

Hear our prayers, O Lord, those we pray personally as well as for others. Forbid that we should live for ourselves this day, but may we be faithful in our service to Your people, even as we serve You.

In Your most Holy name we pray.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BUSTOS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. BUSTOS 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 PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL AMERICANS

(Mr. HIGGINS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate progress in America's pledge to provide liberty and justice for all Americans.

Today, President Biden signed the Respect for Marriage Act into law. The legislation ensures equal rights and protection for married couples regardless of the color of their skin, where they live, or whom they love.

This act is long overdue and necessary as threats remain to undo the hard-fought ruling giving same-sex couples the fundamental right to marriage equality.

I am honored to have cosponsored this bill, and I am proud this day has finally come.

PROTECT MEDICARE

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an issue that will affect millions of Americans unless Congress acts.

Unless we prevent the Medicare reimbursement cut that is scheduled to go into effect, the doctors, hospitals, and

healthcare providers who work each day to treat Medicare patients may be forced to eliminate services, furlough staff, and delay health initiatives.

These cuts will have the deepest impact on those patients who rely on Medicare to see their doctors.

At a time when our healthcare industry is already facing record burnout, we cannot afford to risk losing more doctors, nurses, and healthcare providers.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in fighting these potential cuts in order to protect American patients who rely on Medicare each and every day.

THANKING THE TEAM BUSTOS STAFF

(Mrs. BUSTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank Team Bustos. Every Member of Congress knows that the real work is done by staff.

Those with me from day one are: Lucie VanHecke, Miranda French, Ellie LaBotte, and Katie Papa.

Our dedicated and determined district team include: Laura Rude, Dennis Littlejohn, Austin Stadelman, and Coburn Gillies.

The legislative team that makes our accomplishments possible are: Elaine Ansah, Noah Emanuel, Jon Heppen, Yusuf Nekzad, and Leighton Huch.

The communications team that makes sure everyone back home knows we are working for them are: Katie Anderson, Philip Shelly, and Heather Sager.

The person who keeps the train on its tracks is Mitchell Dunn.

My chief of staff who has helped me complete 10 years of service is Trevor Reuschel.

Because of each of them and those who have served on Team Bustos over the years, peoples' lives are better, and Illinois is stronger. It has been my honor to serve with them.

IRREVERSIBLE PROCEDURES ON VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE DANGEROUS

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, from the beginning, our Nation's founding was based upon the idea of defending our borders and defending our people within it.

Yet, in a complete 180 from the original purpose, our top government officials want our tax dollars to fund irreversible gender reassignment surgery for children.

Chemical castrations, mastectomies, and hysterectomies for sex reassignment on minors are life-altering decisions that are permanent and should not be taken lightly. Moreover, the

government has no business paying for them with our tax dollars. It is not only irresponsible but also flat-out dangerous and encourages irreversible and sterilizing procedures on young people.

Mr. Speaker, 80 percent of young people who experience gender dysphoria move on from that when they become adults.

Some doctors and teachers—sometimes even parents—pressure vulnerable children into these invasive surgeries to keep in line with their woke agenda. Adults have no business forcing these decisions upon young people or making them themselves. Indeed, we have run legislation here saying that this should not be a discussion for minors, they must be at least 18 years old if they want to go through these procedures.

It is unacceptable the way adults, media, and government are putting children entrusted in their care in these situations directly in harm's way with irreversible, life-changing, and even suicide-inducing decisions.

FIGHTING CHORDOMA

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a member of my staff, Joshua Smith, who was recently diagnosed with a rare form of cancer known as chordoma.

Classified as a rare cancer of the spine and skull, chordoma is diagnosed in thousands of people worldwide every year, about 300 of whom live in the United States.

In honor of Josh and others diagnosed every year, I introduced a resolution last week to help shine a light on the need for more research and awareness of this kind of cancer which is very rare.

Thankfully, Josh is recovering and back at work, but his illness serves as an important reminder of the need to bolster research and funding to combat cancers of all kinds. Fighting cancers, particularly rare forms like chordoma, can and should bring us together.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues for their support for this resolution.

GREATER COMPETITION WITHIN THE DEFENSE INDUSTRY FOR SMALL BUSINESS

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, on December 8 the House passed the JAMES M. INHOFE National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2023 on a bipartisan basis.

I am particularly proud to see that my amendment, the Defense Maintenance Data Transparency Act, was included in this crucial package.

The challenges facing the Department of Defense's inability to access

necessary data to award truly competitive contracts to small businesses in America is unacceptable.

My amendment would direct the Secretary of Defense to clarify existing, ambiguous terms in the U.S. Code as well as in DOD's acquisition regulations that, once corrected, will help the DOD access the data it needs to promote greater opportunity for small businesses to compete for maintenance service contracts and has the potential to save millions of taxpayer dollars.

Greater competition within the defense industry means more value for every hardworking taxpayer in America.

