

Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National School Choice Week and the importance of school choice.

I was proud to join my colleague, Senator TIM SCOTT of South Carolina, in introducing the CHOICE Act last Congress, which would expand the school choice options and programs for elementary and secondary school children. I look forward to working together again on similar legislation.

I was also proud to join Representative JOHN MOOLENAAR last week on his resolution to designate this week as National School Choice Week.

In Iowa, we recognize that every child learns and processes information differently, and we have empowered parents and students to choose the school best suited to their needs.

We are fortunate to have Governor Kim Reynolds, who is leading the Nation in school choice policy, and who has been a strong advocate for school choice throughout her tenure.

□ 1215

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many children were forced to transition to virtual learning while some private schools stayed open. Unfortunately, this resulted in a significant drop in testing averages across core subjects like reading comprehension and math.

This proved, in some instances, that public schools weren't able to adapt to the needs of each individual student. However, some students in private or charter schools were able to excel because of smaller class sizes or specialized education tailored to their strengths.

I am honored to represent a State where we put parents first, where parents matter, and where parents have a right to a say in their children's education instead of Washington bureaucrats. As a mother of two, I understand how important it is to ensure that your children receive the best education possible.

I will continue to fight for school choice to ensure every child in America has a chance to succeed in the best possible learning environment. Our children deserve nothing less.

I would also like to wish a happy birthday to my nephew. Happy birthday, Andrew.

I would like to extend birthday wishes to Nicholas Pottebaum, one of my very first campaign volunteers and now a health policy adviser to Senator GRASSLEY. Happy birthday, Nick.

REMEMBERING THE HONORABLE JIM KOLBE

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

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor James Thomas Kolbe, an Arizonan, a decorated Navy veteran,

and a patriot who faithfully served my State and our country for most of his life.

James Thomas Kolbe always introduced himself as Jim, and that is how he will be remembered by all those who knew him and those in this Chamber who were his colleagues.

For 22 years, Jim also was well known in his hometown of Tucson and here in the Nation's Capitol by the position he held—Congressman.

Congressman Kolbe died on December 3 at the age of 80. He led a long, accomplished life, and I am honored, truly honored, to hold the House seat he held for 11 terms.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great privilege as a new Member of the United States House of Representatives to offer this tribute to a man I considered a friend, a mentor, and a role model.

Jim was an elder statesman of Arizona politics. He was a proven vote-getter who knew how to build coalitions to achieve real results for his district, his State, and our Nation. He knew how to get things done in Washington but never forgot who sent him here and why. He was a tireless advocate for Arizona, and he brought that unique Arizona perspective to public policy debates for which this body is so well known.

Jim served alongside giants and, in the process, became one himself. Barry Goldwater, Mo Udall, Ed Pastor, John McCain, Jon Kyl—Jim knew and worked with them all. In fact, Jim got his first taste of politics as a young man serving as a page for the legendary Senator Goldwater, who was in his final term when the voters of what was then Arizona's Fifth Congressional District chose Jim to be their voice in Washington.

Jim was born in Illinois, the Land of Lincoln, but became a champion of the party of Lincoln in Arizona. He came to the Grand Canyon State when he was 5 with his parents when he left the Midwest for a ranch in the desert of southern Arizona, just a few miles from the border with Mexico.

Little did Jim know back then that our country's relationship with Mexico would become one of his signature issues as a Representative from a border State. Jim was a celebrity in the big small town of Tucson.

No matter where he went, everyone knew him. Folks would approach him in the grocery store, at the gas station, or on the street. When they stopped him and called him Congressman Kolbe, he would always make sure to remind them, "Just call me Jim."

I first met Jim when I was a student at Pima Community College. He was my hometown Representative. We continued our relationship long after that first meeting over two decades ago.

Jim gave me wise advice when I first decided to run for his former seat. I will always remember our regular catch-up meetings at Millie's Pancake Haus on the east side of town.

Jim was someone who came to the House not for a big title but to do big

things, and he did just that. He was an expert on trade and became one of the chief architects of the original North American Free Trade Agreement, which he was convinced was a key that opened the door to prosperity.

Fiscal responsibility was important to Jim. Our environment was important to Jim. Water was important to Jim. He was never reluctant to work across the aisle.

Jim was everything a Representative should be. He understood that the word "Representative" was not a job title; it was a job description, and that is why he came back to Tucson nearly every weekend to hear firsthand what was on people's minds.

Jim, my friend, on behalf of the men and women of our little corner of Arizona, thank you. Thank you for your service. Thank you for your steadfast commitment to making our district, our State, and our Nation a better place.

