

□ 0910

**SWEARING IN OF THE HONORABLE
MATT VAN EPPS, OF TEN-
NESSEE, AS A MEMBER OF THE
HOUSE**

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Tennessee, the Honorable Matt Van Epps, be permitted to take the oath of office today.

His certificate of election has not arrived, but there is no contest and no question has been raised with regard to his election.

The SPEAKER. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER. Will the Representative-elect and the members of the Tennessee delegation present themselves in the well.

All Members will rise and the Representative-elect will please raise his right hand.

Mr. VAN EPPS appeared at the bar of the House and took the oath of office, as follows:

Do you solemnly swear that you will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that you take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that you will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which you are about to enter, so help you God.

The SPEAKER. Congratulations, you are now a Member of the 119th Congress.

**WELCOMING THE HONORABLE
MATT VAN EPPS TO THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES**

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DESJARLAIS) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. DESJARLAIS. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today with our Republican colleagues, including Mr. FLEISCHMANN, who joins me as the dean of our Republican delegation, to welcome our new colleague to the House.

MATT VAN EPPS brings a great personal story to us here in the Congress. He is a West Point graduate and a lieutenant colonel, and he has a distinguished record of combat service as a helicopter pilot and mission commander.

He is a proven leader with government experience as a member of Governor Bill Lee's Cabinet, serving as the commissioner of the Department of General Services for the State of Tennessee, managing the day-to-day operations of just about every aspect of Tennessee State government.

Most importantly, he is a husband and father, titles much more important than the one he will soon have as Congressman. We are also happy that Meg and Emilia are here, as well as so many

other family and friends joining him on this momentous occasion.

MATT has lived his life to the values of duty, honor, and country, and I know that he will carry those values into the Congress. We are excited to have him working with us, and I know so many in this Chamber on both sides of the aisle will also appreciate and enjoy serving with him, as well.

MATT, let me quickly interject here. This institution is built on debate, and as every Member in this Chamber can tell you, we don't always agree on things. MATT, let me give you your first chance at providing a rebuttal. As the father of a Naval Academy graduate, we have a pretty important game coming up, so I will simply say: Go Navy, beat Army.

Mr. Speaker, I now welcome and yield to the gentleman from Tennessee's Seventh Congressional District, Congressman MATT VAN EPPS, for his response.

Mr. VAN EPPS. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today humbled by the trust the people of Tennessee's Seventh District have placed in me.

I come to this distinguished body as a Christian, a husband and father, and an Army Special Operations helicopter pilot with nine combat tours, who has seen firsthand what makes this Nation exceptional.

America's strength comes from our enduring belief that freedom is worth fighting for and from our commitment to protect and empower the hard-working families who make the American Dream possible.

My commitment is simple: Lower prices for Tennesseans, bring down healthcare costs, protect communities, and restore American energy independence and economic strength.

I will work every day with President Trump and my colleagues in this House to deliver on the America First agenda.

Our constituents are looking for results. The people of Tennessee didn't send me here to just give a speech. They sent me here to deliver, and that is exactly what I intend to do.

Today, we make history as this is the first time a West Point graduate will succeed another West Point graduate for the exact same congressional seat, so respectfully, sir: Go Army, beat Navy.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the administration of the oath to the gentleman from Tennessee, the whole number of the House is now 433.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

**HONORING DR. YANCEY
ARRINGTON**

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

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pride to welcome our guest preacher here today, our guest chaplain, if you will, Dr. Yancey Arrington. Dr. Arrington serves as teaching pastor at Clear Creek Community Church.

Dr. Arrington is from my district, in my district, and does a great service in our district. He has a vibrant congregation under his tutelage. He is in the heart of Texas' 14th District. He is a devoted follower of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the righteous.

For decades, he has been a shepherd to families across our communities, preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who died for our sins. Dr. Arrington preaches about the Savior with conviction, clarity, and a heart firmly rooted in service.

I have known Dr. Arrington personally, and I can tell you he is the real deal, and I know that because his wife told me. His walk matches his talk. Whether he is teaching Scripture about Jesus, mentoring young leaders, or helping folks through some of life's hardest moments, he does it with humility and a steady faith that strengthens everyone around him.

He also happens to be the brother of my friend and Texas colleague, Congressman JODEY ARRINGTON, a true family known across Texas for their Christian leadership.

Mr. Speaker, we are so grateful to have Dr. Arrington open today's proceedings in prayer. May God continue to bless him; his bride, Jennefer; their three boys; and the great work being done at Clear Creek Community Church.

**SUPPORTING HEALTHCARE
APPRENTICESHIPS**

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

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the introduction of my bipartisan Fast Track Healthcare Apprenticeships Act, alongside my friend, Congressman MIKE KENNEDY from Utah.

Across the country, and especially in Texas, families are feeling the strain of a healthcare system that simply does not have enough trained professionals. Longer wait times, higher costs, and fewer options for care are symptoms of a workforce that is stretched far beyond its limits.

Our bill takes a commonsense approach to address the shortage. It streamlines and modernizes the healthcare apprenticeship approval process, requiring Federal and State labor agencies to act on the application within 45 days, and directs the Department of Labor to digitize and update

the apprenticeship agreement forms to make them more accessible.

