

SINGING THE PRAISES OF  
JENNIFER WICKRE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity from leadership to be able to spend a little time this evening on what I define as a very, very important subject.

Mr. Speaker, in the rancorous world we live in these days there is a tendency for people who observe the United States Congress from afar to think that we have become a shrill, loud, unfocused rabble of people. Perhaps we have lost our sense of humanity, and even worse.

Tonight, I would like to talk about an individual, a person, a set of circumstances that refute that falsehood and the popular perception.

What do I mean by that?

Mr. Speaker, not many months ago, we, on the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, both Republicans and Democrats alike, majority and minority, received some—what can only be described as devastating news—that a member of our family—and when I say family, I mean, our congressional family, the people who serve in this building, and in these buildings, and serve in the personal offices, and serve in the committee offices, and serve in the leadership offices.

These are people who are the individuals that you have known for months, years, or maybe sometimes decades that you have jostled with on issues and that you have crossed-referenced notes and you have debated with for extended periods in the various roles. Those are the people I define as our congressional family, and they could be Democrats, they could be Republicans, they could be senior staff, senior Members, or the most junior of all.

□ 1800

That devastating news that I mentioned, and not all that many months ago, was that the deputy staff director for the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, the majority deputy staff director, Jennifer Wickre, had been diagnosed with cancer.

Now, that is always the most intimidating and shocking news that anyone could receive. Tonight I don't just want to talk about that—and we will because it is important to the struggles she is facing—but I want to talk about the person that this member of our congressional family has been and is. No matter what the struggles of the next few weeks or months turn out to be, she will always be a member of our family in our hearts and in our minds.

Jennifer Wickre—Jenn, as we call her—is originally from Medford, Oregon, a town in the southern part of the State. Her parents ran a local law practice. They are the kind of salt of the earth sort of people whom you

would want to live next door to you, Mr. Speaker.

Jenn earned a bachelor's degree in government from Claremont McKenna College in Claremont, California, and a master's degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College.

In her tenure, she has served in a variety of roles. I think the role that I speak of this evening is her role in Congress. She started her career on Capitol Hill as a scheduler for Congressman Jerry Lewis in 2003.

Now, for those of us who remember that wonderful individual, Jerry Lewis was a senior member of Appropriations and would be chairman of the committee. Jerry served in numerous senior leaderships in positions within the Republican Conference. He was a great Member to work for and to learn from.

Jennifer worked as a scheduler. Mr. Speaker, as any of you who have any interaction with Members of Congress or their offices know, one of the most difficult staff positions is to be a scheduler because you have got to balance the Member's limited time with the needs of the spouse, with the needs of the district staff, with the needs of the office staff, the committee staff, and all the important constituents back home.

She performed well—as all of us who know her would have expected nothing less—and she became a senior legislative assistant.

Now, she worked off the Hill for a little while, but then she came back to the Hill to be the professional staffer on the Research and Technology Subcommittee in 2015. She worked there diligently for 7 years and became the staff director of the Research and Technology Subcommittee and ultimately a senior policy adviser to Chairman Lamar Smith.

After I had the opportunity, she became the deputy staff director for the overall group.

Jennifer's personality—Jenn, again, as we all call her—was the kind of person who no matter who you were, the most senior member of the committee, the most junior member of the committee, the most well-informed member of the staff, or the newest member, she treated everyone with the same kind of respect and decency and would take the time to reason through and discuss with people the merits of their logic and also sometimes the challenges that that presented. She was ever the diplomat—ever the diplomat.

Now this evening, I think we have a few of the folks whom she has touched in this Congress, and they would like to offer a thought or two. I will yield shortly to several of my colleagues.

Before I do that, let me, again, return to the point. We are a congressional family. Jenn is one of our own, and she faces challenges that hopefully none of us will ever face. She has done it with the most amazing grace, strength, and determination. She has decided her own course of action, and that is always to be respected.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WEBER), who has had many opportunities to work with our wonderful friend.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Sadly, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I wish we weren't here.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Jennifer Wickre, a public servant and trailblazer in the science, space, and technology community.

When I got here in 2013, I was put on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee then, and I have been on it a long time. I have got to see a lot of staffers, though I think the gentleman from Oklahoma has, too.

