

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Speaker, since I joined this body in January, I have done my darnedest to steer clear of the political circus that we see on a daily basis in Washington.

Instead, I have worked with so many Members to pass legislation preventing child abuse and legislation that makes it easier for Americans to save for school and for their retirement. We have made progress, and I have been a key part of that progress in USMCA, in welfare reform, and in implementing the farm bill.

But, Mr. Speaker, the impeachment proceedings going on in this Chamber in the last few weeks have given me pause, and they should give pause to every Member of this Chamber and to all American people.

I know—we all know—that some Members are for impeachment and others of us are opposed. But we should all admit that, by its very nature, impeachment is emotional, it is taxing, and it is divisive.

You are talking about removing our President from office. This is no small thing. This is changing the trajectory of this country.

Given how contentious and given how important that proceeding is, we have an obligation to play by the rules and to have a process that is open, that is sound, and that is fair. Mr. Speaker, we are failing at that special obligation.

First, the Speaker has launched impeachment without a vote by this body, and that is unprecedented. Members have been denied their authority, their voice, their opportunity to be on the RECORD in that matter.

Let us be clear: Under the Constitution, the authority to launch impeachment rests with the U.S. House of Representatives, not with the Speaker and not with the chair of House intelligence.

Second, this proceeding has not been open and transparent. Instead, Members have been denied access to witness testimony and kicked out of committees. There is no live streaming and there is no TV coverage as we have seen in past impeachments. The result is that Americans don't have access to important facts because they can't get them.

Finally, this proceeding has not been fair. In the past, Presidents have had an opportunity to have counsel present. Counsel has had an opportunity to cross-examine witnesses, and they have been given an opportunity to review the evidence and to prepare a defense instead of battling secondhand accounts of closed-door testimony selectively leaked to the media.

228 Members of this body have already announced that they are for impeachment even though the evidence is not fully gathered yet, and, in any case, they have not reviewed it. How is that fair?

Mr. Speaker, elections matter; transparency matters; due process matters; and faith in this Constitution, in our Constitution, and in institutions matter.

As I said, it is time that this body lives up to its special obligation. Our country deserves nothing less.

CHARLESTON C-17 CREW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the heroic actions of Captain Forrest Lampela, Captain Ken Dickenscheidt, Senior Airman Chris Bowers, Airman First Class Timothy Henn, and Technical Sergeant Nick Scarmeas, who broke diplomatic protocol and fought near-zero visibility to save the life of a U.S. Navy sailor who was wounded in combat.

The Joint Base Charleston crew was flying a critically injured sailor to Walter Reed from Ramstein Air Base in Germany. Halfway through their mission, the sailor took a turn for the worse and needed immediate surgery. The commander, Captain Lampela, made the decision to turn around and make an emergency landing in Shannon, Ireland, in dense fog and without diplomatic clearance.

In an incredibly stressful situation, the team fell back on their training and made a life-and-death decision that ultimately saved the life of their fellow servicemember. I am honored to commend them.

WARREN COUNTY BICENTENNIAL

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 Warren County, Pennsylvania's recent bicentennial.

In March of 1819, the Pennsylvania General Assembly approved legislation to establish Warren County. On October 1, later that year, the legislation became official, and Warren County became a part of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

This occasion was celebrated earlier this month at the Warren County Courthouse, with local leaders and live entertainment, including the Youngsville High School band. In addition to the remarks and performances, a time capsule was buried on the grounds.

As an avid outdoorsman, I am proud to call Warren County a part of my district, particularly for its beautiful natural landscapes. Home to a portion of the Allegheny National Forest, Warren County has beautiful outdoor spaces that rival much of the Commonwealth.

This bicentennial is an exciting occasion, and I would like to congratulate Warren County on this milestone. I wish them continued success in the next 200 years.

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COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. HAYES) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the chairman of the Committee on Education and Labor for his steadfast leadership of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, and introduction of the College Affordability Act.

