

In Leipzig, Germany, 100,000 protestors and their peaceful demonstrations led to the once-unimaginable reunification of a civilized Germany.

Yet, as democracy spread, many assumed liberty's work in the region was done and that the roots of democracy were firmly entrenched.

Tragically, yet again, maligned Russian influence haunts the region as Putin wages his illegal war in Ukraine, today's scrimmage line for liberty on the European continent. Outmoded ethno-national narratives are being fed that, in the past, led to centuries of bloody conflict.

Mr. Speaker, now more than ever, democratic nations must unite so that liberty, justice, and equality is for all people across our globe.

HIRE VETS MEDALLION

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

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was Veterans Day, and while we were all back in our district and while we should thank our veterans every day for standing in defense of our Nation, November 11 is a day when we all can join together as Americans to thank these courageous heroes.

I rise today to congratulate one specific business, Tactical and Survival Specialties, Incorporated, of Harrisonburg for being awarded the U.S. Department of Labor's HIRE Vets Medallion.

This prestigious honor is the only program within the Federal Government that recognizes the meaningful and verifiable efforts undertaken by job creators to hire and retain our veterans.

Tactical and Survival Specialties, Incorporated, was founded by retired U.S. Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer Bill Strang in 1980, and the business is one of the oldest tactical equipment suppliers in the United States. TSSi is committed to providing state-of-the-art equipment to military, law enforcement, and disaster response professionals all over the world.

I applaud TSSi on being one of a select few awardees across the Nation, and I thank all the employers who have demonstrated outstanding efforts to hire, train, and retain our veterans.

AMERICAN LEGION POST 469, LONGPORT, NEW JERSEY

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

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to thank the American Legion Post 469 of Longport, south Jersey, for their work to honor our wounded veterans and their families with their annual Wounded Warrior Week in south Jersey.

During the week, the Legion hosts a wounded warrior and their family with an all-expenses-paid vacation to south Jersey that includes a parade with a police escort and numerous preplanned outings that include: fishing trips, days at the beach, and nights on the famous Ocean City, New Jersey, boardwalk.

All of this is a celebration that brings together the south Jersey community to honor our heroes in the military and to display the gratitude the citizens of the United States have for the many sacrifices of our soldiers and the many sacrifices that they make.

I thank the American Legion Post 469 for their continuous efforts to uplift our heroes in the Armed Forces and for having a positive impact on the south Jersey community.

I also thank Joseph Hahn for being a hero and thank the wonderful community that has hosted this year after year. And may God bless them and may God bless our heroes.

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COMMEMORATING NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

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

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, as some of our other Members have, I rise to commemorate the observance of National Apprenticeship Week.

Whether you are talking to people who are manufacturers, whether you are talking to people in the medical community, you know that one of the biggest problems we have in America today is we don't have enough people to fill the vital jobs that are necessary for our economy and necessary for the health of our citizens.

To a certain extent, this is because the educational system has let people down, allowing them to spend tens of thousands of dollars and go tens of thousands of dollars in debt without getting the skills needed in these two vital areas.

For too long, we have just focused on a vague 4-year degree path, but we are right now in a position in which we are ruining people's lives or putting them in a very difficult position as they become 30 years old, 35 years old, and still don't have a job commensurate with repaying these loans.

Apprenticeships are good for employers, good for workers, and good for our country.

As Members of Congress, people on the Education Committee and others must do more to expand and promote the apprenticeship program.

DACA BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is with great frustration that I rise today to speak on the Supreme Court hearing arguments today in three cases relating to former President Obama's DACA policy.

President Trump's decision to rescind DACA has thrust fear into hundreds of thousands of Dreamers. These individuals are active members of our society who pay taxes, create jobs, and help drive our Nation forward. To subject these individuals to the threat of deportation is absolutely wrong.

I have heard directly from many constituents who depend on DACA, and I am heartbroken by the trauma and fear they now face.

My colleagues and I did our job earlier this year in passing H.R. 6, the American Dream and Promise Act; however, Senator McCONNELL has failed to consider this important legislation. As a result, we are now dependent on the Supreme Court offering a favorable decision that upholds DACA.

I urge Senator McCONNELL to bring H.R. 6 for a vote and hope the Supreme Court will give a favorable decision on these cases.

CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF AUSTIN TICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MORELLE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia?

There was no objection.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize my equal partner in this Special Order, my very good friend from Texas, Representative AL GREEN.

Representative GREEN represents the parents and, for that matter, the place where Austin Tice, the person about whom we are speaking today, was born.

