

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 13 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. YAKYM) at noon.

PRAYER

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

Apart from You, O Lord, anything we have, anything we boast in, anything we hope for amounts to nothing. We draw near to You this day, the source of our strength, for in You only do we trust.

As we pray for this country, we ask that You would preserve all that You have granted us, especially the gift of liberty, which protects us from tyranny and oppression. In exercising this gift, may we do so with civility, respecting the rights of those who think differently.

As we pray for our communities, we ask that You would inspire in us the commitment to the common good. In living out this pledge, may our hearts be inclined to find the paths toward peace and security for all our neighbors.

As we pray for our world, we ask that You would give refuge and protection to those who are enduring unimaginable adversity. Answer the prayers of those who call upon You in the war-torn regions and contested areas of Ukraine, Sudan, Armenia, the Sahel, and so many others. In praying for Your people around the globe, we ask Your counsel that we may have the eyes to see and the minds to discern how You would have us serve You in these places.

On this day, stand before us and guide us. May we prove faithful wherever and however You would have us serve You this day.

In Your sovereign 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 the approval thereof.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Louisiana (Ms. LETLOW) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. LETLOW 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.

DELIVERING ON OUR COMMITMENT TO AMERICA

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

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, this week, House Republicans are continuing to deliver on our commitment to America—a Nation that is safe—by providing the Department of Defense with the facilities it needs to protect us from foreign adversaries.

One of the bills we will consider is the fiscal year 2024 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies appropriations bill that funds the Department of Defense facilities and veterans' healthcare programs.

We don't stop there. This bill prohibits the use of funds to promote or advance the destructive critical race theory and prohibits the Biden administration's executive orders on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

There is more work to be done to get our military back to the world's elite fighting force focused on combating adversaries. By taking these small steps to eliminate fraud, waste, abuse, and unnecessary programs, we are taking the right first steps.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF PASTOR RALPH W. EMERSON, JR.

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

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the great tenure of Reverend Ralph W. Emerson, Jr., who will be conducting his last sermon at Rising Star Baptist Church on Miller Avenue and Avenue M in Fort Worth this August before he kicks off his retirement.

Reverend Emerson, better known as Pastor Ralph, was first called to preach in 1978 and was ordained that very year in December. He became the assistant pastor of Rising Star Baptist Church in 1989 and after 1 year he was called to be the senior pastor in 1990. During his illustrious tenure at Rising Star he has really served the community well. He made sure that kids know how to read, that souls are fed, and he has done a tremendous job.

Reverend Emerson has worked dutifully in several different capacities and

several cities, including Compton, Houston, and Fort Worth. Prior to coming to Rising Star, he was an active member of Mount Moriah Baptist Church in Los Angeles and Faith Baptist in Houston.

Reverend Emerson is involved in so many different endeavors in the community: JPS, our public hospital, Aids Outreach, different food banks, and again, he does a tremendous reading program for kids in the summer.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Reverend Emerson on his retirement and the community thanks him for his service.

HONORING THE LIFE OF HERSELL WEST

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

Ms. LETLOW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate and honor the remarkable life of Hershell West who has left an extraordinary impact on our community and an outstanding legacy across the State of Louisiana.

Hershell is known as a role model across the State, most famously as one of Louisiana's great sports heroes, as a true legend in the world of college basketball.

Hershell was a respected community leader across the State of Louisiana, serving as a mentor and teacher to generations of young Americans. Hershell is most notably known for his selfless spirit and his unique ability to inspire others to action.

Throughout his career he displayed an unwavering commitment to bettering the lives of those around him. He had outstanding accomplishments as an athlete and coach, including Louisiana State AA Championship in 1959, the NAIA Championship in 1961, and elected as one of the first 25 members of Grambling Legends Sports Hall of Fame in 2009.

We remember and celebrate his extraordinary life, his skill, his honor, and his legacy.

Mr. Speaker, today the House honors an outstanding Louisianian, Hershell West.

RECOGNIZING ERIN DOTY

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

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Erin Doty and celebrate her great accomplishments as my legislative director for the past 8 years.

She led my legislative strategies to great success. Under her leadership, we passed 47 bills into law. Some of our most memorable bills are the Safe Step Act, the Protecting People from Surprise Medical Bills Act, the Humanitarian Standards for Individuals in Customs and Border Protection Act, and the Honoring our PACT Act.

Erin has a heart of gold, a relentless commitment to social justice, and a

special talent to make sure I never missed a vote. She was unwaveringly dedicated, often staying very late for votes, despite me insisting that she go home to rest.

Erin is a wonderful human being, a good friend, and a trusted adviser.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Erin for her service on behalf of the American people, especially the people of California's 36th and now 25th District. We miss you dearly and we wish you luck and look forward to your future endeavors.

