

morning that President Trump says that he is just going to ignore the courts because he believes that he is above the law, Mr. Speaker, that he is not accountable to anyone. Now, he is saying that he is not even accountable to the courts because he and the billionaire class have gotten together and said: Don't worry. No one on the Republican side of the House and Senate who controls both the House and Senate is going to speak up and challenge us.

We need to protect Americans' privacy and their Social Security. For 40 percent of all Americans, Social Security is the basis for their retirement and their retirement savings. For 28 million Americans, Social Security is the only thing that they have, and that is why we have to make sure that we are protecting it, as well.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

LIFT EVERY VOICE

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

Mr. BELL. Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to say happy birthday to my father, John Bell; happy heavenly birthday to my stepfather, Larry Greer; and happy Founder's Day to the national AME Church and, at home in St. Louis, St. Paul AME Church led by Pastor Spencer Booker.

I rise today humbled and with deep gratitude to deliver my first speech here in these Halls, this living testament to both the promise and the challenges of American governance.

I stand not merely as a Representative in Congress but as a proud son of St. Louis, one who believes in the power of bringing every voice into our shared conversation. It is my mission to ensure that every single person in my district feels seen, heard, and valued.

My first foray into public service was as a city councilman elected in 2015 in a place called Ferguson. In 2018, I was the first African American elected to serve as St. Louis County prosecuting attorney, working with community partners to create the first of its kind diversion advisory committee and connecting nonviolent offenders to substance abuse, opioid, and mental health treatment to address underlying root causes of crime. We also created the first conviction incident review unit in St. Louis County, investigating credible claims of wrongful conviction and police misconduct.

Here I stand, elected to this great House, at a time when the current administration has actively intended to make diversity into scarlet letters and is attempting to rebrand the three letters "DEI" into a four-letter curse word.

As we celebrate the lunar new year, we will not forget the contributions of

our AANHPI brothers and sisters in atomic science, medicine, and engineering, to name a few.

We will not forget the contributions of our Hispanic and Latino "brothers and sisters," "hermanos y hermanas," in science, music, medicine, and biochemistry, to name a few.

We will not forget our Muslim brothers' and sisters' contributions in education, science, and medicine, to name a few.

Moreover, we will not forget our Jewish brothers' and sisters' many contributions, but more personally to me, the contributions in the civil rights movement from those who bled and died during the Freedom Rides. Rabbis were locked in arms and risked their lives, marching across the Edmund Pettus Bridge with Dr. King and others, like the late John Lewis, who also graced these very same Halls.

As we celebrate Black History Month, I would be remiss if I did not also mention the tremendous contributions of Black folks in building this Nation.

To the current administration, I rise to say directly that Black history is American history; diversity is this Nation's superpower; equity is about fairness and fair play, which all Americans believe in; and inclusion literally refers to all of us.

From slavery to Jim Crow to being denied basic civil rights but still fighting for and believing in the promise of this promised land, it is this land that, despite that history, we still love.

This is evidenced by a song you may hear a lot during this month and in June. It is a song dubbed the Black national anthem. As my esteemed colleague Congressman CLYBURN accurately remarked, it is a song everyone can identify with. It is a song not about retribution, as it could have been. It is a song not about hopelessness, as it could be. On the contrary, it is a song about hope, faith, and freedom.

It is a song that does not direct some voices to be lifted, but directs us instead to:

Lift every voice and sing,
Till Earth and Heaven ring;
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising Sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 43 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MOORE of West Virginia) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

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

In the spirit of a national pastime and a game well played, we rejoice with those who rejoice and do our best to refrain from gloating in the company of those who weep.

For it is not in our victory but the Lord's in which we trust. In the Lord, we will renew our strength. In the Lord's protection, do we find shelter. Inspired by Lord's abiding presence hovering over us, we run and do not grow weary. With the Lord's guidance and care, we will soar to new heights of faith.

In Proverbs, we read that there are many mysteries only the Lord can answer, like how a ship sails on the sea or how an eagle soars to the heights of the sky. But those who trust in the Lord will spread their wings and fly like eagles.

In faith, let us soar and humbly serve the Lord this day.

In Your strong name we pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. 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.

PROTECTING FARM FAMILIES

(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 to recognize crucial legislation that protects farm families. Farming tends to be an asset-rich but cash-poor industry, and America's hardworking farm families should not be unfairly burdened when it comes to accessing higher education.

For generations, these families have contributed to our Nation's food security and economy. Yet, their eligibility

for Federal student aid has been hindered by policies that count their land and equipment as financial assets, despite the fact that these are essential for their livelihoods and not readily available for educational expenses.

I am proud to cosponsor the Farm Family and Small Business Exemption Act, which would ensure that farm families and small business owners are no longer penalized for owning the tools and property that sustain their work.

By preventing these assets from being counted against financial aid eligibility, we are leveling the playing field and assuring that the children of farmers and small business owners have the same opportunities to pursue higher education as their peers.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representatives MANN and PANETTA for leading this commonsense solution. Investing in the future of farm families strengthens rural communities and our country.