I have had the privilege of getting to know Jenn during my time on the committee. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, her enthusiasm, her brilliance, and her commitment, as the chairman laid out, were second to none.

Her smile—she always laughed at my jokes. She always laughed at my jokes. I think she was trying to make me feel better. God knows I wish she felt better right now. I wish she felt better.

People don't often realize how impactful folks like Jenn are at drafting and moving the needle on very important legislation that has impacted the science, space, and technology community. Likewise, they don't often recognize or realize what the staff means to us when you have got somebody like Jenn—what a jewel. What an absolute jewel.

She is an avid Oregon Ducks football fan. I don't know why she wasn't for the Dallas Cowboys. I am trying to figure that out. Go Ducks.

She sings in the Congressional Chorus and loves to walk her rescue mutt named Finn. With a lot of the good humor that she had, the dog could have been named Huckleberry Finn for that matter.

All at the young age of 42 Jenn has achieved more than most people do in a lifetime. She should be proud of that, and I promise her that we are not only proud, but we are grateful.

We thank Jenn for the time she has invested in our great Nation, and we want her to know that we are rooting for her, we are praying for her, and we are in her corner.

We expect God to do a miracle from what little power we have in this House of Representatives—as I believe this country was ordained by God—to the throne of grace that He would heal Jenn.

Cancer sucks, and Miss Jenn is fighting the good fight. I pray she is at peace knowing the positive impact she has had not only in the Halls of Congress but on every single person and staff member she has come in contact with.

Mr. Speaker, I want to urge all my colleagues to keep Jenn and her family in their prayers.

I want to end with a Bible verse from Deuteronomy 3:16 that says: Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or terrified because of them; for the Lord

your God goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.

God in Heaven, hear our prayers for the healing of our one great Miss Jenn.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Texas for those very thoughtful and very wise words.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN) who has had many opportunities over the years to work with our mutual dear friend.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman LUCAS for organizing this Special Order. Honoring Jenn Wickre is really a privilege.

I know Jenn from the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, and I know her as an organized and capable person. Today, even more than speaking for myself, I am here to speak for the Democratic staff of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee who know her even better than I do. Many of them have worked with Jenn closely for many years. They really appreciate her and her excellence as a congressional staffer serving this institution and our Nation and how valued she is as a colleague on both sides of the aisle and how respected she is in the greater science and technology stakeholder community.

Prior to coming to the Hill, Jenn had not worked on science policy, but she has a keen intellect, and she understands and cares deeply about the issues that come before our committee. She has become such an expert on these issues that most people just assume that Jenn came from a lifelong science background.

Staff on both sides have benefited from her institutional knowledge, her thoughtfulness, and her perspective. The mutual trust and respect she shared with Democratic staff has allowed them to find common ground on almost every topic that came before them.

It also even enabled them to tag team in difficult negotiations with the Senate and external stakeholders, especially during the CHIPS Act. Jenn's sharp sense of humor also helped ease the tension in these long and acrimonious negotiations with the other body.

Jenn played an essential role in the CHIPS and Science Act, a bill we celebrate as being a once-in-a-generation accomplishment, and she did that while going through treatment for her cancer. That is just remarkable.

Staff on the Democratic side count Jenn as more than just a colleague. She is their friend, and they are praying for her and pulling for her at this moment.

I believe that their friendship speaks further to the special person that she is. Jenn is the best of what our Nation should expect from people dedicating their careers to the work of this institution.

I am honored to lend my voice to the celebration of her career today and to be the voice of the Democratic staff

who love her so much and who are praying for her recovery.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman LUCAS for allowing me to participate.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for her very thoughtful and extremely accurate comments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. POSEY), who is another Member who has worked extensively with our dear friend.

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for his leadership.

Today, we recognize a key congressional staffer who has served us on the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, Jenn Wickre.

She has faithfully served both a Member of Congress and the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee for more than 16 years.

Often in Washington, people hear the phrases: No, we can't do that. That is too hard. No, that can't be done. No, we just can't do that.

But that has never been an experience anyone I know has had working with Jenn.

She has always been such an amazing help to our staff and to our efforts to properly serve the American people.