He and I have partnered because Austin Tice, though born in Texas, moved to the District of Columbia. Like many in the House and Senate, we have grave concerns about Austin Tice and want to express those concerns and call upon those who are keeping him in Syria to let him go.

Mr. Speaker, I can't say enough about how strongly bipartisan this matter is—bipartisan, yes—and bicameral. There are dozens upon dozens of Members of the House and the Senate who have written the President to ask him to do all he can to bring Austin Tice home from what we believe is captivity in Syria.

Despite the difficulties our country is having, as I speak, with Syria, this, we

believe, is not a lost cause. In fact, we are encouraged that there are Americans who Syria has let come home. Sam Goodwin is one. Canadian Kristian Baxter is another.

So we do more than hold out hope that we can bring Austin Tice home.

So, let me explain who Austin Tice is and why he has attracted such concern and interest in the House of Representatives and in the Senate.

First of all, I want to pay tribute to his mother and father, Marc and Debra Tice, who have never lost hope that they can bring their son home, have visited Members of the House and Senate, and have never stopped seeking his return to the United States.

Let me tell you why he is of special concern to me. Austin Tice not only lived in the District of Columbia and will continue to live here when he returns; Austin Tice was a U.S. marine. He served in the Armed Forces of the United States.

When he came home, he enrolled in Georgetown Law school and had only a year to go when he left the law school, because he so yearned to be a reporter, and went to Syria in the early days of the civil war.

Now, because he didn't speak to a lawyer first, he entered Syria without a visa. That is why he is being held. It is not the kind of reason you would expect someone to be held in a foreign country.

After all, Syria holds more American hostages, than any country in the world or any group that is holding people—we think about half a dozen.

You wouldn't think that not having a valid visa could be anything but easily corrected, but he has been there, we believe—now he will turn 38, or he may have turned 38 by now—for 7 years with no word from him.

And that is why we come to the floor of the House tonight, because we are very concerned because we cannot be in touch with him. Despite working through the appropriate intermediary, the Czechoslovakian embassy, we have not been able to receive word.

Austin Tice left for Lebanon, by car, from Damascus. Then he fell into rebel hands and was detained at the checkpoint. That is the last we have heard of him.

January 3, the very first day of the 116th Congress, my partner and I introduced a resolution for Syria to return Austin Tice, and that was as soon as the House commenced this session.

Frankly, I am concerned that, as I note in our House resolution, that there has been a video clip on YouTube. That clip shows Austin Tice blindfolded and being prodded up a hillside by masked militants.

You can imagine, since we haven't heard from him since, why we are on the floor this evening.

The Syrian Government has not acknowledged that they are even detaining Austin Tice or his whereabouts. Officials of the United States, however, believe that Austin Tice is alive, and

they believe that he is being held either by the government of Bashar al-Assad or by some group affiliated with that government.

The FBI has offered a \$1 million reward for information leading to the return of Austin Tice, and we are pleased that so many journalism organizations are working for his return.

It is important to note that Austin Tice was anything but a combatant. He was a journalist. He only went to Syria because he wanted to talk with the people who were living through an awful civil war. He was freelance, so he wasn't working through any powerful media, and his concern and his interest in journalism is what drove him, not any undermining of Syria or even views on the Syrian Government. He was acting as a journalist to find out what was happening.

Now, we recognize that Syria does not have a policy of never releasing American citizens. We refer to Sam Goodwin, 30 years old, who also made a mistake. He crossed—just like Austin Tice, he just made a mistake. He crossed the border from Iraq into northeast Syria without a visa because he was trying to visit every country in the world, all the innocence of that. And it was that kind of innocence that I think we should assign to Austin Tice because he is much like Sam Goodwin in that regard.

We call upon the Syrian Government to understand Austin Tice in that context, the naivete of a young man without legal advice, simply seeking knowledge, not seeking to undermine a government or to in any way interfere with the government.

There are others who have been held and who are believed to be in custody whose families are beginning to speak out. It is important to note that many families whose relatives are held in Syria do not speak out because they are concerned that, in doing so, they will be acting against the best interests of the family member held.

So, you can see how concerned the parents of Austin Tice must be that they have felt they had to speak out after 7 years.

Bear in mind that the United States has leverage with Syria, because this country is the largest single humanitarian donor to Syria. We are providing or have provided more than \$8 billion in humanitarian assistance for those displaced inside of Syria and the region since the start of that crisis in Syria.

The U.S. Government itself is supporting emergency food assistance, shelter, safe drinking water, urgent medical care, humanitarian protection activities, and other urgent relief. And I believe, if the Syrian Government understands or considers humanitarian aid from the United States, they will see that they have nothing to lose by freeing this American citizen.

