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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and all who live therein. Holy God, You founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.

Creator of the Earth and skies, to whom all truth and power belong, we ascend our prayers to You. We are humbled to stand in Your presence.

Redeem us that we would be given clean hands and pure hearts, trusting not in idols of our own making, nor swearing to gods who seek to deceive.

Give us Your blessings, O Lord.

Make things right, O God, our Savior.

May ours be the generation that seeks You. Then may we find You in our work, in our living, and in our world.

In Your sovereign name we pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to section 11(a) of House Resolution 188, the Journal of the last day's proceedings is approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. DAVIDSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. DAVIDSON led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

RECOGNIZING THE ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF VANESSA GUILLEN

(Ms. GARCIA of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 1-year anniversary of Vanessa Guillen's death.

Vanessa was one of my constituents before she was transferred to the Fort Hood military base for her Army training. She was a rising star before her life was tragically cut short.

As Members of Congress, and as a nation, we have the moral obligation to honor Vanessa's memory and enact change that will end violence in our military installations. Her story has captivated Americans of all backgrounds. It brought much-needed attention to sexual assault in the military. It has led to changes being implemented at Fort Hood and at military bases throughout the world.

Madam Speaker, I will not rest until there is justice for Vanessa Guillen and her family. My thoughts and prayers are with them today.

CELEBRATING EARTH DAY WITH FERNDALE AREA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Earth Day and recognize Mrs. Sweeney's sixth grade class at Ferndale Area Elementary School in Cambria County, Pennsylvania.

In March, Mrs. Sweeney's class wrote an article called "Stewards of the Environment." Her students were inspired to start the "Every Bottle Back" schoolwide recycling program. The class set a goal of recycling 1,000 bottles, and, as of today, they have collected 1,486 bottles.

Mrs. Sweeney's class decorated receptacles and spread the word throughout the school. The students kept track of their progress with a tally sheet, and every 2 or 3 days educators took the plastics to the Roxbury or Geistown recycling center.

The actions of these sixth graders continue to inspire others in the community. In fact, these sixth graders have inspired the local high school to start a similar program. They have set a great example proving that the littlest of actions can make a big difference.

Thank you, Ferndale Area Elementary School, for your hard work and dedication to recycling.

Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Earth Day, let us use Ferndale Area Elementary School as an inspiration to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

(Ms. DEAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DEAN. Mr. Speaker, before coming to Congress, I served as a Pennsylvania State Representative. The legislation I was most proud to be a part of was the bipartisan Act 89 infrastructure bill that helped fix some of Pennsylvania's crumbling roads and bridges.

Signed into law by Governor Corbett in 2013, Act 89 was a serious investment in our infrastructure, but it is not enough. Nationwide, we know that an out-of-date infrastructure system is costly, energy inefficient, and dangerous.

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Today, in a moment of low interest rates and historic need and a rapidly warming planet, we have an opportunity and an obligation to invest in a stronger, greener, and better connected future.

The American Jobs Plan is that chance, a chance to build back better and make a generational investment for our grandchildren's future. This includes: roads, bridges, public transportation, drinking water, broadband, and good, clean energy union jobs.

I worked with a Republican legislature and a Republican Governor to help pass Pennsylvania's infrastructure bill. I hope we can get together and work across the aisle for infrastructure investment for the next generation.

BENEFITS OF THE VACCINE AND RETURNING TO NORMAL LIFE

(Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, since March, I have traveled my district, administering COVID-19 vaccines. As a doctor and former Director of Public Health, I combat vaccine hesitancy by discussing the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine, and the benefits of returning to normal lives, removing our masks, gathering together, and reopening businesses and schools by attaining herd immunity.

But the deepening mental health crisis has become an epidemic within the pandemic. Yesterday, I read of yet another youth suicide. Eighteen-year-old star quarterback Dylan Buckner, with plans to attend MIT, committed suicide on January 7. His father said that the Illinois extended stay-at-home orders and school closures greatly contributed to his suicide.

As leaders, it is our responsibility to encourage and incentivize vaccinations. One incentive is by removing our masks and returning to normal. Despite having reached the traditional level of herd immunity by our Members, our Chamber does not reflect a return to normal.

