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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

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

Almighty God, our shield and defender, our guide and friend, we praise You. For it is You who provides us counsel every hour of every day. Even at night, You instruct our hearts. We will never be shaken if we keep our eyes on You. With You at our right hand, we will not be led astray.

Therefore, on this day, may our hearts be glad and our tongues rejoice. May our bodies rest secure, for You will not abandon us to destruction, nor will You let those who remain faithful to You see the end of hope.

For You make known to us the path of life. You fill us with joy as You make Your presence known to us each day.

On this day, may we live, work, and love reflecting our gratitude for the bounty of countless and unimaginable gifts You have bestowed on us. May we reveal the joy of our faith in the eternal pleasure You desire for us.

In Your generous and gracious name we pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. 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. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania 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

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

388TH BIRTHDAY OF THE NATIONAL GUARD

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the National Guard's 388th birthday.

Since its founding on December 13, 1636, in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the National Guard has exemplified the spirit of citizen-soldiers, ordinary men and women answering the extraordinary call to serve their country and their communities.

For nearly four centuries, the National Guard has been there in times of war and peace, disaster and recovery, and every moment in between.

The National Guard is a symbol of America's best, a team of teachers, doctors, engineers, and everyday citizens, all soldiers, who are willing to sacrifice their lives to protect ours.

Mr. Speaker, today, we honor the men and women who have worn the uniform of the National Guard, past and present. We salute their courage, their sacrifice, and their unwavering commitment to duty. We reaffirm our gratitude for their families, who stand beside them at every challenge and sacrifice.

Let us commit to supporting these brave individuals as they continue to protect and serve, ensuring that the

National Guard remains a shining example of what it means to be a citizen and a patriot.

PREVENTING ELIMINATION OF 500 JOBS

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

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, jobs, jobs, jobs.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 prevents the elimination of over 500 jobs at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base.

To be clear, cutting one squadron would have a devastating impact on this economically distressed community and strip away a vital national security asset in a dangerous world.

Amidst ongoing conflict around the globe, without any doubt, the F-15E Strike Eagle remains critical to the mission.

When visiting Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, the need for constructing a new combat arms training range couldn't be made clearer.

The NDAA also includes a provision authorizing \$41 million to help airmen with deployment readiness and weapon proficiency.

I say to the 4th Fighter Wing and the Wayne County community: I see them, hear them, and will stay in this fight with them.

REMEMBERING JERRY STERN

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember the life of former Pennsylvania State Representative Jerry Stern, who passed away earlier this week.

For more than 20 years, Representative Stern served the people of Blair

□ 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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and Bedford Counties in Harrisburg, where he was committed to addressing the issues that matter most to our communities.

During his time both as a member of Pennsylvania's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the Committee on Children and Youth, Representative Jerry Stern poured himself into his work each and every day.

By building coalitions and passing legislation that supported our farmers and by advocating for children in the foster care system and working to ensure that they received the support and the care that they needed, Representative Jerry Stern showed his commitment to the people of central Pennsylvania.

Today, please join me in remembering the life of Representative Jerry Stern and offering condolences to his wife, Susan, and to his entire family.

CELEBRATING KEVRE HENDRICKS

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

Ms. PLASKETT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and celebrate Kevre Hendricks, a master musician, dedicated educator, Virgin Islands National Guardsman, and this year's honoree for the Crucian Christmas Festival Village in my home, St. Croix.

Mr. Hendricks is a passionate advocate for music and the arts in our community and tremendously committed to the work of supporting young people interested in music. He not only teaches music but also teaches creativity, discipline, and dedication to craft.

He is a teacher, a band director for St. Croix Educational Complex High School, and the musical director of a local band that has won the Crucian Christmas Festival Road March numerous times.

Congratulations to Cousin Kevre on this well-deserved recognition. We all look forward to this year's Village experience and Maestro's Musical Haven.