HONORING SOUTH ST. PAUL POLICE OFFICER LEO PAVLAK

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

Ms. CRAIG. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was proud to watch the House pass my bill naming the South St. Paul, Minnesota Post Office after fallen South St. Paul police officer Leo Pavlak.

In 1933, after only 4 months on the force and at just 38 years old, Officer Pavlak was shot and killed by the notorious Barker-Karpis gang while assisting in a payroll delivery. To this day, he is the only South St. Paul officer to have been killed in the line of duty.

In the 89 years since his death, Leo's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren have continued building the impressive Pavlak legacy in law enforcement in our community.

Leo's son, Robert Leo Pavlak, Sr. was a St. Paul police officer. One of his grandsons, Robert, was a Ramsey County deputy, while another grandson, David, worked in St. Paul as a police officer.

And now Leo's great-grandson, Ryan, is following in those very footsteps.

So today, I applaud my colleagues in passing this bill to honor not only Leo's dedication and service but that of the entire Pavlak family.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my Senate colleagues to pass this bill in a timely manner.

BIDENFLATION ENERGY CRISIS ONGOING

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last week the average for a gallon of gas was shamefully \$1 more than when Biden took office. A gallon of diesel, fuel for trucks and ships, is nearly 50 percent higher.

Due to irresponsible energy policies of Biden and Democrats, inflation reached 40-year highs, and families are hurting. In the last year, one-third of households have reduced or skipped necessities like food and medicine to pay

energy bills, according to a LendingTree survey.

The National Energy Assistance Directors Association has said that household energy costs will be the highest in 15 years.

On Saturday, I was grateful to be on a codel warmly welcomed in Kiev by Ukrainians thankful for defensive weapons which last week stopped 85 percent of Putin's missiles and Iranian drones. Putin must be stopped from freezing Ukrainians to death as Stalin starved Ukrainians to death.

President Biden joined Turkish President Recep Erdogan and French President Macron pledging additional defensive weapons to courageous President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, who successfully protected America for 20 years, as the global war on terrorism continues moving from an Afghan safe haven to America.

HONORING CLAY PHILLIPS, CHIEF OF STAFF

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

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my longtime chief of staff, Clay Phillips, who is retiring at the end of this Congress. I thank him for his tremendous career of public service, including 16 years of service in the chief of staff role.

There are few people in the Tampa area who have not worked with Clay, and I am grateful for all the work that he has done to ensure that veterans receive the benefits that they have earned to ensure that our neighbors were able to stay in their house during the foreclosure crisis, all of his work on affordable healthcare, and for social justice.

He was also instrumental in Florida's new statue, the Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune statue that all Americans will enjoy seeing. She is the first African American in history to represent a State in the National Statuary Hall Collection.

He has always stood up for the voiceless, and as President Kennedy encouraged, let public service be a proud and lively career.

Clay's career was proud and lively. I am grateful he has provided selfless service, and I am grateful for his friendship and his devotion to our neighbors.

HONORING COACH MIKE LEACH

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

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Mississippi State University head football coach, Mike Leach, a man who left a substantial mark on the game of football and served as an inspiration for players and fans alike.

Coach Leach was, in a word, unconventional. The air raid offense, which he brought to college football, changed the game of football forever; but the sports world will not soon forget Coach Leach's unique personality that entertained everyone who had the opportunity to listen to his good-humored interview style and memorable one-liners.

I am thankful that Coach Leach chose Mississippi State University as his new home in 2020. The last three seasons with him at the helm have produced some of the most memorable football seasons in my lifetime.

Without a doubt, Coach Leach will be missed, and his impact on the game of football and Mississippi State University will prove to be timeless. We will continue to look back fondly on the memories that Coach Leach, the pirate, graciously left us with.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF HOUSE DEMOCRATS

(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. Mr. Speaker, as we come to the final days of this session, I rise to celebrate the remarkable accomplishments House Democrats delivered for the American people during the 117th Congress.

While there are too many wins to mention, I would like to make sure everyone knows that we have always put people over politics.

Democrats will save 13 million Americans an average of \$800 a year on their health insurance premiums. Democrats helped create a total of 10.3 million jobs. Democrats lowered the national unemployment rate to 3.7 percent, which is nearly a 50-year low. Democrats delivered the largest 1-year reduction to the Federal deficit in American history, a reduction of \$1.5 trillion this year alone. Democrats passed many pro-woman bills—like the Women's Health Protection Act, which protects the woman's right to make her own healthcare decisions.

House Democrats did all this because we always put people over politics—we always have, and we always will.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF CHARLES "RED" FARMER

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

Mr. PALMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the life of Charles "Red" Farmer. Mr. Farmer was born on October 15, 1932, in Nashville, Tennessee. He began racing cars in the 1940s and is still competing today at the age of 90, having recently raced on the dirt track at Talladega Short Track in Alabama.

Following military service in Korea, and having obtained his NASCAR license, Red competed in his first Daytona Beach race in 1953 and went on to