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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. VAN DREW).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 13, 2024.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JEFFERSON VAN DREW to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 9, 2024, 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.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ALLIED D-DAY INVASION OF FRANCE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 80th anniversary of the Allied D-Day invasion of France.

Last week, we recognized the solemn anniversary and honored the bravery of our Armed Forces who served in that operation. On June 6, 80 years ago,

thousands of America's bravest soldiers fought to protect the freedoms, liberties, and rights of those back home.

Sadly, the United States lost more than 6,000 soldiers that day. Ultimately, we would lose thousands of brave servicemembers in the coming weeks and months liberating the rest of Western Europe from German control. Marking a crucial turning point in World War II, the Allied forces joined together to storm the beaches of Normandy. These patriots conquered their fears of what lie ahead in battle, showcasing sheer bravery while facing the dangerous unknown.

In an operation that would quickly turn the tide of the war and rally men across nations, American soldiers made sacrifices, leaving permanent marks on the war-torn terrain, on their families, and on our hearts.

Mr. Speaker, in 2018, I had the privilege of attending the wreath-laying ceremony at Normandy American Cemetery in France. I am forever humbled and grateful for the opportunity to travel to those beaches that our brave men stormed so many years ago. Looking out and seeing the white crosses, brothers buried next to brothers, fathers buried next to sons, it is a reminder that our freedom isn't free.

The memorial serves as a constant reminder that the United States will fight and die to protect the freedoms of not just American citizens, but for those around the globe. We are eternally grateful for this devotion to duty and devotion to country.

I recognize members of the Pennsylvania 15th Congressional District who stormed the beaches of Normandy. Our community has a long history of strong military service across many years of service, and, today, I name just a few.

From Bradford, McKean County, Elmer DeLucia, who served in the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion. He landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day, June 6,

1944, and was involved in four more battles in northern France, the Battle of the Bulge, the Rhineland, and Central Europe.

Mr. DeLucia passed away at the age of 99 in 2022. He spent the years after returning home speaking often about his service, wanting to share his firsthand knowledge, especially with school children.

Mr. Speaker, I also recognize the members of our community who gave their lives during the D-Day battle. There were 347 Pennsylvanians who were killed in action. They gave their lives defending our freedoms. Of those men, 31 grew up across the 15th Congressional District. May we always remember their sacrifices.

Mr. Speaker, let us take a moment to remember and honor those who sacrificed so much for so many and celebrate the heroism of the servicemembers nationwide.

For the good of the many, so gave the few. It is these few we acknowledge today, and let us honor their heroism. Let us always speak with pride of D-Day, of our troops, and of our victory. God bless America.

ENDURING COMMITMENT TO OUR BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM

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

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the House and to revise and extend my remarks.

First, I thank Chair ROGERS and Representatives SMITH and BACON for the opportunity to work on this really important piece of legislation, which is the National Defense Authorization Act.

Unlike any other piece of legislation that we have passed in Congress, we have passed this bill every single year

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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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for over six decades. It is a testament to our enduring commitment to our brave men and women in uniform, and it is proof that Republicans and Democrats can indeed continue to find common ground and provide for our collective defense.

Since I arrived in 2019 in Congress, I have had the privilege of serving on the Armed Services Committee, which oversees this defense bill, and it is truly one of the highlights of my career to serve on such a bipartisan committee. This idea of bipartisanship, putting country before party, is not new to me. It is indeed how I was raised.

As the daughter and granddaughter of naval aviators, it is not an exaggeration to say that my very earliest memories are on a military base. I was born at Patuxent River Naval Air Station just a few hours from here. When it was my turn to fulfill our commitment to our Nation, I served in the Air Force, but that, of course, did not come without challenges.

Now, as a member of the Armed Services Committee, I have shared not only my own challenges and those of my family who have been in uniform, but also those of my mother and my grandmother and countless other Pennsylvanians and Americans I have been able to talk to along the way. Sharing these stories helps make our military the greatest on Earth and make it even stronger.

For nearly a year, I have now had the privilege of serving as ranking member on our Military Quality of Life Panel alongside my very dear friend, Republican colleague Representative DON BACON from Nebraska. From inadequate pay to substandard housing conditions and to long wait times for essential services, it is very clear that we have enormous work to do to ensure that our military families have the support and resources that they need to thrive. That is why we proposed 31 different recommendations, and I will highlight just a few of them.

First and foremost, pay. We want pay that is competitive with our civilian economy, including a significant additional pay raise for junior enlisted, E-1 through E-4.

