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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BENTZ).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 29, 2026.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CLIFF BENTZ 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 6, 2026, 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 1:50 p.m.

RECOGNIZING CAMERON SMITH

(Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it is with pride that I rise to recognize Cameron Smith of Westmont, Pennsylvania, for earning the rank of cadet captain in the Civil Air Patrol.

Cameron is a 2026 graduate of Bishop McCort High School. He is a member of the Cambria County Composite Squadron, which is a branch of the Pennsylvania Wing of the Civil Air Patrol. He

earned the Amelia Earhart Award and received promotion to cadet captain by completing Phase III of the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program.

Cameron is the son of Matt and Tori Smith. His plans in the immediate future include sitting for the Federal Aviation Administration final exam to obtain his private pilot license.

I congratulate Cameron and his parents on this notable achievement through the cadet program and extend to him best wishes for success throughout his aviation career.

RECOGNIZING ALAN GIFT

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Alan Gift on his selection as the 2026 Franklin County Conservation District Farmer of the Year.

In partnership with the conservation district, Alan has demonstrated a strong commitment to agricultural stewardship and environmental conservation.

Also, through the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program, Alan has initiated a comprehensive project that reduces runoff. At the age of just 30 years, Alan has distinguished himself as a leader in the agricultural industry and a role model for aspiring farmowners.

I join with the Franklin County Conservation District in congratulating Alan Gift for his outstanding agricultural efforts.

COMMEMORATING ANNIVERSARY OF FRANKLIN COUNTY AREA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Franklin County Area Development Corporation. Since its founding in 1986, the organization has facilitated more than 1,000 projects in Franklin County.

This milestone anniversary presents a valuable opportunity to celebrate the development corporation's enduring impact on Franklin County. The success and the priorities of the Franklin

County Area Development Corporation foster prosperity and achievement throughout Franklin County.

On behalf of constituents in Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I personally congratulate President Mike Ross, his staff, and his board of directors on this milestone, and I express my personal gratitude for their continued leadership.

RECOGNIZING LEAH RITCHEY

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the gifted artists from Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District who participated in this year's Congressional Art Competition. Several students from Cambria, Huntingdon, Blair, and Franklin Counties participated.

The 2026 winner is Leah Ritchey, who is a freshman at Cumberland Valley Christian School. Through her acrylic painting, *Blazing Liberty*, Leah captures the traditions of America by drawing inspiration from our Statue of Liberty, a timeless symbol of patriotism, and the fireworks that bring us together. Leah's work serves as a beautiful tribute to our Nation's semiquincentennial.

I extend appreciation to Leah's art teacher, Lisa Fisler, and her mom, Jesse Walizer, for supporting Leah's incredible artistic talents.

DIMINISHED ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

(Mr. COURTNEY of Connecticut was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, 5 days from now, on July Fourth, our country will be celebrating its 250th birthday.

All over the Nation, there will be enthusiastic events in big cities and small towns to recognize the publication, 250 years ago, of the Declaration of Independence, which, as historian Jill Lepore recently wrote, is "arguably the most important piece of prose in modern history."

□ 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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Its author, Thomas Jefferson, laid out a vision of an independent America built around the individual's rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, which still inspire not only our own people but people all over the world.

Unfortunately, it is also the 1-year anniversary of arguably one of the worst pieces of legislation in the modern era, the so-called One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which President Trump signed into law on July Fourth, 2025.

As the Congressional Budget Office documented, this bill will add 3.4 trillion new dollars to our national debt, provide permanent \$1 trillion tax breaks to the top 1 percent of income earners, cut nutrition programs by at least \$187 billion, and, worst of all, cut \$1 trillion from America's largest healthcare program, Medicaid, starting on January 1.

At the time the bill was debated, an overwhelming coalition of hospitals, nursing homes, physician groups, nurses, and patient groups tried to warn the Republican majority and the White House that millions of Americans will be denied healthcare from this draconian butchery of the healthcare system. To be exact, 10 million Americans will lose their coverage, according to CBO.

The majority dismissed those concerns and jammed this measure through, accusing Democrats of scare-mongering. According to them, the new work requirements in the law for vulnerable populations would have exemptions for the "medically frail," and there was nothing to worry about.

A couple of weeks ago, however, these warnings sadly came true when RFK Jr.'s health department released the actual rule that State Medicaid directors will have to follow starting in January.

The hope was that a medical diagnosis for cancer, HIV, or other serious, chronic conditions would qualify for protection. Instead, the rule makes clear that a cancer diagnosis will not automatically qualify for an exemption. Instead, the patient will have to document that the disease actually impairs the ability to work.