If our staff or I have ever brought tough issues before the committee, we never heard her sigh, roll her eyes, or do any of the things that somebody might do with some of my crazy ideas. She just jumped right in and figured out a way to get us to where we needed to go. You have got to love it, Mr. Speaker.

I have had amendments that have made it into bills strictly because of Jenn's leadership and her hard work; otherwise, they would have just gone nowhere. It is just the special touch that she had.

She always found a way to help members on the committee so they could best serve their districts and their constituents, and often it was in a bipartisan manner, which is not easy to come by around this place.

Congressional staff are truly the unsung heroes and heroines of this institution. Without them the legislative wheels would grind to a halt, and that is a fact.

Jenn Wickre is one of those heroines. Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers go out to this wonderful lady and her family.

God bless Jenn, and God bless America.

□ 1815

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, my colleague is exactly right. Sometimes even in the institution and amongst the family, we forget how important the critical role that the staff plays is, their understanding of the issues, their vast experience and ability to focus. Jenn is one of those individuals, one of the catalysts, I will say, of the legislative process.

Mr. Speaker, I yield now to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) to discuss a fellow Oregonian.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, as a fellow Oregon Ducks fan, an Oregonian, I am really grateful to be here today with my colleagues to honor an exceptional staffer, Jenn Wickre.

Jenn is a longtime, dedicated, and invaluable staffer for the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, on which I have had the honor of serving since I joined Congress in the beginning of 2012.

Jenn has been a tireless public servant, supporting members of the Science Committee in our efforts to craft and advance meaningful legislation.

I know her unwavering commitment, her expertise, and her bipartisan approach have really left an indelible mark, and we are honored to pay tribute to her exceptional contributions this evening.

Committee staff plays a crucial role in supporting the work of the committee. They are really essential to the functioning of the legislative process. I learned when I went from the Oregon legislature to Congress how important our committee staff members are.

Jenn has been working diligently behind the scenes, providing her valuable expertise, her research, and her assistance to help Members fulfill their responsibilities on the committee. She, like many of our staff, possesses specialized knowledge in policy and really plays a pivotal role in helping us understand complex issues.

Many of us who serve on the Science Committee are not scientists. We don't have that expertise. Our committee staff really helps us identify potential pitfalls, because we occasionally run into those, and develop effective strategies to achieve our goals. Her expertise and dedication have really contributed to the development of well-informed and evidence-based policy decisions, leading to more effective policymaking that benefits the American people.

I had the honor of traveling with Jenn on a bipartisan delegation to the Galapagos Islands in 2018. When you travel with somebody, you get to spend time together. We conducted oversight of NSF-funded research and observatories. The primary subject of the trip and a significant area of cooperation between the United States and each of the nations we visited was our scientific research enterprise.

The trip was noteworthy because it really gave a unique insight into the bipartisan cooperation that lay ahead. It was great to have Jenn on that trip. It was one of those Science Committee trips that you will never forget for the lessons learned and the relationships made.

In addition to her exceptional expertise, she has been a model of bipartisan collaboration. I have heard stories from her friends across the aisle about how she has continued to foster a culture of inclusivity, cooperation, and mutual respect, transcending political differences and working with her colleagues on both sides of the aisle to

achieve common goals. That is something we know we desperately need in this institution.

Her ability to find that common ground to build consensus was crucial to the passage of important legislation like the recent CHIPS and Science Act. Many have suggested this would not have been possible without her unwavering commitment to the underlying policy, which helped bridge divides and really led to significant results for our Nation's economy, research and technology sectors, and, of course, our scientific research enterprise.

Mr. Speaker, I am really honored to be able to join my colleagues in extending our deepest appreciation and gratitude from both sides of the aisle for Jenn's exceptional service to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and to the American people.

I thank Jenn for her unwavering dedication, kindness, and extraordinary contributions.

I can't end without saying: Go Ducks.

I know what a wonderful Ducks fan Jenn is, so I had to get that shout-out to my alma mater.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for the opportunity to honor Jenn Wickre this evening.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Oregon for her comments.

