

There is a wonderful picture of Thad in the Orlando Sentinel obituary. He is helping construct a home for someone less fortunate. He is perched on a ladder. His shirt is splattered with paint. He has a broad smile on his face. That is how I will always remember Thad: happily helping, happily building.

May President Seymour rest in peace.

RECOGNIZING FORMER MISSISSIPPI SPEAKER BILLY MCCOY

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

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the former speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives, the Honorable Billy McCoy, who is pictured here.

Former Mississippi Speaker Billy McCoy passed away on November 12 after an incredible, lifelong career of public service.

Billy was directly responsible for revolutionizing the economy of Mississippi and bringing thousands of jobs to our great State. As speaker, Speaker McCoy championed the 1987 infrastructure plan that created four-lane highways throughout Mississippi. The four-lane highways brought industries and added more than 1,300 miles of highways to the State.

Billy was also dedicated to improving public education in Mississippi and giving every child a chance for success. His influence on the lives of numerous Mississippians will not be forgotten, but his honorable demeanor and commitment will be greatly missed.

I just think back to being at Jacinto, an ancient courthouse that predates the Civil War in Mississippi near Rienzi, where Speaker McCoy was from. Whether you are a Republican or a Democrat, when you got ready to run, you had better go pay homage to the great Speaker Billy McCoy, who did so much for Mississippi.

And I can still see him sitting on the front lawn in front of the trailer with the hay bales on it, where I would speak for my first political speech, and seeing Speaker McCoy out there, knowing that I would have gone by and gotten advice from him, even though we were on opposite political parties.

May Mr. Speaker rest in peace.

RECOGNIZING JUDGE SADIE HOLLAND

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Judge Sadie Holland, another icon in history. And thank goodness she is still here with us. She is just retiring.

She is retiring from Lee County Justice Court as a judge, after 16 years of service in that capacity. She also has a history of being Lee County's first female justice court judge. She served, before that, as the Tupelo court administrator and mayor of Nettleton, a small community in Lee County.

Judge Holland's influence in the community has been so significant, Lee County proclaimed November 3 as Sadie Holland Day.

I also have to mention that one of her sons is retiring as a State representative of over 36 years, who I will recognize next, and her other is a supervisor in her home county of Lee County.

The Hollands are icons in Lee County, and I thank Judge Sadie Holland for her service.

RECOGNIZING STATE REPRESENTATIVE STEVE HOLLAND

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize soon-to-be former—he is about to retire from the Mississippi House of Representatives—Representative Steve Holland.

Steve has served in the House of Representatives in the Mississippi legislature for 36 years. He was also a desk mate, I think, of former Speaker McCoy, and they were good friends.

Steve has represented the 16th District of Mississippi proudly, as he has represented all of the people of his district. He is a true Mississippian who prioritized legislation that would create a brighter future for Mississippi.

And, if you have never met Steve Holland, he is a character who is not large enough for this body to contain. What a gentleman. Always for the State of Mississippi and a true Mississippian at heart, but always with a quip and quick humor. He was always willing to never take himself too seriously, although all the matters that he achieved were very serious.

Steve Holland is an icon in Mississippi politics. I look forward to working with Steve in his retirement and thank him for his service.

IMPEACHMENT PROCESS

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I just want to talk a little bit about this impeachment process, or whatever you want to call it that we have going on.

The American people deserve the facts—and just the facts—not supposition from witnesses who have second- and third- and fourth- and fifth-hand information.

They have a right to not have lawyers and alleged whistleblowers, who the lawyer has—the coup started in 2017 as soon as our President took office, or impeachment next.

Mr. Speaker, the people of America deserve the facts. They don't deserve secret proceedings, leaks, misinformation, and disinformation.

And I just want to make a small point. A whistleblower is not afforded anonymity by the statute. They are afforded the protection from firing or retaliation, not anonymity. It is not a hotline or an anonymous tip line.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the misinformation and disinformation stop. Just the facts.

RISING PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, last Friday, November 8, the Department of Health and Human Services announced that the new Medicare part B premiums starting in January 2020 will increase by \$9.10 a month, a 6.7 percent increase over last year.