Festival on St. Croix is the warmest celebration of all, with sweet music, food, and fellowship.

**RECOGNIZING MORGAN COUNTY
SHERIFF ROBERT MARKLEY**

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

Mr. COLLINS. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to recognize the retirement of Morgan County Sheriff Robert Markley.

From the beginning of his career as a beat cop patrolling the streets to keep our community safe to serving as Morgan County's law enforcement officer, Sheriff Markley has dedicated his life to protecting the innocent, delivering swift justice to criminals, and keeping all of us safe.

He has been a pillar in the community, a mentor to everyone in local law enforcement, and the leader Morgan County needed.

I thank him for his dedication and leadership over these last two decades. He truly will be missed. I hope he will continue to advise and guide the next generation of local law enforcement.

Madam Speaker, I thank him for everything he has done.

**RECOGNIZING TWO ILLINOIS
STATE CHAMPION FOOTBALL
TEAMS**

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

Ms. BUDZINSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize two State champion football teams in my district, the East St. Louis Flyers and the Belleville Althoff Crusaders.

Under Coach Darren Sunkett's leadership, the Flyers went 13-1 this season, winning their 11th State championship on November 28 with a 48-28 victory over Geneva.

I also congratulate the Crusaders football team for winning the 2024 1A Illinois State championship and running back Dierre Hill, Jr., on being named the 2024 Illinois Gatorade Player of the Year. What an incredible accomplishment.

I know that each and every player, coach, and staffer put in hours of practice and preparation to help the Flyers and the Crusaders achieve their goals on and off the field this season.

Your dedication to the game of football and our local community is an inspiration.

□ 0915

**HONORING STAYING HOME
CORPORATION**

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

Mr. ALFORD. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor our December Small Business of the Month, Staying Home Corporation.

This fantastic business in Harrisonville, Missouri, offers a wide range of products that allow folks in the Midwest to live more comfortably in their own homes.

Owners, Mike and Natalie Vogt, share their story about how they came to own Staying Home. Their hope is to provide jobs to those in need, donate to causes that the Lord directs, and create a company that continues those goals.

Not only are Staying Home Corporation's products beautifully designed, but they are also brilliantly functional, reliable, and affordable.

From elevators to stair lifts, ramps, and storm shelters, this business elevates home life and safety with their

durable products. Each product is beautifully crafted and expertly engineered in the United States.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate Staying Home Corporation, our December Small Business of the Month.

**HONORING STEPHENS COUNTY
SHERIFF RANDY SHIRLEY ON
HIS RETIREMENT**

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

Mr. CLYDE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate and honor the remarkable career and legacy of my dear friend, Stephens County Sheriff Randy Shirley, who is retiring after serving as sheriff for 16 years.

Randy, who has been in law enforcement for five decades, has always given his unwavering dedication to the safety and well-being of the folks in north Georgia, leaving an indelible mark on our community.

For 16 years, Sheriff Randy Shirley has led the Stephens County Sheriff's Office with integrity, vision, and a servant's heart. His achievements are many, but what stands out the most is his tireless devotion to our community.

From fighting crime and keeping drugs off our streets to enhancing transparency and mentoring the next generation of law enforcement, his actions have always reflected his deep love for the people he has served.

Madam Speaker, I thank Sheriff Shirley for putting his life on the line to protect ours. After December 31, while his boots may no longer be on the ground under that badge, his legacy will continue to inspire us all.

I wish my friend fair winds and following seas.

**JUDICIAL UNDERSTAFFING
DELAYS GETTING EMERGENCIES
SOLVED ACT OF 2024**

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1612, I call up the bill (S. 4199) to authorize additional district judges for the district courts and convert temporary judgeships, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. KIM of California) pursuant to House Resolution 1612, the bill is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 4199

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Judicial Understaffing Delays Getting Emergencies Solved Act of 2024" or the "JUDGES Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Article III of the Constitution of the United States gives Congress the power to