Many people may notice that several of us are wearing an Oregon Ducks pin that has "CANCER" on it. It shows the Oregon Duck's foot smashing it. That is a symbol to us of Jenn's enthusiasm for Ducks football, but it also shows our common spirit about smashing cancer and how appropriate that the Science Committee worked so diligently in those areas.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN), another senior member of the Science Committee with a long working relationship with Jenn.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, it is with a very heavy heart that I offer my prayers and sincerest gratitude to Ms. Jenn Wickre, a longtime staffer on House Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

I had the honor of working with her under former Chairman Lamar Smith and now under Chairman FRANK LUCAS and their leadership. Jenn has been an integral part of the committee, and her departure will leave a void that will be absolutely impossible to fill.

Over the years, my staff and I have grown very close to Jenn, often relying on her expertise and strong work ethic. We have traveled together on several very meaningful and informative codels, very interesting ones, and I have always appreciated Jenn's input to and her service on these wonderful trips that we have taken.

She is reliable. She acts with thoughtfulness and has always been able to provide an insightful perspective in approaching policy. Throughout her time on the committee, Jenn has shown an unshakeable passion for serv-

ing our Nation and advocating for the goals of our Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

Her professionalism and one-of-a-kind personality have left an enduring mark, and she will be greatly missed in the Halls of Congress.

I am sure that I speak for many in expressing my very deepest appreciation for Jenn and her years of service and lasting contributions. She is a shining example, without question, of public service. Whether she knows it or not, she has made a significant difference in the lives of many Americans.

We wish her and her family the very best during this time, and she is in our deepest prayers.

I thank Jenn. We are praying for her, and may God bless her always.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for his thoughts and observations.

We arrive at a moment in this Special Order when we begin to focus on a conclusion. You have heard this evening from Democrats and Republicans alike. You have heard from the most senior Members about the wonderful nature of our friend Jennifer Wickre. You can tell from those of us who have worked with her day to day, in many instances for years, some for decades, what a wonderful, productive, bright, articulate, and focused young woman she is. She has made the committee more productive. She has made the lives of her many friends richer.

I simply suggest this in my closing: We may not get to work together with Jenn again in the near future on the Science Committee, but I have confidence in her and her faith. I am confident that, somewhere down the road, we will work together with Jenn again in a wonderful place.

Mr. Speaker, God bless the congressional family, and in particular, God bless Jennifer Wickre, one of our very own.

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

#### REPUBLICANS' FIRST 100 DAYS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EDWARDS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, this evening, I have some of the most influential leaders in the House Republican Conference to ad-

dress some of the key issues we are addressing this week together in the people's House.

Mr. Speaker, I yield first to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MURPHY).

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, this evening, I will be talking on the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act.

I have been a physician now for over 30 years and have dealt with a lot of different types of individuals, and there is a difference medically between men and women. There is a difference biologically between men and women. There is a difference chromosomally between men and women. There is a difference genetically between men and women.

At age 5, it is an absolutely normal thing for young children to question who they are. It is absolutely normal. We all go through that phase. Sadly enough, our left colleagues now want to put pressure, either from teachers, counselors, or whatever, that they may be disillusioned, that they may not understand who they are, to try to push them in one direction.

What has happened? We now have this huge conglomeration of individuals who don't understand their biological sex. We have been preached to by the left for 3 years, "Follow the science. Follow the science," even though the science was wrong.

Right now, they don't want to follow the science. It comes down to the science of gender, and they refuse to allow that truth to be told. They don't want to hear about the true biological and genetic differences between XY and XX chromosomes.

As a physician, I can say there is an absolute genetic difference in mitochondria, spindle cell formation, and everything else in a genetic XY male from an XX female. It is how they develop.

Regardless of any type of hormonal manipulation, an XY male has a competitive advantage over an XX female—period, point blank. It is fact. It cannot be refuted.

Sadly enough, the left doesn't want to hear that. They want to push the fact that the choice of a gender will get to decide a competitive advantage. They want to trample over the rights of women and allow men to compete in women's sports. It is an absolute absurdity.

I honestly cannot believe that this is an actual issue that we are debating in the United States of America. It is common sense.

I won't point out any specifics, but what would happen if a male from the NBA decided he wanted to compete in the WNBA? Would that be fair? Absolutely not.

What would happen if somebody like Michael Phelps wanted to compete in women's athletic sports, in swimming? It would be absolutely unfair, but the left is not horrified if something like that would happen in high school or college.