SOUTH CAROLINA'S STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Governor Henry McMaster just gave the South Carolina State of the State address. I am grateful that under his leadership, the Palmetto State has achieved a historic year, with over \$8 billion in capital investment creating 5,500 new jobs.

Additionally, his goal 3 years ago to drop the State personal income tax rate has exceeded expectations. The tax rate continues to be reduced, helping taxpayers.

I am appreciative to be working with Governor McMaster and the Republican supermajorities, for the first time in 150 years, in the State senate led by President Thomas Alexander; in the house with Speaker Murrell Smith; my colleagues in the Republican Congress; and President Donald Trump are all working to make America great again.

In conclusion, God bless our troops as the global war on terrorism continues. Open borders for dictators put all Americans at risk of more 9/11 attacks imminent as warned by the FBI. Trump is reinstituting existing laws to protect American families with peace through strength.

I thank President Trump for removing the academy boards to restore duty, honor, and country.

REPUBLICAN BAIT AND SWITCH

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

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the Republican bait and switch that has been taking place throughout the 119th Congress.

The Republican bait and switch has three elements:

Part 1: Talk about lowering the high cost of living but do nothing about it.

Part 2: Enact massive tax cuts for billionaires and wealthy corporations that will do nothing to improve the quality of life of everyday Americans.

Part 3: Stick working-class Americans with the bill for those massive tax cuts for billionaires and wealthy corporations by destroying Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid as we know it.

House Democrats want nothing to do with the Republican bait and switch, and we will do everything possible to stop it.

The cost of living in the United States of America is far too high. Housing costs are too high. Grocery costs are too high. Insurance costs are too high. Utility costs are too high. Childcare costs are too high. America is too expensive.

It is not acceptable, in the wealthiest country in the history of the world, that far too many everyday Americans are struggling to live paycheck to paycheck. It is time for us to do something about the high cost of living and to build an affordable economy for hard-working American taxpayers.

House Democrats hear you. We see you. We feel you when it comes to the pain being experienced by the American people, and we are determined to do something to make life better for you.

The Republican bait and switch has a very different plan. Last year, all we heard from our Republican colleagues was the need to do something about the high cost of living, while at the same time they ran away from Project 2025 as if it didn't exist.

This year, Republicans have spent all of their time implementing the most extreme parts of Project 2025 that have done nothing to lower the high cost of living. There has not been a single thing, a single bill, a single idea, or a single proposal from my House Republican colleagues to do anything about the high cost of living in the United States of America. Why? It is a Republican bait and switch.

Part 2 of the Republican bait and switch is that their true objective is to enact massive tax cuts for billionaires and wealthy corporations just like they did in 2017 when the GOP tax scam was passed where they set in motion legislation where 83 percent of the benefits would go to the wealthiest 1 percent.

My House Republican colleagues are back at it. There they go again with the same plan but nothing to drive down the high cost of living. Everything is about massive tax cuts for billionaires and wealthy corporations, who in many cases aren't even asking for it. They certainly don't need the relief that everyday Americans need, that working-class Americans need, that middle-class Americans need, and that all those people who aspire to be part of the middle class need. It is a Republican bait and switch.

What is the final element of the Republican bait and switch? Enact these massive tax cuts for billionaires and wealthy corporations and stick working-class Americans with the bill.

The nerve of this group of people who spent all last year lecturing the country about how they were going to do something to drive down the high cost of living, do nothing about it, are planning to enact massive tax cuts for their billionaire buddies, and then, as the final element of the Republican bait and switch, stick working-class Americans with the bill.

House Republicans have no plan to love and cherish Medicaid. Let's be very clear about that. They have no plan to love and cherish Medicaid. Their plan is to destroy Social Security, destroy Medicare, and destroy Medicaid as we know it.

With Republicans controlling the House, the Senate, and the Presidency, it is their intention to try and do it. Just watch what happens at the Republican budget hearing that is upcoming in terms of what is proposed. The cuts to Medicaid will be devastating. Hospitals will close, including in rural America and urban America and in the heartland of America.

Nursing homes will be shut down. Everyday Americans, children, seniors, and those who are suffering with disabilities will be hurt as part of the Republican effort to target earned benefits like Social Security and Medicare and to destroy Medicaid as we know it. It is the Republican bait and switch.

We will continue to expose it to the American people. House Democrats want nothing to do with it, and we are going to do everything in our power to stop it.

HONORING MAJOR GENERAL MASON M. PATRICK

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

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the late, great Major General Mason M. Patrick.

General Patrick, a West Virginia native, West Point graduate, and World War I veteran, honorably served our Nation for 41 years.

In 1921, General Patrick oversaw the creation of the United States Army Air Corps, the precursor to our modern-day Air Force.

Recognizing that true leadership comes from experience, he learned to fly at the age of 59.

His vision to place air power in its own branch was instrumental in building the world's first formidable Air Force.

In 1950, Patrick Air Force Base, in my district, was named in his honor, recognizing his historic contributions to military aviation.

Today, this base is known as Patrick Space Force Base, a testament to how America's leadership in the skies has evolved to dominate new frontiers.