In dollars and cents, this means that premiums will go to \$144.60 a month, up from \$135 a month. As seniors know all too well, that \$144 will be deducted automatically from their Social Security checks, which is a bitter pill given the fact that Social Security itself is slated only to rise by 1.6 percent starting January 1.

Very simply, that \$9-a-month increase for millions of seniors will chew up a large part of any COLA that they can possibly receive starting in January.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to footstop that point about the fact that the Social Security system's COLA, which is tied to general inflation in the economy, is going up 1.6 percent; whereas, the Medicare part B premium, which is tied to healthcare costs, is going up 6.7 percent.

This is something that we know is endemic throughout the healthcare system. In the State of Connecticut, the Department of Insurance increased commercial insurance rates, that went up again above inflation, and identified the fact that prescription drug cost was the primary cost driver.

The Center for Medicare Services last Friday, when they announced the Medicare part B premiums, also confirmed the fact that it is prescription drug costs that are driving that 6.7 percent increase.

The increase in prescription drug costs that Medicare paid from 2018 to 2019 was 10 percent, and they are projecting that it is going to go to 10.10 percent in 2020; thus, we have a \$9 increase coming up in terms of people's premiums.

This is not going to come as a great surprise to the American people. If you go back to last year's election in 2018, the exit polls showed that the number one issue that people cared about and were concerned about and wanted Congress to act on was healthcare costs—more specifically, prescription drug costs.

That was an election that had the largest voter turnout since 1914 in a midterm election and elected a new majority with a 10-million-vote plurality.

So, that is the context that we are in right now, at a moment where this Congress, and particularly the House of Representatives, is poised to take up H.R. 3, which is the Lower Drug Costs Now Act. And in the midst of all the media focus on impeachment, it is important to know that the committees that have cognizance over healthcare—the Ways and Means Committee, the Energy and Commerce Committee, and the Education and Labor Committee,

on which I sit—reported out basically the same version of H.R. 3.

And it is, again, a matter of just a couple of weeks for the Congressional Budget Office to finish scoring the bill that we are going to take up that measure for a vote.

What does it do? It basically unhandcuffs the Department of Health and Human Services to negotiate with the pharmaceutical companies. By law, they have been prohibited, with what is called the noninterference clause, from negotiating lower drug prices.

The VA system has been negotiating prescription drug costs for decades, and, in fact, they get a much better price for veterans in America than the folks who, again, are covered by Medicare.

So that noninterference clause is going to be scaled back. DHS is going to be able to negotiate the 250 highest brand-name drug costs tied to an international price index—because America pays the highest drug costs by far. The next highest country is Switzerland, and they pay 25 percent less than we do here in the U.S.

Again, what do those savings mean in terms of folks on Medicare? Already CBO has told us, for people on part D, which is the outpatient prescription drug benefit, they, again, will see a reduction in the out-of-pocket costs, which today are unlimited in terms of any copayments that they are paying for medications. That will be capped at \$2,000.

I have a constituent up in Killingly, Connecticut; she is a retired teacher. She has AFib. She is on Medicare part D. It has been a great help to her. But those copayments, because the AFib medication is so expensive, cost her \$13,000 a year.

That will be brought down to \$2,000 a year if we pass H.R. 3, and that is just one example of the benefits—\$350 billion in savings to Medicare over 10 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Again, this is a program, Medicare, which is slated to go into negative territory, according to the trustee, starting in 2026. We are giving a \$350 billion lifeline to Medicare to make sure that it is an enduring program moving forward in the future.

That is why organizations like AARP, the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice, Patients for Affordable Drugs Now, and the Small Business Majority are supporting H.R. 3.

It is time to sit up and pay attention to what just happened last week to Medicare and pass H.R. 3 for America's patients and seniors.

HONORING MASTER SERGEANT MATTHEW WILLIAMS

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

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a native of the 21st Congress-

sional District of Texas, Master Sergeant Matthew Williams.