Last month, the President told reporters that he himself was interested in working on securing the release of hostages in Syria. However, we do not

know what action the President has taken and call upon him to become involved, as he said he would.

The only intervention we know of is his intervention into the captivity in North Korea of Otto Warmbier, but by the time he got home, it was too late, and he died shortly after being released.

However, we believe that this Austin Tice is alive and can, in fact, come home safe to us.

We believe that, in any negotiations with Syria, the fate of our hostages should be front and center. We are pleased that Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM has indicated exactly that as well, again showing the bipartisan and bicameral concern about those being held in Syria.

On August the 11th of this year, Austin Tice's parents wrote an op-ed that appeared in papers around the country on the birthday of Austin Tice. They said: "We wish we could remind him of how glad we are he was born, how blessed we are to be his parents, and how truly we believe the world is a better place for having him in it."

Those are the words of his parents.

We are on the floor of the House today to speed Austin Tice home.

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Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my partner to come to the floor now, Representative AL GREEN, who, of course, is the Representative from the home State of Austin Tice's parents and where Austin Tice was born and raised.

I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN).

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for more than her kind words. I thank her for her many years of service here in the House of Representatives. She has acquitted herself as a Congressperson par excellence: Yale, M.A.; Yale, L.L.B.; in Congress for, lo, these many years, yet not able to vote as other Congresspeople do.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the gentlewoman and I will see the day that she will cast that first vote. I thank her for all of her endeavors. I especially thank her for what she is doing for Austin Tice.

The Tice family, Marc and Debra, are the equivalent of family with me. I have known them for many years now. I know how sincere they are with the efforts to bring their son home.

I know of their trips to Lebanon. I know that they have corresponded with people that some of us might not find suitable for such correspondence. But because they want their son, they are willing to talk to anyone who has intelligence that might lead to his return.

I know that they have made a difference in the lives of others who have friends, relatives, children, if you will, captured because they have worked with the State Department to help fashion protocols. They have worked with two Presidents. They want their

son home, but they also want to see justice for all persons who are being held captive.

Their son, Austin, is an all-American lad, at 38 years of age now. I am 71. Anybody under 71 is young to me.

He is an all-American person, if you will. Yes, he has served his country in the military. Yes, he was an Eagle Scout. Yes, he did attend Georgetown, Georgetown Law, as a matter of fact. Yes, he was a freelance journalist.

He was one of those persons who would dare to go to distant places, dare to risk life and limb so that we might know the truth about circumstances in places where the eyes of cameras do not pierce.

Yes, he was a person who had the courage, intestinal fortitude, to go into Syria without the consent of the government. I wish he hadn't done it, but I understand why he did it. I understand that he wanted to let people know about the conditions.

I am not sure that he went with pre-conceived notions, but I am sure of this: that he would tell the truth, that he would present the truth, that we would know the truth, whatever that truth might be.

I regret that he has been held captive now for some 7 years. He truly is a great American.

But more than this, for me, he represents the son I never had. I have no children. But if I had a son, I would want him to be like Austin Tice. I would want my son to have the courage to not measure his life by days and years, not measure his life by heart-throbs, passions, and tears. I would want my son to use the truest measure under God's Sun, and that is, what for others in your lifetime have you done?

Austin Tice was trying to help somebody. He wasn't there to help himself. He wanted to help others. That is the kind of son I would like to have, a courageous person who would dare to go where others dare not, a person who understood the risk but also understood the need.

Sometimes people like this have to stand alone, but they know that it is better to stand alone than not stand at all.

He is a hero. I miss him. His parents miss him. This country misses him.

I would ask that those who can reach the proper authorities in Syria—perhaps it is the President. Perhaps there are people who can get to the President. But I would ask that you would send this message: As a gesture of goodwill, let Austin Tice come home. As a gesture of an attempt to span some chasms that have been created, let us bring Austin Tice back.

This could be the genesis of something bigger than we know, giving Austin Tice his freedom.

I can tell you this: There are some Members of Congress who will be appreciative. There are American people who won't forget it. And there is an opportunity available to mend some fences.

I pray that this word will get to the appropriate authorities.

Mr. President, if this word gets to you, I would have you know that I am the kind of Congressperson who is willing to come to Syria. I am willing to come and be there to thank you and to welcome Austin Tice back into the hands of an agent of the United States Government.

This is a great opportunity. I beg that we take advantage of it.