A patient suffering from pancreatic cancer, brain cancer, breast cancer, or lymphoma will have to demonstrate, with job searches and employer paperwork, that the disease and the debilitating therapies are an impairment, a hopelessly vague standard that will rob desperately ill patients of care.

To put it in a nutshell, the definition of "medical frailty" is no longer a medical diagnosis by a doctor but a subjective employability standard that makes no sense.

There is a word for this, Mr. Speaker. It is "inhumane."

Don't take my word for it. On this poster is a list of 48 patient groups vehemently denouncing this vicious rule, which Secretary Kennedy and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services should withdraw immediately.

As you can see, the most credible patient groups—American Cancer Society, Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, National MS Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, Lupus Foundation of America, March of Dimes, The ALS Association, and The AIDS Institute, to name just a few—have all warned Kennedy and his followers in Congress that this rule will create chaos and dramatically increase the number of desperately ill people who will lose their health coverage.

There is no better way to honor the principles of our treasured Declaration of Independence—to guarantee the right to life and the pursuit of happiness—than to block this grotesque rule, which will condemn the sickest and most vulnerable of our society to degradation and pain.

STOPPING SHARIA INFLUENCE IN TEXAS

(Mr. SELF of Texas was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. SELF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a growing threat to the rule of law in my State of Texas.

The rise of sharia, the law of Islam, has reached a tipping point in the Lone Star State, especially in north Texas, which I represent. Opaque sharia-compliant actions are advancing across our State and our Nation. We must be clear that America recognizes only one legal system: the Constitution and laws of the United States.

I commend Texas Governor Greg Abbott for his strong leadership in recently confronting this challenge. His actions regarding the proposed Texas American Muslim University and the planned Muslim-only event at a taxpayer-funded water park demonstrate the continuing vigilance required to protect our uniform system of justice.

Last year, nearly 95 percent of Texas voters supported Proposition 10 to ban sharia. That was not a symbolic gesture. It was an overwhelming mandate. Texans declared decisively that no foreign legal framework shall influence, operate alongside, or supplant our State's judicial system. They expect their elected representatives to honor that vote.

Recent events in the United Kingdom offer a stark and tragic warning. A new independent report on grooming gangs has exposed decades of systematic child sexual exploitation, predominantly of young, White, British girls by groups of Pakistani Muslim men, with authorities repeatedly failing to act out of fear of being labeled racist.

Thousands upon thousands of victims were betrayed by the very institutions meant to protect them. We must not allow such horrors to take root here in America.

While Congress is acting—my bill, H.R. 6230, the Tehran Incitement to Violence Act, passed the House and is now pending in the Senate—Federal efforts alone are not enough. The pri-

mary responsibility for protecting our legal system from parallel frameworks rests on the shoulders of an informed citizenry, along with those of State and local leaders. Texans are leading the way, and others are beginning to follow.

In Kaufman County, Texas, Federal, State, and local officials worked in unison to stop a sharia city project backed by a Dubai-based development company.

Several of my constituents confronted the Wiley School Board after one of their high school principals granted a group called Why Islam access to the campus to hand out Korans.

One of my constituents, Jessica Hulcy, grabbed her walker, got a ride to Josephine City Hall, and stood in front of a crowded room to share her concerns about the proposed East Plano Islamic Center.

Across the Red River, citizens in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, successfully put a stop to a sharia enclave after imploring their local leaders to just say no.

Even across the pond, citizens in the U.K. are beginning to push back against the cultural shift wreaking havoc in their community because of sharia's influence.

In America, belief is protected. Conduct under the law is not. Let me be clear: Sharia is a political-legal ideology, not a religion. Therefore, it should not fall under the First Amendment protection for faith and worship. The First Amendment safeguards an individual's right to believe and practice their religion, but it has never granted immunity to political systems, especially those that claim authority above the Constitution, which sharia does.

When presented as a governing framework that dictates civil law, family law, criminal penalties, and public policy, sharia functions as an ideological legal code rather than a religious belief.

Under this view, the Constitution must remain the supreme law of the land. No ideological system, particularly sharia, religious in origin or otherwise, can override the liberties, equal protections, and democratic processes guaranteed to every American.

I thank the Texas Public Policy Foundation and the Texas legislators advancing commonsense measures, such as House Bill 495, which prohibits public institutions from accepting funds from foreign adversaries.

I also encourage States to expand tools for local officials, including county commissioners, in order to safeguard our laws.

□ 1215

Thomas Jefferson declared: "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." This eternal hostility must extend to any religious or foreign legal code, particularly sharia, that seeks to supplant American liberty and self-government.