I implore leadership and the Attending Physician to follow science and the CDC guidelines, and permit Members who have been vaccinated or who have naturalized immunity to forgo wearing a mask while in the Chamber, and incentivize and show the public that a world beyond the pandemic exists.

Not another minute should go by where children as young as 9 years old commit suicide because they see no hope of a future beyond the pandemic. We cannot waste another second or another young life.

Let us remove our masks and show America that there can be a light at the end of the pandemic tunnel.

REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO THE EARTH

(Ms. BONAMICI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, in Northwest Oregon, raging wildfires have made the air unhealthy to breathe. Ocean acidification, harmful algal bloom, and hypoxia threaten our fisheries. Droughts and extreme weather patterns jeopardize the livelihoods of our farmers.

But there is hope. By recognizing the scale and urgency of the climate crisis, we can take meaningful action to address it.

Today, the Biden-Harris administration is convening a group of world leaders to commit to ambitious action. We stand ready to work with them to enact policies that reduce emissions, create jobs, and support frontline communities.

Last year, I joined my colleagues on the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis in releasing our bold, comprehensive, science-based Climate Action Plan to reach net-zero emissions no later than mid-century, and net-negative thereafter. It includes bills like my bipartisan Blue Carbon for Our Planet Act, which I am reintroducing today, to help capture the power of the ocean and coastal ecosystems in mitigating the climate crisis.

The Climate Action Plan is our road map. Now, on this 51st anniversary of Earth Day, we must all reaffirm our commitment to the Earth and to taking bold action to solve the climate crisis.

KEEPING OBSCENE AND INDECENT CONTENT OFF OUR AIRWAVES

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

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, John Adams said our Constitution is fit for a moral and religious people, and is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.

The average American watches about 30 hours a week on broadcast TV. And, of course, what starts on broadcast TV winds up on other screens as well. The Federal Communications Commission is tasked with keeping obscene and indecent content off the airwaves.

While there are some especially responsible parents who raise their children with no TV in the house at all, as a practical matter, broadcast TV affects the moral norms of the Nation.

I have received complaints in my office, and rightfully so, about Cardi B and the GRAMMYS. They wonder why we are paying the FCC if they feel this should be in living rooms across the Nation.

I realize that KAMALA HARRIS has used her fame to promote this performer, but I assure the FCC that millions of Americans would view her performance as inconsistent with basic decency.

Wake up, FCC, and begin to do your job. The moral decline of America is partly due to your utter complacency.

FULL ACCESS TO BENEFITS FOR VETERANS

(Ms. UNDERWOOD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, as a registered nurse and a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have spent my time in Congress fighting to ensure that northern Illinois veterans and veterans across the Nation have full access to the benefits and support that they have earned.

A critical part of that work has been focusing on ending the veteran suicide crisis by providing veterans with the resources they need and equipping VA employees and community partners with the training necessary to support veterans in crisis.

That is why, this week, I reintroduced the bicameral Lethal Means Safety Training Act with Senator BLUMENTHAL and Representatives BROWNLEY, MRVAN, LEVIN, and PAPPAS.

This legislation is an evidence-based approach to prevent suicide, and it creates valuable time and space between a veteran in crisis and a potentially lethal means.

I am honored that my bill has been endorsed by a broad coalition of veterans service organizations and suicide prevention experts, including: The Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, the Minority Veterans of America, the American Association of Suicidology, and many more.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Lethal Means Safety Training Act and join me in the urgent mission of ending our veteran suicide crisis.

HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF DAVID KERN

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

Mr. DAVIDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life and memory of David Kern.

David recently passed away at the age of 79, following a long fight with cancer. I am particularly extending my condolences to his beloved wife, Katy; his 4 children and 11 grandchildren.

David was a veteran of the United States Army, a volunteer firefighter, a small business owner. He served as Liberty Township Trustee for 32 years, and he was chairman of the Butler County Republican Party. He was an avid hunter, fisherman, and conservationist.

More than all that, however, he was a friend and someone who gave me sound advice and used his influence as a mentor.

David Kern was a very good man, and his presence will be sorely missed by his family, our community, and all who knew and loved him.