Second, housing. Our recommendation is to reverse the 5 percent reduction in BAH that was passed nearly a decade ago. BAH would now cover 100 percent of the calculated rate for military housing.

In a similar vein, third, we recommended funding facility budget requests at 100 percent of the maintenance and modernization requirements so that we are able to fully fund them.

Next and finally, childcare. The bill that we passed out of committee would cover childcare expenses for those who worked in our childcare development centers for their first child at a minimum. This would get more staff on the books, more open and available childcare slots, and reduce wait times.

Finally, on healthcare. Servicemembers won't need referrals any longer for

physical therapy, for nutrition, for women's health, for audiology, for optometry, and podiatry specialties.

Next, spousal employment. We will be supporting military spouses by expanding childcare access for them from 90 to 100 days while they are able to look for a job, and we are permanently expanding our partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

We have the greatest military in the world because of the people that wear the uniform and the families that support them, so we must take care of them. At the very least, we owe our military community a bill that is free from political drama and theater.

Unfortunately, we here on the floor are now seeing some very upsetting amendments being offered to a very bipartisan bill and potentially adding to this bill many poison pills, poison pills that will make it difficult for even me to vote for the final passage of the bill, even though there is so much goodness in it.

Here are just a few ideas of what we will be voting on today:

Banning Pride flags in workplaces and public areas in the Department of Defense.

This one is particularly absurd: Banning content related to certain animals that change their sex, like clown fish, and a range of education materials.

Thirdly, prohibiting the Secretary of Defense from paying or reimbursing expenses related to reproductive care, such as abortion services.

Fourth, eliminating any DEI, or diversity, equity, and inclusion, within the military and laying off everyone who is in those offices.

Finally, prohibiting all assistance to Ukraine, which, of course, would be a gift to Russia, China, Iran, and all of our adversaries. These are just some of the very nonserious efforts that we are seeing here on the floor. It is enormously frustrating to see these being added to this bill, which was such a bipartisan bill, voted out of committee 57-1.

Regardless of which amendments are passed, these are attacks against women, against the LGBTQ community, against diversity initiatives, and more. They will have a chilling effect on military recruitment and retention at a time when we are facing historic challenges to fill our all-volunteer ranks.

We, the Congress, need to knock this off. I proudly served in uniform, as did generations of my family before me, and I will do everything in my power to send a truly bipartisan bill to the President for signature. I very much look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in the House and Senate to do just that.

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HONORING MARTIN ESCALANTE
ORTIZ

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

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Martin Escalante Ortiz on his 100th birthday.

Martin is part of America's Greatest Generation. Born in 1924, Mr. Ortiz served in our Nation's United States Army during World War II. For his service, he received several medals for his service, including the Purple Heart and Bronze Star.

After the war, Martin returned home and cared for his younger siblings before he married his wife, Maria, in 1955. Together, they raised 10 children and built a legacy that includes 21 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

In the late 1950s, Martin moved to Orange County and joined our community.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Martin a happy birthday, and I thank him for his service to our country and to our community.

HONORING ESPIRIDION "SPEED" CASTILLO

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Espiridion Castillo, known in our community as Speed.

Speed was an Air Force veteran, cherished father, dedicated educator, and esteemed community leader.

How did he get the nickname "Speed"? He ran the 400-meter in Flagstaff, Arizona, in 50 seconds and covered 800 meters in 2 minutes.

Speed dedicated over 30 years of his life to Anaheim Union High School District as a teacher, counselor, truant officer, principal, and director of Federal projects. He also spent almost 50 years as a high school sports referee.

Speed often helped those in need, including students who couldn't afford the graduation expenses.

He leaves behind a lasting legacy and is survived by son, Michael; daughters, Michelle and Lisa; and three grandchildren.

I thank Speed for his service. We love him, and we will never forget him.

RECOGNIZING DR. CHRISTOPHER DOWNING

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the career of Anaheim Elementary School District Superintendent Dr. Chris Downing.

Dr. Downing dedicated the last 6 years of his career to leading the largest elementary school district in California, where he oversaw tremendous progress in science, arts, math, and music education.

Notably, Dr. Downing expanded learning opportunities and created after-school programs for our children. He made sure that our community was a leader in dual language programs, launching Spanish, Korean, and Mandarin programs for all of our students.

During Dr. Downing's tenure, our elementary school district won many Statewide recognitions, including the California Department of Education's Pivotal Practice Award for effectiveness during the pandemic.

Dr. Downing's 35 years as an educator have demonstrated his commitment to the education of our children.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Dr. Downing a happy retirement, and I congratulate and thank him.