JULIE SU'S IMPERILED CONFIRMATION

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, Julie Su has now exceeded the previous record for the longest duration between a Presidential Cabinet nomination and a confirmation—when the same party controls the White House and the Senate—since 1887.

It is no surprise that Axios even dubbed her as “Biden’s forever nominee.”

That is not a title, and certainly not an accolade worthy of a gold star or pat on the back. For months on end, her nomination has languished before the Senate. This is a telltale sign that she does not have the votes.

One doesn’t need to be an expert in reading tea leaves to see that her nomination is on life support.

Mr. Speaker, I will offer some much-needed advice to the Biden administration: rip the Band-Aid off already and pull Julie Su’s nomination.

SHORTAGE OF PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS AT VA CLINIC

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

Mr. HARDER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today out of concern for the ongoing shortage of primary care physicians at Stockton VA Clinic in my district.

There are nearly 30,000 veterans that live in San Joaquin County, but earlier this year the Stockton VA Clinic went from eight doctors to just four in the span of just a couple of months, a 50 percent reduction of full-time, in-person physicians. This is completely unacceptable. This is leading to a caseload of over 7,000 veterans for every doctor that we have.

My constituents have been telling me that they have to wait more than 90 days to get an appointment. Men and women who risk their lives for our freedom deserve better than months-long wait times to see a doctor.

As we consider the VA’s budget this week, it is clear that we can do so much more to address the workforce shortages in my district and across the country at the VA. Our veterans deserve better.

Primary care is an essential part of every veteran’s medical care, and it is on us to make sure that that care is never in jeopardy. I will continue to fight for the funding to fully staff our clinics until we get that done.

PROVIDING FOR THE COMMON DEFENSE OF OUR NATION

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

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, both fiscal year 2024 appropriations bills we are considering this week will ensure that the Federal Government fulfills one of its main duties outlined in the Constitution, providing for the common defense of our Nation.

Until our Republican majority took over, this body neglected this duty and failed to prepare our Nation for the threats posed by China and Russia. Our Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies appropriations bill will provide our military with the resources they need to succeed.

This funding will be focused on investments in the Pacific theater, barracks, and other quality-of-life projects so that our men and women in uniform will be ready to meet any challenge that they face.

Additionally, our agricultural appropriations bill will invest in strengthening our supply chain, so we don’t have to rely on foreign adversaries for necessities like food and medications.

In passing both of these critical bills, we provide for the safety and the prosperity of our great Nation for generations to come.

□ 1215

RECOGNIZING AND CONGRATULATING LESLIE MERRILL

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

Ms. PINGREE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate a great Mainer and a longtime public servant, Leslie Merrill. Leslie is retiring this month after 22 years of dedicated constituent service to the people of Maine’s First District, having served under my predecessor before joining my office.

I believe that the majority of us who work in this institution do so because we want to improve the lives of those around us.

Leslie has committed her career to doing just that—whether guiding asylum seekers and refugees through the immigration process, securing passports for many anxious travelers, or assisting Maine youth with the Academy nominations process so that they may pursue a career in the military.

Beyond her considerable skills as a caseworker, she has been a mentor to countless staff, sharing her Rolodex,

her institutional knowledge, and her relationships with those in agencies across the country, all of which have been invaluable to constituents and colleagues throughout the First District.

Importantly, she has been a treasured friend to so many of us in and outside of the office. The lives of Mainers are infinitely better for Leslie having served as their advocate, friend, and neighbor.

We will miss Leslie dearly. We wish her and Peter the very best in their next adventure.

WADSWORTH BLUE TIP FESTIVAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. MILLER of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the annual Blue Tip Festival in Wadsworth, Ohio.

The Blue Tip Festival is a long-standing community celebration. The festival’s name pays tribute to the city’s former largest employer, the Ohio Match Company and their famous blue tip matches.

Each year, the Blue Tip Festival begins the Tuesday after Father’s Day with a 2½-mile parade. The parade leads to the ceremonial lighting of a 17-foot blue tip match sculpture that holds the record for the world’s largest matchstick sculpture. The next 5 days are filled with family fun like amusement rides, carnival games, festival food, and more.

I commend the city of Wadsworth and the Blue Tip Festival Committee for their commitment to make the Blue Tip Festival one of the best celebrations in Ohio’s Seventh District. Year after year, their dedication has created a space for our community to recognize and enjoy Ohio’s rich history. Here is to another safe and fun 50 years of the Blue Tip Festival.

UPS-TEAMSTERS

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

Mrs. SYKES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the historic labor deal reached between the Teamsters and UPS. This is a monumental achievement for organized labor, underscoring the power of unions that make up the backbone of our economy and our democracy.

I would especially like to recognize Teamsters Local 348, which represents UPS workers in Ohio’s 13th Congressional District.

These hardworking, dedicated union members were on the front lines throughout the entire pandemic, keeping our country running by consistently delivering essential supplies, food, and medicine to communities