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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LALOTA).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 13, 2023.

I hereby appoint the Honorable NICK LALOTA to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

KEVIN MCCARTHY,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 9, 2023, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. MOLINARO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOLINARO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize September as National Suicide Prevention Month.

The mental health of our Nation and mental health crisis remains the greatest public health crisis of our lifetime. In 2022 alone, we lost 50,000 Americans to death by suicide.

Among younger populations, that statistic is even more alarming. Sui-

cide is the second leading cause of death among people aged 10 to 14, and the third leading cause of death among people aged 15 to 24.

No community, no family, no neighborhood is immune, and addressing this crisis requires bold and persistent bipartisan efforts from Congress, State, and local leaders.

We have made great strides in increasing access by rolling out the 988 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and making other investments in mental health programs. However, there is significantly more to be done.

We have to continue to raise awareness, reduce the stigma, address and ensure anyone who needs help is able to get the treatment and the care they deserve, regardless of neighborhood, ZIP Code, or community.

Mr. Speaker, this is the public health crisis of our lifetime, and we must rise to the challenge.

RECOGNIZING THE INDOMITABLE SPIRIT OF VIRGIN ISLANDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, as we mark the solemn sixth anniversary of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, I am reminded of the indomitable spirit of Virgin Islanders who faced these devastating Category 5 storms, and the invaluable support we received from Members of Congress who rallied to secure much-needed funding for our recovery.

The impact of two twin Category 5 hurricanes unleashed unprecedented destruction upon the Virgin Islands of the United States, leaving a trail of devastation that will be remembered for generations.

September 6, 2017, witnessed the relentless fury of Hurricane Irma as it swept across our territory, carving a

path of devastation that lingers in our collective memory. A mere fortnight later, Hurricane Maria descended upon our already devastated islands, compounding the damage exponentially.

In the wake of these unparalleled catastrophes, the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands demonstrated incredible resilience and determination, while other places receiving such damage cried and wailed about what had happened to them. Virgin Islanders, as always, not believing that support would come, looked to one another.

We came together to support one another, rebuild our communities, and lay the foundation for one more resilient future. The road to recovery has been long and arduous, but the spirit of Virgin Islanders remains unbroken, and the commitment to rebuilding stronger and more resilient persists.

As we approach the exhaustion of FEMA disaster relief funding, we face an impending crisis. FEMA has announced the implementation of immediate needs funding due to the dwindling disaster relief fund. Under INF, immediate needs funding, new obligations for public assistance not essential for lifesaving and life-sustaining activities, permanent work, and the hazard mitigation grant program will be paused until the disaster relief funding is sufficiently supplied.

Without FEMA funding, crucial programs such as public school reconstruction and essential services hang in the balance. Moreover, we are only 10 legislative days away from a government shutdown, with some of our colleagues more concerned about baseless political vendettas than the well-being of the American people.

I implore my colleagues to rise above partisan extremes and deliver for the American people. The Biden-Harris administration has requested \$16 billion in supplemental funding to replenish the disaster relief fund. This request

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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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should receive bipartisan support for disaster-impacted areas across the United States. It is crucial that we put the needs of our constituents first, prioritizing disaster relief over political bickering.

I say to my Virgin Islands brothers and sisters, that opportunities are fragile and don't always come through for us. We have got to do what needs to be done to support our own rebuilding if Washington cannot.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to work on behalf of Virgin Islanders to assess the support needed for our ongoing rebuilding efforts. Together, we share the responsibility of ensuring that the U.S. Virgin Islands emerge from the twin tragedies stronger and more resilient.

The opportunity before us is significant, and we must not let it slip away. Let us act swiftly to provide the necessary funding and support for all disaster-impacted areas across America to build a more resilient preparedness plan.

Mr. Speaker, may we rise to this challenge with the strength and unity it demands, and may we, as Virgin Islanders, remain VI strong.

RECOGNIZING TY WHITE AS ARIZONA'S 2023 TEACHER OF THE YEAR

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

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Arizona's 2023 Teacher of the Year, Mr. Ty White, a chemistry teacher at Wilcox High School in Wilcox, Arizona.

Mr. White, known for his dedication to his students in and out of the classroom, embodies all that a parent wants to see in their children's teachers.