Mr. and Mrs. Tice, I want you to know that we have not given up. We will not give in. We want Austin returned, and we will do everything, and we will leave no stone unturned, until this takes place.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for the time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I don't think there could have been a more eloquent statement than the statement we have just heard from my good friend, AL GREEN.

I am inclined to believe that if the Syrian authorities were listening, even they could not resist the eloquence, the depth of Representative GREEN's very intelligent but heartfelt statement.

I know that statement is much appreciated by Austin Tice's parents, who have had to go these 7 years alone, with only your help as their Member of Congress.

I am also grateful to the Members of Congress who, after all, don't necessarily represent anyone connected with Austin Tice, as AL GREEN and I do, for their generosity in coming to the floor. I would like to call upon Representative LORI TRAHAN from Massachusetts to ask her to say a few words at this time.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Mrs. TRAHAN).

Mrs. TRAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) for their dedication to the Tice family.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to an issue of critical importance for our country. Our fellow American, Austin Tice, is in his eighth year of captivity in Syria, where we believe he was unjustly detained and is reported to be held by the Syrian Government or its affiliates.

Austin was risking his health and safety as a freelance reporter, endeavoring to shed light on the suffering of the Syrian people for the world to see. His reporting has appeared in The Washington Post, McClatchy, and other news outlets.

As a fellow graduate of Georgetown's School of Foreign Service, Austin was also a former Marine Corps captain who served tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Austin was no stranger to risk.

Regardless, he knew the importance of the work he was undertaking. His dedication to service represents the very best our country has to offer.

There is every reason for us to believe that Austin is still alive, and I have joined with my colleagues to call

on our administration to use the full resources of the United States Government to bring Austin home.

I had the privilege of meeting Austin's parents, Marc and Debra, a couple of months ago. I am awestruck by their hope, their perseverance, and their commitment to seeing their son returned home once and for all.

I am comforted that there is strong bipartisan support behind this effort. I know we can get this done if we work together.

I again thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia. I appreciate so much her organizing this Special Order and a coalition of bipartisan legislators to keep focus on this very important issue. We won't stop until we bring Austin Tice home.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Massachusetts whose relationship with Austin Tice—she didn't know him, but there is a school tie there.

It shows you that people, when they hear about Austin Tice's captivity, are inclined to the eloquence of Mrs. TRAHAN, who just spoke about him, spoke about him without knowing him, spoke with such enviable and praiseworthy remarks.

I thank her so much. I know that I speak for his parents in thanking her as well.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to introduce one of my good friends from the region. We were so pleased to welcome her into our delegation, and I am anxious to hear what she has to say because she, too, is neither from Texas nor the District of Columbia, and yet, with selflessness, she has asked to express her views on the captivity of Austin Tice.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Virginia (Ms. SPANBERGER), my good friend, at this time.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman HOLMES NORTON for organizing this Special Order. I am grateful for the comments that she has made.

To the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN), his passionate plea to see Austin Tice freed was moving, and I am proud to associate myself with many of his comments.

I rise today because Austin Tice has been in captivity for 2,647 days. Those have been 2,647 days of fear and anguish for his parents, his friends, his classmates, and his community. They have also represented 2,647 days of Austin's remarkable life and his determination and his will to live despite his captivity.

Austin is a journalist with a deep sense of service. He is also a veteran. Seven years ago, he traveled to Syria to report on the plight of Syria's children. He wanted to shed light on the consequences of a complex and unrelenting war on the youth of Syria. And in Syria, he was abducted. It was that 2,647 days ago that he was abducted.

He remains held in Syria, and we have every reason to believe that Austin is still alive. He is being held in

Syria. In September, I joined a letter sent by Republicans and Democrats directly to the President of the United States. In that letter, we called on the administration to use every diplomatic tool in our toolbox to secure Austin's safe return home.

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Austin's parents have been among his strongest advocates. They have made countless trips to Washington, D.C., and across the Middle East working to secure his release. They have been pillars of strength as they have fought to bring their son home.

I had the opportunity and the honor to meet Marc when he was in Washington, D.C.; and to see the tenacity and strength and devotion to his child was awe inspiring. It also makes me understand how he could be a parent to a young man who would go out and seek adventure and seek truth and seek information as a journalist.

It is my hope that we can come together as a body to bring Austin Tice home. I never met Austin Tice, but I am in awe of his story as an adventurer, as a journalist, as a veteran, as someone who has traveled the world seeking information and stories.

