



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 171

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2025

No. 201

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 2, 2025.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RANDY FINE 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 3, 2025, 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 whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

HONORING GARY STEINHARDT

(Mr. BAIRD of Indiana was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Gary Steinhardt from Lafayette, Indiana.

Gary Steinhardt served in the U.S. Army for 30 years and is a veteran of the Vietnam and Iraq wars.

Gary has also served as a professor of agronomy at Purdue University, focusing on soil conservation and the preservation of agricultural land. He has been with Purdue for nearly 50 years.

Gary has been a great advocate for veterans in Tippecanoe County for

years. Gary has served in multiple positions within the VFW and the American Legion, such as post chaplain and commander of post 38. He has also been very active with other Vietnam veterans' organizations in the area, furthering legislation affecting veterans' issues.

Gary was recently diagnosed with a life-limiting illness. My thoughts and prayers go out to Gary and his family during this time, and I thank him for his many years of selfless service to our country, our veterans, and Purdue University.

HONORING RICK LANG

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Martinsville Police Chief Rick Lang, who is retiring from the Martinsville Police Department this month after over 50 years in law enforcement.

He first became a law enforcement officer in 1974 and has spent most of his life faithfully serving the people of Morgan County with unwavering dedication.

Rick Lang first served as the Martinsville police chief from 2015 to 2016 and took over for a second time as chief that year. Prior to serving as police chief, Rick Lang served as a Morgan County-based detective with the Indiana State Police.

I thank Rick for his dedicated years of selfless service to our Martinsville and Morgan County communities, and I wish him the best in his well-deserved retirement as he begins this exciting new chapter in his life.

RECOGNIZING BROWNSBURG BULLDOGS

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate back-to-back Indiana High School Athletic Association's 6A State champion football team of Brownsburg Bulldogs.

The Brownsburg Bulldogs faced Westfield High School once again in the State finals at Lucas Oil Stadium. Brownsburg successfully defended its title as the reigning State football

champion, defeating Westfield with a final score of 38-31. The Brownsburg football team finishes their remarkable season undefeated with a record of 14-0.

I congratulate these outstanding student athletes on winning back-to-back State championships. Every one of these students should be incredibly proud of their hard work, dedication, and commitment to excellence.

I also thank the parents, the coaches, and the faculty, who gave their time and efforts for this team. They couldn't have won without their support.

Once again, I congratulate the reigning State 6A football champions, the Brownsburg Bulldogs.

RECOGNIZING SOUTH PUTNAM EAGLES

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the South Putnam High School football team on winning the IHSAA 1A State championship this year. The South Putnam Eagles took on Pioneer. After a back-and-forth battle in the first half, the South Putnam Eagles took on a commanding lead, achieved a decisive victory, and won with a final score of 55-29 against Pioneer. This historic victory is South Putnam's first State football championship since 1986.

This State championship win is a testament to the South Putnam student athletes' dedication, teamwork, and perseverance. They should be incredibly proud of their hard work.

I thank the parents, teachers, and Coach Chuck Sorrell for their support and efforts that helped this team succeed on and off of the field.

Again, I congratulate the South Putnam Eagles on their State championship.

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL DEGREES

(Mr. KENNEDY of New York was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

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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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Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because Donald Trump and congressional Republicans are, once again, waging war on our healthcare system.

Their big, ugly bill restricts access to Federal student loans for advanced degrees, including in high-demand healthcare sectors like nursing, physical and occupational therapy, social work, and so many more.

When I went to school to become an occupational therapist, I had to take out loans. I remember filling out those forms, hoping that I would have enough to cover tuition, books, and other expenses. The weight of those payments followed me for years.

I took on that debt because I wanted to build a better future for my family and because I wanted to help people as a healthcare practitioner.

This administration wants to force aspiring healthcare professionals to mortgage their futures before they treat their first patient. Worse, this move will deter them from answering their calling, taking an ax to the very system that trains them.

Due to the Republican healthcare crisis, our hospitals are understaffed, clinics are closing, and rural communities are being left behind. Our nurses are burning out. Therapists are stretched thin, and practitioners are retiring faster than we can replace them. Every healthcare system in America is screaming code blue, warning us that the future of our workforce is flatlining before our very eyes.

This means fewer nurses at the bedside, fewer therapists helping patients recover, fewer specialists serving rural communities, and fewer mental health providers at a time when this Nation is desperate for them. It means Americans are waiting longer for care as hospitals operate with skeleton staffing.

It means communities are growing sicker all because this Congress, under Republican control, decided that access to advanced healthcare education is a privilege for the few rather than a pathway to service for all. This is a callous assault on the very people who hold this Nation together: every prospective student who dreams of helping people in healthcare.

