

loser of any election must have to accept and respect the will of the electorate.

The old process assured the presumption of fairness. The new process offers none. Acceptance of an election cannot be obtained by browbeating. It can only be earned by a full and open review of the integrity of the election establishing for all Americans that their vote was fairly and accurately recorded and that the result speaks as the will of the Nation. And I eagerly await that day.

THE POLITICAL STATUS OF PUERTO RICO

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

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss the political status of Puerto Rico, which is home to more than three million American citizens.

In my home State of Florida, there are now 1.2 million people who were born in Puerto Rico or who have Puerto Rican roots. That is more than any other State.

Every month, many Puerto Ricans move to Florida and other States in search of a brighter future. The island has been through so much—from the economic crisis, to Hurricane Maria, to the earthquakes, to COVID-19.

In Florida, we will always welcome these families with open arms, but I want them to have more opportunities in Puerto Rico. I don't want them to feel like they have no alternative but to leave their beloved home.

In my Orlando district, most of my Puerto Rican constituents have family members and friends still living on the island. Because they care deeply about Puerto Rico, I care deeply about Puerto Rico.

But every Member of Congress should care about Puerto Rico because Puerto Ricans are our fellow American citizens. We are part of the same American family, even though the hard truth is that the United States hasn't always treated Puerto Rico very well.

Our country now has the chance to do right by Puerto Rico.

That is because on November 3, Puerto Rico held a vote on its political status. In a referendum, the people of Puerto Rico were asked the following question: "Should Puerto Rico be admitted immediately into the Union as a State?" Yes or no?

Even though Puerto Rico has been a U.S. territory since 1898, and the island residents have been American citizens since 1917, this was the first time the people of Puerto Rico were asked this simple and direct question.

According to the results, over 52 percent of voters, more than 623,000 people, answered "yes," while nearly 48 percent of voters answered "no."

The vote was fair, and the results were clear.

At this point, it is beyond dispute that a majority of the American citi-

zens living in Puerto Rico want the territory to become a State.

Now, are there people in Puerto Rico who would prefer for the island to remain a territory or to become a sovereign nation? Absolutely. And that is completely valid and legitimate.

But when it comes to the political destiny of a place, the views of the minority cannot trump or take precedence over the views of the majority. That would turn the concept of democracy on its head. Votes matter.

And now that the people of Puerto Rico have spoken, the Federal Government must listen. Whether it is the White House or Congress, whether it is Democrats or Republicans, we must respect and respond to this result.

To do otherwise would be immoral or undemocratic, beneath the dignity of our great Nation.

Let me be crystal clear on two points so there is no misunderstanding.

First, it is well known that I personally support statehood because I think it will provide the people of Puerto Rico with democracy and equality and political power and a better quality of life. They do not have these things right now and they deserve to have them.

By the way, I am an immigrant and a refugee. I grew up in Virginia speaking Vietnamese with my parents. One of the main reasons I love America is because it is a mix of people from different cultures with different traditions who speak different languages. I reject the notion that statehood would weaken Puerto Rico's beautiful culture or its proud traditions or affect the island's use of the Spanish language.

Having said all this, even though I personally favor statehood, it is not my place to substitute my views for the views of the people of Puerto Rico.

If they wished to remain a territory or become a nation, I would honor that wish.

However, the majority of voters have chosen statehood, and so I intend to respect that choice.

Finally, let me say this: I am a Democrat, but my support for statehood has nothing to do with any prediction about whether Puerto Rico would be a blue State or a red State. History teaches us that such predictions tend to be wrong, and I personally think Puerto Rico would be a swing State that elects both Democrats and Republicans.

However, I would support statehood for Puerto Rico if it were as Republican as Wyoming or as Democratic as Vermont. To oppose statehood because you fear the people will not vote the way you want them to vote violates the most basic principles of justice and democracy, and I have zero patience for that.

In the coming weeks, I will work with Puerto Rico's governor-elect, resident commissioner, and legislative assembly, with the incoming Biden administration, and with my congressional colleagues on both sides of the

aisle to determine the best path forward.

I cannot promise a particular result, but I can promise I will never stop fighting for equality for the American citizens of Puerto Rico.

CELEBRATING VETERANS DAY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last week on November 11, we celebrated Veterans Day, and I rise today to thank each and every one of the men and women who have donned the uniform of the United States military; to express my gratitude for the individuals who have served to secure and protect our most precious freedoms; to acknowledge the sacrifices that these brave Americans have endured to make America the country that it is today.

In the Pentagon, in the stairwell to the office of the Secretary of Defense, there is a painting of a soldier in gear ready for deployment surrounded by family at the altar of a church.

Accompanying that painting is a verse of scripture from the Holy Scripture from the Book of Isaiah. And it reads: "Who shall I send? Who will go for me?" In the painting, that is from the Gospel and the word of God. That painting communicates that our Nation's veterans have answered that call.

Recently, I was approached about co-sponsoring H.R. 2350, the Ghost Army Congressional Gold Medal Act. A 16-year-old young lady named Madeline reached out to my office to share the story of her great grandfather's service.

Her great grandfather served in the Ghost Army during World War II. The Ghost Army was a tactical deception unit that sought to undermine the Axis Power efforts in Germany during the war.

Madeline shared with me that there are two gentlemen from my district who served in the Ghost Army, Tom Ebeling from Bradford and Claude Blake from Patton.

There are many fascinating stories from the Ghost Army that were kept secret for decades after the war. It wasn't until 1996 that this information was declassified, and their bravery could be shared with us all.

I would also like to mention that Veterans Day took place during National Apprenticeship Week, and this is a great opportunity to remind everyone what incredible value veterans add to our workforce.

Veterans exhibit proven leadership, higher retention rates, have the ability to work well under pressure, and they have a strong work ethic.