But I cannot do that without further recognizing my colleague and my friend, Chairman ELIJAH CUMMINGS, whose family was from South Carolina, Clarendon County, to be exact, which is the home of the Briggs v. Elliott case, one of the first cases challenging school segregation. He understood the power of a high-quality education, and I know that he would be so incredibly proud of this remarkable piece of legislation that is being introduced this week.

This is an achievement that reflects the priorities of the entire Democratic Caucus to expand opportunities and make college affordable and accessible for all students.

I am proud that this bill embraces and reflects my priorities in Congress, including the Pell Grant Restoration Act, the Teacher Debt Relief Act, the Teacher Diversity and Retention Act, and the Jumpstart on College Act.

These bills would respectively protect student aid of vulnerable students who have been defrauded; provide educators with much-needed student debt relief so that they can stay in the classroom; reinforce critical programs that help develop a diverse educator workforce; and provide a robust investment in dual-enrollment classes that will lower the cost of a degree for students who need it most.

This bill is a year's-long effort to level the playing field for every demographic of students across the country, from veteran students, to working parents; and from small family farmers, to public servants. It is for students hoping to become the first in their family to go to college and afford it.

This bill is for families who struggle to put enough in the bank for their children's education. This bill is for students who struggle to fill out the overly complicated FAFSA; who struggle to earn degrees and keep the lights on while working and raising children; who utilize the Pell grant and other Federal aid to make it through, and still find themselves in debt.

My own journey reflects the challenges of navigating a system that simply is not built for everyone, of jumping through untenable hurdles to complete a degree. So it is deeply gratifying today to be part of the change that I so desperately needed as a student, to give a new, more diverse generation of students the supports they need to succeed.

The College Affordability Act would immediately lower the cost of college

for students and families across the country by expanding Pell grants, incentivizing free community colleges, and driving States to substantially reinvest in their public institutions.

The bill invests in teachers by fixing a broken Public Service Loan Forgiveness program and TEACH Grant system, and permanently funding historically Black colleges and universities and minority-serving institutions, all proven incubators of diverse educators.

The bill raises the quality of higher education by holding accreditors and schools accountable and weeding out bad actors. The bill also improves the completion rate for underserved communities through more robust and flexible student support.

This bill tackles the growing student debt crisis by making student loans cheaper to take out, simpler to understand, and easier to pay off.

With the passage of the College Affordability Act, for-profit colleges will no longer be able to look at students as mere profit centers to swindle out of their Pell or GI dollars.

The bill closes loopholes to prevent veterans and low-income students from predatory for-profit institutions and creates more guardrails to ensure that every student can have the peace of mind that the degree they are investing in has value upon graduation.

That is all Americans want—the opportunity to get an education that opens the doors to a life of achievement, fulfillment, and economic power, and to be self-sufficient.

The College Affordability Act is a downpayment on the success and financial stability of students in my district and across the country. I am proud to have contributed to it and I support it here today.

HONORING RONALD K. GREENLEAF

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

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Village of Hannibal Mayor Ronald K. Greenleaf who was recently named Veteran of the Year by the Oswego County Veterans Service Agency.

Ron Greenleaf has spent the vast majority of his life in public service, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to his country and community.

In 1967, he entered the United States Navy, serving in Vietnam on the USS *Harnett County*. An electrician by trade, Mr. Greenleaf assisted with maintenance, while contributing to the ship's overall mission of providing tactical assistance to American and Vietnamese forces. In recognition of his service, Mr. Greenleaf was recommended to receive the Combat Action Ribbon.

Following his deployment, Mr. Greenleaf returned to central New York to pursue a career as an electrician, to raise a family, and to continue his service in the Navy Reserves.

Ron Greenleaf has been married to his wife, Dawn, for 47 years, and together, they have two daughters. He is known for his commitment to his family, attending countless practices, games, dance recitals, and plays of his grandchildren.