Master Sergeant Williams received the Medal of Honor at the White House 2 weeks ago for his heroic actions while serving as Weapons Sergeant, Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha 3336, Special Operations Task Force-33, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

According to the Medal of Honor citation, on April 6, 2018, Williams, his team, and roughly 100 Afghan commandos were airdropped from helicopters into a mountainous area in Afghanistan's Shok Valley.

The terrain was too rough for the helicopters to land, so the soldiers jumped from 10 to 12 feet off the back of the helicopters to start the mission. Some landed on jagged rocks. Others landed waist-deep in a river. None of them were detoured from the mission.

After making their way through fast-moving water and up rocky terrain, an element of Williams' team faced an onslaught of machine gun fire, sniper fire, and rocket-propelled grenades.

Williams and his group were forced to take cover. Once Williams learned members of his team were trapped and taking heavy fire, he quickly joined a small assault team to assist the wounded and the troops taking heavy fire.

Williams led the group up the mountain and across a 100-meter valley of boulders and difficult terrain toward the American troops in danger.

□ 1030

Quickly, they set up a human chain to bring the wounded down the mountain. As they were setting up the chain, one of his fellow soldiers was hit. Without a moment's hesitation, Williams braved enemy fire to give the soldier first aid and get him out of the line of fire.

After helping his fellow soldier, Williams immediately turned around and fought his way back up to the mountain to where his teammates were pinned down.

After taking out multiple insurgents, Williams worked to get his unit organized. He then went back to putting himself between enemy fire and his fellow soldiers, to protect them as they were making their way to safety.

Insurgents began attacking a small house at the base of the mountain the American troops were using as the collection point for casualties and injured soldiers. To buy time for helicopters to extract the wounded and get them to safety, Williams led a counterattack against a group of over 200 insurgents, fighting them off as his troops were being saved.

Master Sergeant Williams' actions were critical in helping to save the lives of four wounded soldiers. There is no doubt that Williams protected his fellow soldiers from grave danger. Because of his actions and that of his brave teammates, no American servicemembers were killed.

Master Sergeant Williams exemplifies the selfless commitment our men and women in uniform give to the United States of America, our values, and our way of life.

Master Sergeant Williams from Texas-21, from Boerne, Texas, the State of Texas and the entire Nation is proud of the honor you received 2 weeks ago.

HONORING SERVICE OF RICK PERRY

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I also want to say a few remarks quickly about my friend and former boss, and the former Governor of the State of Texas, Rick Perry. He is going to be ending his service as the Secretary of Energy, I believe at the end of this month.

He is a patriot, a proud veteran of the Air Force, and a proud Aggie, which he and my Aggie wife like to remind me of regularly.

He was born in Paint Creek, Texas, in a house that didn't have indoor plumbing. He lived in that house for 5 years without indoor plumbing.

He worked up to graduate from A&M, serve in the Air Force, serve as a State representative, as the Texas Agriculture Commissioner, the Lieutenant Governor, and the 14-year Governor of the State of Texas.

He is my friend. I respect him immensely. I thank him for his service as the Secretary of Energy.

I would just say that when I worked for him, I was battling Hodgkin's lymphoma, and the Governor could not have been more gracious and more supportive of me and my young family at the time.

He will always be someone for whom I will be happy to crawl across broken glass for any day, any week, anywhere in the United States. I know his public service is far from over because he loves this country so much.

QUESTIONS FOR MAJORITY LEADER

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I would make only one other point in my remaining 20 seconds.

I heard the distinguished majority leader talking about the whistleblower. We are in the middle of the Nation focusing on what the House of Representatives is doing, and the Nation is wondering why we aren't working on the things that will make their lives better: lowering healthcare prices, balancing the budget, securing the border, and doing the work that we should be doing to make their lives better in the United States of America.

To listen to the majority leader talking about the whistleblower in some hallowed respect when that very whistleblower had an attorney who was talking about a coup in 2017, I would ask one question: Why hasn't this alleged whistleblower fired that attorney?

Did the whistleblower know that the attorney was talking about a coup in 2017? If he did, why did he hire him? If he didn't, why hasn't he fired him?

Those would be my questions for the distinguished majority leader.