of their religious affiliation, deserve the same freedom to practice their chosen religion like we have enjoyed here in the United States of America for more than 200 years.

Permanent peace based on justice for the Coptic Christians of Egypt, that is my goal with this resolution.

As President Reagan said: "Respect for human rights is not social work; it is not merely an act of compassion. It is the first obligation of government and the source of its legitimacy."

Mr. Speaker, the respect for human rights and religious freedom is fundamental to the American position, and I will continue to promote this issue for Coptic Christians and all Egyptians who take their water from the Nile.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the irresponsible government shutdown that is hurting people not only in my district, but throughout California and our Nation. There is no good reason for our government to be shut down.

As national leaders, one of the most important responsibilities as Members of Congress is, in fact, to pass a budget every year on time and always to keep government open. But since 2010, we have seen a phenomena take place where groups on both sides think, well, there can be justification to shut down government for an agenda, usually politically motivated, and put all of our other responsibilities aside.

Over half the Members of Congress have been here less than 6 years.

I say this government shutdown, any government shutdown, is irresponsible. We are supposed to have a budget for our country, like every family has a budget and every business has a budget.

When the government shuts down, people suffer, families suffer, veterans suffer, all Americans suffer. Approximately 800,000 Federal employees are

currently furloughed or working without pay across the country.

Last Friday, in my home State of California, over 37,000 Federal employees did not receive their paychecks. That is irresponsible.

□ 1030

Yesterday was payday for the United States Coast Guard. Protecting our seas throughout our Nation is a vital part of America's national security. They got a paycheck with a printed "0" on it for their wage.

Our national parks are operating without full staff or guides. We have had, already, Americans die as a result of the shutdown, one in Yosemite close to my district.

The government shutdown is putting Americans in danger in other ways as well. By shutting down the government, the President is making border security—supposedly the reason for all of this—more difficult and has stopped paying key law enforcement personnel, including Customs and Border Protection officers, Federal prosecutors, immigration judges, Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, and members, as I said earlier, of the Coast Guard.

This is a manufactured crisis in order to pursue a political agenda. It is just not right. It is not the way our government is supposed to function.

Within the United States, Homeland Security investigation agents who investigate human trafficking, drug smuggling, and transnational criminal gangs are working without pay. Does that make any sense? I thought this was supposed to be about national security. We ought to be paying these folks.

The Department of Justice has stopped processing discretionary grants that support State and local law enforcement, which is critical, I can tell you, in California, where we have many of these challenges. I have been listening to the people back home. That is our job. We are supposed to listen.

For 25 days now, the shutdown has been hurting the people of San Joaquin Valley. Middle-class families are suffering. We have IRS officers and large numbers of Federal employees in my district who are working or not working, and they are not receiving paychecks.

Many of these individuals have shared that they don't even know how they are going to be able to feed their children or pay their mortgage or their car payment, because the majority of families live—what?—from paycheck-to-paycheck. In fact, a group of Federal employees in my district is at the point of needing to take out loans and trying to find other jobs—which makes no sense—to keep themselves and their families afloat.

And the pain radiates, broadly affecting our local economies. Small businesses in downtown Fresno, Madera, Merced, and many other communities