Following his retirement, Mr. Greenleaf ran for the Hannibal Village board, a position he was elected to in 1994, and served in for 10 years. He then ran for the position of town supervisor where he served seven terms. Leaving this position in 2017, Mr. Greenleaf went on to be elected as the mayor of Hannibal, a role he still holds today.

Of his many accomplishments as an elected official, Mr. Greenleaf has most notably worked to improve infrastructure and promote recreation in Hannibal. He has been praised as a driving force behind the popular Hannibal ramp park, a multiuse park for bikes, skateboards, and Rollerblades.

Aside from his work in public service, Mr. Greenleaf has found many other ways to serve his community. As a member of the VFW, Hannibal American Legion, and chairman of the 2013 Wounded Warrior Benefit, he has worked to assist and support his fellow veterans through adversity and hardship. A deeply patriotic man, Mr. Greenleaf has given several speeches at Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies in and around Hannibal.

On several occasion, Mr. Greenleaf donated his skills as an electrician to assist with repairs for in-need neighbors. Devoted to his faith, for many years Mr. Greenleaf has been an active participant in the Hannibal United Methodist Church, serving as a trustee and youth group leader.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House to join me in honoring Ronald K. Greenleaf. Serving in the military, contributing as an elected official, and volunteering in central New York, Mr. Greenleaf has spent the majority of his life serving others.

Our Nation and community need more people like Mr. Greenleaf, and we are inspired by and thankful for his commitment to public service.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ELIJAH CUMMINGS

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and passing of my friend, ELIJAH CUMMINGS.

When I first came to Congress a few terms ago, I teamed up with Mr. CUMMINGS to introduce a bill honoring the life and legacy of Harriet Tubman.

When I approached Mr. CUMMINGS about this bill, he didn't ask me what party I was in. He didn't ask me what my political philosophies were. He didn't care about partisanship. What he cared about is the fact that we had a common interest; that being, Harriet Tubman.

I always appreciated that and in the years that have passed since then, we continued to cosponsor that bill and continued to push it.

I am sad to hear of his passing, and I offer my prayers to his wife and family, and I pray that he is united with God

right now. And I think going forward, we can all be happy and proud of the legacy he set for us here in Congress.

SECOND CHANCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUDD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss second chances.

Across our Nation, one in three adults have an arrest or conviction that makes it difficult to find a job.

Take Kevin Miller, for example, who was incarcerated for 8 months in 1992 after a minor altercation with police officers.

Kevin was only 19 at the time, but more than a quarter century later, Kevin hasn't been able to get a steady job because he must disclose his arrest on every job application.

Michael Mirsky faced similar hardships. He lost his job as a Verizon technician in 2012 after he pled guilty to resisting arrest during a disagreement over child support payments. In the years following the incident, he faced foreclosure of his home, and even as the economy improved and more and more jobs became available, Mr. Mirsky was unable to find a permanent job and start rebuilding his life.

Mr. Speaker, stories like Kevin's and Michael's are all too common. In fact, more than 70 million Americans have minor criminal records that they must disclose on job applications. As a result, millions of Americans have been turned down from countless jobs for mistakes made decades ago.

The reluctance of employers to hire people with criminal records, combined with job applications that contain check-the-box measures, has detrimental effects on the economy and prevents millions of Americans from becoming productive members of society.

In addition, excluding people with minor criminal records from the workforce, often results in their return to crime and to drugs.

That is why I am proud to cosponsor the Fair Chance Act, which prohibits the Federal Government and Federal contractors from asking about a job applicant's prior criminal record before a conditional offer of employment. This process humanizes applicants and gives them a chance to meet employers face to face and explain their past before employers make a sweeping judgment based on one checked box.

Mr. Speaker, America is a land of second chances. Barriers to employment should not follow a person long after they have served time, paid their debt to society, and started a new life. People deserve the freedom to redeem themselves.

As my colleagues go to conference over the NDAA, I urge them to include this legislation as part of any final deal.