These changes will help aspiring health workers get trained faster and step into good-paying, stable jobs. It will reduce barriers for employers, strengthen our workforce pipeline, and expand access to care in communities that desperately need it.

Our bipartisan bill supports workers and providers and helps ensure that every family can rely on a healthcare system that is accessible, affordable, and built to meet their needs.

I urge all of my colleagues to join us in supporting this bill.

□ 0920

50th ANNIVERSARY OF IDEA, INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

(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 50th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA, which mandated that every child with a disability in America should have access to a high-quality public education.

When Congress passed IDEA in 1975, it was a landmark step toward educational equity. It opened classroom doors to ensure that every child with a disability could grow, learn, and succeed at school. The legislation expanded opportunities for millions of students with disabilities, helping them reach their full potential.

Unfortunately, before 1975, students with disabilities had long been denied access to public education, but IDEA transformed the public school experience for students with disabilities and their families.

Mr. Speaker, we have an obligation to our students in this country. Thanks to IDEA, our education system is working to serve the needs of every student in America.

This important milestone shows how far we have come in educating students with disabilities, and the legacy of this landmark legislation means a brighter future for all.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DANIEL JAMES SULLIVAN, SR.

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Daniel James Sullivan of Chicago, a veteran, a man of deep faith, and, above all, a devoted husband, father, and grandfather.

Daniel served our country during the Korean war where his compassion stood out, once building a false-bottom delivery truck to secretly deliver bread to nuns at a nearby orphanage.

Daniel brought that same spirit to his family, his church, and his community. A loyal Chicagoan and a proud Chicago sports fan, nothing gave him more joy than the time he spent with his six grandchildren.

Of his six grandchildren, I had the pleasure of working with Catherine Flannery who interned in my Washington, D.C., office.

Mr. Speaker, we remember and honor Daniel Sullivan not just as a veteran but as the kind of American we should all aspire to be. May his memory be a blessing.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF CHARLIE TOMBRAS, JR.

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

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life and legacy of my dear friend and fellow east Tennessean, Charlie Tombras, Jr. Charlie passed away at 83 in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Charlie was a Knoxville native. After high school, he continued his education at the University of Tennessee where he was a member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity.

After his time at UT, Charlie served his country by joining the Army and heading to Vietnam, becoming a decorated Army Ranger. After his service, he returned to Knoxville to work for his father, the legendary Charles P. Tombras, Sr., founder of the Tombras Group Advertising Agency.

Charlie demonstrated grit and dedication to advertising and pioneered campaigns for many of the world's most recognizable brands. Charlie also kick-started the process of establishing the Tombras School of Advertising and Public Relations at our beloved University of Tennessee in 2022.

In addition to his successful business ventures, Charlie was a great outdoorsman, holding records in marlin fly-fishing, sailfishing, and spearfishing, and loved to spend his spare time in the Smoky Mountains and the rivers of Colorado.

Mr. Speaker, Charlie was a known all-American family man, who passed in the presence of his loved ones after a long battle with leukemia.

We love and miss him.

VENEZUELA BOAT STRIKES

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

Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, commanding our Armed Forces and safeguarding our national security requires exemplary honor, experience, and loyalty to the Constitution.

Yet time and time again, the President and his Defense Secretary have proven themselves unfit. They have ordered dozens of illegal strikes on al-

leged drug boats in the Caribbean without congressional approval. This week, we have learned they likely committed war crimes by ordering a second strike targeting and killing survivors.

At the same time, President Trump is pardoning criminals like Juan Orlando Hernandez, the former President of Honduras who was convicted in a U.S. court for smuggling more than 500 tons of cocaine into our country and was sentenced to 45 years.

The President is also threatening violence against our very Members of Congress who simply reminded our military of their constitutional duty not to follow illegal orders. Most troubling, the President doesn't know how to lead, and he doesn't care.

Mr. Speaker, I implore my Republican colleagues, ask yourself: Is the President serious about stopping the flow of fentanyl?

No. He is deathly unserious.

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF THE MINNESOTA AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

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

Mr. FINSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate 25 years of the Minnesota Agriculture and Rural Leadership program known as MARL.

Twenty-five years ago, MARL was founded with the goal of developing the skills of Minnesota's agriculture and rural leaders, connecting them with educational resources to build their influence and effectiveness at local, State, national, and international levels.

In the year 2000, the first MARL class was selected with the inaugural seminar held that November. Today, MARL is recognized throughout Minnesota as the leading agriculture and rural leadership development program.

The idea for MARL was sparked by a 2-year research and development project between Southwest Minnesota State University, University of Minnesota Extension, and the Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota.

Since its creation, the MARL program has continued to grow throughout the past two-and-a-half decades, with some of Minnesota's well-respected leaders among its alumni.

Mr. Speaker, as a past board member of MARL, I am especially proud to recognize this outstanding program for its commitment to educating and training tomorrow's rural leaders for the past 25 years. I wish them many more years of success.

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, the United States Institute of Peace was created