This misguided policy, which caps graduate student loan borrowing for certain advanced health degrees, means that these students will be permitted to borrow only half as much in Federal loans compared to their counterparts.

Not only will healthcare professionals be impacted but teachers, architects, accountants, engineers, and many other professionals who will lose the ability to finance their education through reliable, flexible Federal loans, pushing them instead into the arms of predatory private lenders and adding to the mountain of debt that our students already endure.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics says that we need to fill nearly 200,000 nursing positions every year through 2033

just to keep pace. The United States also needs tens of thousands of new mental health professionals and rehabilitation providers annually. Cutting off our healthcare system's talent pipeline also is not just cruel, but it is shortsighted and will drive up the cost of healthcare. It is reckless, and it further strains a healthcare system already in crisis.

Gutting the healthcare workforce will shrink the care economy, and it will stifle job growth at a time when families are desperate for getting control of their lives and ensuring that they can afford their daily cost of living.

Under this thoughtless Republican rule, if you want to save lives, prepare to drown in debt. If you want to do a job that this Nation needs, prepare to pay a steep price for it. If you want to look after the sick, don't expect your government to look after you.

In the richest country in the world, Trump and congressional Republicans are saddling an already overburdened healthcare workforce with an even more unimaginable financial burden, but the American people know better. They remember the nurse who sat with their parents in hospice, the physical therapist who got them back on their feet, and the social worker who helped their family get the support that they needed.

They know that healthcare workers aren't to be taken for granted or pushed aside, and they know that Donald Trump and congressional Republicans have failed them once again.

As the only occupational therapist in Congress, I will not sit idly by while Trump and congressional Republicans sabotage the very workforce that keeps this Nation alive. House Democrats will continue to fight like hell to protect every student, every patient, and every community that Washington Republicans are abandoning.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Randall Holstead, one of his secretaries.

RECOGNIZING RON HAUENSTEIN

(Mr. BAUMGARTNER of Washington was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. BAUMGARTNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding work of Ron Hauenstein, who has served as the executive director of the Spokane Fatherhood Initiative since 2018.

Throughout my time representing eastern Washington in Congress, I have seen firsthand the transformative impact that this organization has had under Ron's leadership. The Fatherhood Initiative has become a pillar in our community, equipping fathers with values like commitment, resilience, gratitude, and honor.

Their guiding principle and their guiding belief is simple but powerful: When fathers are present and engaged, children do better and entire communities prosper. Time and again, families across Spokane have been reunited, and lives have been changed for the better, one dad, one child, and one family at a time.

Earlier this month, my team had the honor of joining the Spokane Fatherhood Initiative's Building Legacy gala, where our community rallied to raise nearly \$175,000 for life-changing programs.

With weekly classes, some lasting half a year, and special outreach to men reentering society after incarceration or dealing with drug addiction, Spokane Fatherhood Initiative is helping dads restore relationships with their children and strengthen the fabric of our region.

I express my gratitude and extend my congratulations to Ron Hauenstein and everyone at the Spokane Fatherhood Initiative. Their dedication to building stronger fathers is building a stronger Spokane and a brighter community for every child in our community.

HONORING SCOUTS ACROSS AMERICA

Mr. BAUMGARTNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Scouts Across America. Scouts Across America carries forward with a remarkable legacy that began with Robert Baden-Powell, a British Army officer whose simple idea was that outdoor skills, teamwork, and service could build better citizens and a better world.

Robert Baden-Powell served with the British military in Afghanistan and against the Boer in South Africa, and the ideas that he saw there and the skills that he saw that were needed to be developed in young boys. From that, grew a global movement and in our country inspired what is now Scouting America, chartered by Congress to serve our Nation's youth by instilling the values of the Scout oath and law.

As a proud Scout dad, I rise today to say very clearly: Scouts is an outstanding program, and America needs more Scouts, not less.

It takes real effort from moms and dads and volunteers to get kids to meetings, campouts, and service projects. That effort pays off in character, confidence, civic service, and self-reliance of our young people.

Eleanor and I are father and mother to three boys and two girls, and we look forward to hopefully one day being the proud parents of five Eagle Scouts.

Today, Mr. Speaker, let's honor the Scouts, the volunteer leaders, the parents, and the enduring legacy of Robert Baden-Powell, whose vision still calls each new generation to duty, service, and leadership.

May we always support this movement so that more young Americans, especially the young people of eastern Washington, can discover a lifetime of impact and purpose, guided by the Scout oath and the Scout law.