I have been compelled to take part in this event tonight, and I thank my colleagues for their tireless efforts on behalf of Austin Tice, their work to bring him home, their work to bring a voice to his story and knowledge of his continued capture and detainment in Syria. I thank them for their work, and I look forward to continuing, in small part, to work with them where I am able, where I can be of aid to bring information and light to Austin's story and to continue to be an advocate to bring him home.

It is my hope that in some days we will be able, here on the House floor, to celebrate the homecoming of an American, of a veteran, of a journalist, of a man who sought to tell the story of children in Syria.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to thank my good friend, Representative SPANBERGER, for those compelling remarks. Once again, we are hearing from a Member who, as she says, did not know Austin Tice.

I hope that Debra and Marc Tice, when they see Representative SPANBERGER give such eloquent and intelligent and deeply felt remarks, are comforted to know that they are not alone in seeking the release of their son.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of Members, not to mention all of the many Members of the House and Senate, who have signed on letters to the President for help with Austin Tice, but it is worth noting again that, on the very first day of Congress, Rep. AL GREEN introduced H. Res. 17.

That resolution, introduced with Representative AL GREEN, sought, from

the very beginning of the 116th Congress, to draw attention to Austin Tice, and we will not cease drawing just that kind of attention until we have learned where Austin Tice is and when he is coming home.

The resolution that we introduced expressed concern over the detention of Austin Tice and laid out many of the factual matters that the Members have offered here today. In that resolution, we not only expressed our concern regarding the detention of Austin Tice, we asked the State Department and the intelligence community and the interagency Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell to jointly continue investigations and to pursue all information. We have every reason to believe that that is being done by our agencies.

We encouraged, in our resolution, the State Department and the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs to engage directly with Syrian officials to facilitate Austin's safe release. In our resolution, we encourage the State Department to work with foreign governments known to have diplomatic influence with the Government of Syria, and we request the State Department and the intelligence community to continue to work with and to inform Congress and Austin Tice's family regarding his safe release and his condition at this time.

We, I think, in bringing this very young man to the attention of the American people, we have shown our concern and have shown that we remain hopeful.

In this case, no word is good word; it is word, that he is alive, we believe. The best word would be word to the parents, Debra and Marc Tice, that he is on his way home safe and sound.

Let me pledge on behalf of the many Members of the House and Senate who have written the President, let me assure these parents, Marc and Debra Tice: This Special Order devoted to your son, Austin Tice, is not the end of the work we will continue to do until we bring your son, Austin Tice, home. We appreciate the devotion you have shown as parents, and we mean to honor that devotion by continuing to do all we can in the Congress to make sure that Austin Tice is returned to you safe and sound.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlelady from the District of Columbia, the Honorable ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, for leading this special order today on the life of Austin Tice.

In November 2016, I had the privilege of meeting for the first time, Austin Tice's mother, Debra. It was at the Newseum, where Reporters Without Borders and the Newseum were launching a campaign that ran a banner on the Newseum's facade featuring Austin.

The banner was showing on the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes

Against Journalists. The banner had a simple message next to a photo of Austin's face, "Held captive for being a journalist since August 2012."

Austin Tice is the only American journalist being held captive in Syria. The banner at the Newseum is supposed to continue to run until he is safely returned home to his family.

Today, November 12, 2019, Austin remains in captivity. I had the privilege of meeting his parents Marc and Debra Tice in September. They brought me up-to-date on Austin's captivity, and the many efforts to press for his freedom.

Austin Tice is a graduate of the Georgetown School of Foreign Service and many of Georgetown's students and faculty have taken up his cause. He served as a Marine officer and returned home to study at the Georgetown School of Law. But when he saw the carnage inside Syria, he felt a calling to report on the Syrian human crisis. Working as a freelance journalist and photographer for McClatchey newspapers, his images, interviews and reports soon appeared in the Washington Post, McClatchey, Agence France-Presse and other news media.

He intended to leave Syria after his 31st birthday, on August 11, 2012, after he filed his last story. On August 14th, he left for Lebanon by car from Damascus. Shortly after, we know that he was stopped and detained at a checkpoint, most likely in rebel control. Five weeks later, a video was posted on a pro-government website by people who appeared to be Islamist militants. There has been no contact with his captors.

Marc and Debra continue their efforts to find and release their son. The State Department believes that he is still alive. Other countries have offered their services as intermediaries. And national and international campaigns have been mounted to support him, his family, and the many other journalists from many nations who are in captivity or held hostage around the world.

Congress has sent several letters, introduced bills, and like today, taken to the floor of the House of Representatives to raise his case and declare our sympathy and solidarity with his family, friends and colleagues.

We will not stop until Austin is free and re-united with his family.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 7 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, November 13, 2019, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.