Our veterans are highly trained and highly skilled. They deserve our support while deployed and when they return home. One of the best ways to do

that is to prepare them for the work-force outside of the military.

I am a proud original cosponsor of the Veterans in Effective Apprenticeships Act, which instructs apprenticeship programs to account for a participant's competencies and prior experiences, including those gained during military service, among other things.

Mr. Speaker, the best way to thank a veteran is to hire a veteran. The skills obtained during service are invaluable.

In closing, I would like to offer my sincerest gratitude one last time to the men and women who have selflessly served our country in the United States military. They have put their lives on the line for us, and we are forever indebted to them for this sacrifice.

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CONGRESS IS THE FINAL ARBITER OF ELECTORAL COLLEGE VOTE SUBMISSIONS

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

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, this is the first in a series of House floor speeches by me on the recent Presidential election.

Some believe the Supreme Court decides who wins Presidential elections. That is wrong. While the Supreme Court has a significant judicial role in the Presidential election process, the United States Constitution and Federal law make Congress, not the Supreme Court, the judge of who wins Presidential elections.

Congress must first accept or reject State submissions of electoral college votes. Thereafter, if no candidate wins an electoral college vote majority, Congress, not the Supreme Court, votes on and elects the next President and Vice President of the United States.

The Constitution's 12th Amendment requires States to submit their electoral college votes to Congress, thereby triggering United States Code title 3, section 15, which requires that:

First, Congress shall meet January 6 following the election at 1 p.m. to receive States' electoral college vote submissions.

Second, the Senate President presides over all proceedings.

Third, each State's electoral college submissions shall be opened, presented, and acted upon in alphabetical order, beginning with the letter A.

Fourth, the Senate President shall receive and publicly announce each State's electoral college vote.

Fifth, the Senate President shall call for objections, if any. Objections must be in writing and clearly and concisely state, without argument, the objection grounds. Further, each objection must be signed by at least one Senator and one Congressman or be disallowed.

Sixth, the Senate and House shall then separate, and each body shall then decide whether to accept or reject elec-

toral college votes that have been properly objected to.

Finally, if the House and Senate both vote to reject a State's electoral college vote submission, those electoral college votes shall not be counted in the election of the President and Vice President.

United States Code title 3, section 17, adds that the Senate and House votes to accept or reject electoral college votes must occur immediately after no more than 2 hours of floor debate.

This process has been used in the past to challenge States' electoral college votes.

For example, in 2005, Democrat Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones and Democrat Senator Barbara Boxer jointly objected to acceptance of Ohio's electoral college votes for Republican President George Bush after Ohio election officials certified that George Bush won Ohio by almost 120,000 votes.

Similarly, in 2017, numerous Democrat Congressmen objected to all the electoral college votes for Republican Presidential candidate Donald J. Trump from the States of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Texas, North Carolina, South Carolina, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. These objections failed for lack of a Senate cosponsor.

In sum, the United States Constitution and Federal law mandate that, on January 6, 2021, Congress must decide whether to accept or reject States' submissions of electoral college votes for President.

If a Congressman and Senator jointly object, then the full House and full Senate must each vote on whether to accept or reject a State's electoral college vote submission. That vote by Congress is final, determinative, and nonreviewable. If a State's electoral college votes are rejected, then those electoral college votes are excluded from candidate totals.

My second speech in this series covers what happens if, because of rejected electoral college votes, neither candidate has the majority of electoral college votes needed to be elected President of the United States.

SOUTH CAROLINIANS APPRECIATE PRESIDENT TRUMP

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, President Donald Trump was extraordinarily successful in South Carolina, overcoming the biased fake news to have a tremendous victory.

The voters appreciated record job growth for African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans, along with record job growth for women and youth, along with a restored military with peace through strength, protecting our allies like Israel, as he stood for law enforcement to protect American families.

There is true love and affection for Donald Trump in South Carolina.

Democrats wasted the largest onslaught ever of cash, with over \$200 million from out-of-State, to pathetically spend money to the point where their votes were \$120 per vote to lose.

Democrats unintentionally exposed their socialist agenda of everything free for everybody, resulting in citizens with no freedom, but the political and media elites have all the power.

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was correct that socialism will work until it has run out of spending other people's money, always failing.

In South Carolina, female Republicans were especially targeted by the failing Democrats. South Carolina has elected the first female Republican Congresswoman ever, Congresswoman-elect Nancy Mace. The South Carolina State Senate has elected, with Penny Gustafson of Camden, the first Republican ever to be elected to the State Senate from Kershaw County, joining Senators Katrina Shealy of Lexington and Sandy Senn of Charleston.

Despite Democrat dirty tricks, a smeared Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM swept to victory, with Republican gains at all levels—Federal, State, and local—with the largest number of Republican elected officials in 140 years.

State Party Chairman Drew McKissick and Executive Director Hope Walker have been dynamic leaders for successfully leading the victory party with Governor Henry McMaster, Lieutenant Governor Pamela Evette, and Attorney General Alan Wilson.

I am humbled to have lived the modern Republican revolution, attending the swearing-in of State Representative Charlie Boineau in August 1961 as the first elected Republican in the 20th century, with State Representative Floyd Spence being the first to courageously switch parties in 1962, leading today to super Republican majorities with all statewide officials now Republicans, along with eight out of nine Federal legislators being Republicans.

I credit my mother, Wray Wilson, for my political involvement, as she was a pioneering activist in South Carolina for President Dwight Eisenhower in 1952.

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

Our sympathy for the family of the visionary Midlands business leader Arthur Brown, Jr.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

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

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate National Adoption Month along with National Adoption Day on November 21.

This recognition aims to increase awareness for the 122,000 foster children in America awaiting adoption,