He serves as a founding board member of InSimEd, a nonprofit that helps students participate in STEM-related experiential learning opportunities. He also sponsors other initiatives at Wilcox High School aimed at finding ways for his students to gain real world industry experiences.

Mr. White has been widely honored by other organizations across the country, including being recognized as the 2023 National Rural Education Association's National Teacher of the Year, the Air and Space Force Association's Arizona Teacher of the Year, and the first runner-up for the Air and Space Force Association's National Teacher of the Year.

His commitment to the next generation is unmatched. I am incredibly proud to have him in our district. I know his students will walk away from his class and the programs he runs with lifelong lessons.

Because of his tireless efforts, people in my district are developing an interest in STEM fields and growing their love for learning.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to represent Ty White and the committed educators like him. Congratulations to

Mr. White on this well-deserved recognition.

HIGHLIGHTING THE TOWN OF PIMA

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the town of Pima, one of the many unique and special rural communities in my district. This town has a long history of bravery, service, and sacrifice.

This town, during World War II, lost 27 men, accounting for the greatest loss suffered by any community in the country on a per capita basis.

Today, a memorial to these men stands at the local high school. I was able to spend some time in Pima over the August work period, and I had the opportunity to visit their local fire station.

Like many communities across the country, these firefighters are all a volunteer force. I was inspired by these individuals' commitment to their community, running toward the danger when their neighbors need them most.

It is clear that these Arizonans have a strong dedication to not only each other and their community, but service to our country as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to represent them in Congress.

COMMEMORATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 16TH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH BOMBING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963, and to honor the lives and legacies of four little girls killed in this heinous attack.

Mr. Speaker, 60 years after parishioners of the 16th Street Baptist Church prepared for Sunday service, 19 sticks of dynamite placed by Ku Klux Klan members exploded. As the interiors of the walls of the church caved in, over 100 churchgoers rushed for safety.

Though most of the congregation escaped, under the debris lay the bodies of Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Morris Wesley, as well as Sarah Collins Rudolph, who was injured but ultimately survived.

Tragically, the brutality did not stop after the bombing. When African-American communities across the State of Alabama took to the streets to demand justice, they were met with unspeakable violence at the hands of law enforcement. Within a few hours, Johnny Robertson and Virgil Ware, ages 16 and 13, were killed in a clash between protesters and the police.

Despite the horrific nature of this attack, it took over 34 years before the perpetrators faced justice.

In 2013, Mr. Speaker, I was honored that the very first bill I passed in this body awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor we

can give, to the four little girls posthumously to ensure that their lives were never forgotten.

While we will never recover the lives lost or the injuries suffered, we know that their sacrifice was not in vain.

Indeed, the loss of the four little girls changed America forever, bringing into clarity our Nation's storied history of racially motivated violence, and galvanized the civil rights movement.

It was their memory that inspired generations of freedom fighters to build for a world where the color of your skin does not determine the value of your life.

It was their memory that burned in the minds of foot soldiers as they fought to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

It was their sacrifice that brought our Nation closer to realizing its highest ideals of equality and justice for all.

Without the influence of the four little girls, I not only question where America would be, but where I would be.

Mr. Speaker, 60 years after their passing, I get to walk the Halls of Congress as Alabama's as first Black Congresswoman, and I do so because of their sacrifice and because they cannot.

Their premature and senseless death serves as a constant reminder that every battle and every gain in the fight for civil rights has come at a high cost, paid for by the sacrifice of others.

Yet, despite their gains and our gains as a Nation, we know that our work is far from over. Today, as extremists seek to rewrite our history and roll back our progress, it has never been more crucial to ensure that the legacy of the four little girls lives on in American history.

After all, those who don't learn from their history are doomed to repeat it.

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In the words of Coretta Scott King, struggle is a never-ending process. Freedom is never really won. It is earned and won in every generation.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the lives of the four little girls and remembering them by name: Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Morris Wesley.

NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY

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

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, did you know that more than 40 million Americans have served in the Armed Forces since our Nation's founding?

From Yorktown to Gettysburg, from San Juan Hill to Saipan, from the Leyte Gulf to Tora Bora, America's sons and daughters have heroically answered the call to protect our precious