My prayers are with Hector and the Kolbe family.

RECOGNIZING PETE McClymont

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

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Third District native Pete McClymont for his contributions to the Nebraska beef industry.

Pete was raised on a farm and ranching operation near Holdrege, Nebraska, and has maintained a lifelong commitment to growing the Nebraska cattle business and advancing the State as a leader in agriculture.

With steadfast excellence, Pete has fostered growth in numerous sectors of agribusiness in Nebraska and recently announced his retirement after 25 years of service in several roles with the Nebraska Cattlemen, including the last 10 as the organization's executive vice president.

Nebraska's first nickname was "The Beef State," and Pete's list of accomplishments in maintaining that reputation is long. Despite having to navigate the difficult conditions of disasters, drought, and market challenges, Nebraska's beef industry is better for his leadership, and we continue to be grateful for his outstanding service.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 22 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WALTZ) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

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

O infinite one, Your love for us is great. You who are rich in mercy, bend Your ear to us and hear our prayers. Draw near to us this day and allow us to experience Your generous and forgiving embrace and to receive Your manifold kindness.

Then may we respond with the faith of our hearts and not just the ideas from our heads, for nothing we can conceive in our minds will come anywhere near to the devotion You desire of us. Help us to trust You with our innermost being and not just rely on the work of our hands, for the tasks You set before us are best accomplished when we yield our wills to Yours and align our efforts with Your grace plan.

For we are what You have made us to be. We are each unique witnesses to Your handiwork, created to do the good work You have called us to do.

Grant that all of us this day demonstrate the faith and trust You deserve in all that You have prepared for us. Then may our lives serve to glorify You as we call upon Your name.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina 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.

FAMILIES FIGHTING INFLATION
AND DEBT IN 2023

(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 year was difficult for the American family. Under disastrous policies of Biden and the Democrat-led Congress, inflation reached 40-year highs, causing everyday prices to skyrocket.

December marked the 21st straight month that inflation was higher than real wages. As a result, Americans are relying on credit cards as payment, and nearly half are carrying debt from month to month, up 39 percent from last year, according to Bankrate.

Credit card balances increased 15 percent versus last year, the largest increase in more than 20 years, according to a recent quarterly report of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

When Biden took office in 2021, inflation was 1.4 percent, but it has risen nearly 14 percent since then, destroying jobs.

The House Republican majority is committed to fighting inflation and lowering the cost of living, creating jobs.

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

Our sympathy to the family of Tom Young, Sr., of Aiken, South Carolina.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF
CAPTAIN JOHNATHAN BENTON

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

Mr. ELLZEY. Mr. Speaker, today, I come before the House of Representatives to honor the legacy of Captain Johnathan Benton. Captain Benton tragically lost his life on January 16, 2023, in a small plane crash.

Johnathan was a man of service. He served our country faithfully for over 25 years in the Air Force. During that time, he was a command pilot with over 4,000 hours in the C-130 and KC-135. He was also an instructor and evaluator pilot.

He spent over 750 days deployed in support of conflicts in Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. He eventually retired as a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force's Air National Guard for the State of Oklahoma.

After his time in the military, Johnathan served as the Government Affairs Committee chairman for CAPA as well as the Allied Pilots Association.

Johnathan never stopped serving our country. Through his role as chairman for CAPA and APA, he continued to advocate on behalf of Americans.

To his wife, Bridget, and two children, Nathan and Ashlynn Marie, I am

truly sorry. Your husband and father was a great man. He had a great big heart and loved you all dearly. What he gave our country cannot be summed up in a 1-minute speech, but the legacy he leaves and the good works he has done will last forever.

DEFENDING THE SECOND
AMENDMENT

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

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in defense of the Second Amendment, which is, once again, under attack by the unelected Federal bureaucrats in Washington.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives is seeking to reclassify firearms with pistol braces as short-barreled rifles, a classification which threatens to make criminals of tens of millions of law-abiding Americans who have already purchased these.

The extra red tape, fees, and registrations that the ATF wants to require is an unnecessary punishment for shooting enthusiasts who purchased perfectly legal accessories to their legal firearms.

This follows a long pattern we have seen for decades in Washington's antigun, unconstitutional policies, which could never make it through Congress as a law that is imposed upon the public through the rule-making process.

Americans are tired of unelected Federal agencies spending their tax dollars attacking and curtailing the constitutional rights of law-abiding citizens.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 8 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1730

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WITTMAN) at 5 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

CHANCE TO COMPETE ACT OF 2023

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill