



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 172

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2026

No. 116

House of Representatives

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

PRAYER

The Reverend Jon Thomas, Diocese of Camden, Camden, New Jersey, offered the following prayer:

O God of all the nations, today, in this House, we ask that You shed Your grace on the United States of America.

We are grateful for our semiquincentennial. We are hopeful for our future. We are grateful for our diversity. We are hopeful for unity.

We are grateful for "pilgrim feet" and "heroes proved in liberating strife." We are hopeful for open hearts and Representatives proved in cooperation.

In declaring independence from Great Britain 250 years ago, the first prayer of the Continental Congress promised that we were "desiring to be henceforth dependent only on Thee."

If we turn to You as our Father, then crown our Nation with brotherhood and sisterhood.

Give us unity from inspiration, not desperation. Unite us with a common dream, not a common enemy. Unite us as a people striving for righteousness, not a people merely arguing who is right.

Through Christ our Lord.
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 Ohio (Mr. TAYLOR) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TAYLOR 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.

WELCOMING REVEREND JON THOMAS

The SPEAKER. Without objection, Mr. NORCROSS of New Jersey was recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to welcome guest chaplain, Father Jon Thomas, priest and vicar general of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Camden.

He was born and raised in south Jersey and educated at Catholic University right here in D.C. Father Jon was ordained in 2010 and has since served the parishes across south Jersey.

As pastor in Atlantic City, he provided assistance and spiritual guidance to the workers in the hospitality industry in Atlantic City.

Since 2020, he has served as pastor of Christ the King in Haddonfield. The year I met him, he was hosting a virtual mass for frontline workers who were, during the pandemic, being challenged.

Since 2022, he has served as chaplain to the New Jersey AFL-CIO.

In 2025, he was appointed vicar general of the Diocese of Camden, serving roughly 475,000 Catholics across south Jersey.

I thank Father Thomas for the prayer, the call for unity, and to our community.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas). The Chair will entertain up to five further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROWAN COUNTY RESCUE SQUAD

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

Mr. McDOWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Rowan County Rescue Squad as we celebrate its 75th anniversary of protecting and serving the community.

Since 1951, the rescue squad has answered the call for more than 140,000 residents who call Rowan County their home. While at its core the rescue squad is made up of brave volunteers, they also are joined by staff to help provide enhanced services of the highest quality to everyone in Rowan County.

Over its first 75 years, they have always been there in times of emergency ready to protect and respond. No matter where, whether on our waterways or in our neighborhoods, they stand ready 24 hours a day.

Their dedication reflects the very best of North Carolina and the spirit of service that strengthens our communities. North Carolina's Sixth District is better because of their dedication.

We thank the Rowan County Rescue Squad, and congratulate them on 75 years.

BARRIERS TO BENEFITS

(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, this month, as our country celebrated 250 years of American democracy, a moment for profound reflection and unity, instead my Republican colleagues rejoiced in one year of the big, beautiful bill. It was anything but beautiful.

SNAP cuts have literally taken food out of the mouths of babes, kicking 1.5

□ 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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H4547

million children from nutrition assistance, leaving families hungry and afraid for tomorrow. Because of this now-law, Medicare cuts have left seniors facing life-threatening barriers to healthcare.

Martin Luther King once said: "Of all forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and inhumane."

When you consider that this bill is on track to cost our Nation \$3.4 trillion, it becomes even more nonsensical, destabilizing, and cruel. That seems to be the point.

Our Founding Fathers believed—in fact, endangered their very lives—on the unmovable belief of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for those fortunate to call our Nation home.

Ripping healthcare coverage, nutrition, and security from our most vulnerable is no way to honor our guiding principles.

RECOGNIZING JANA DETTY

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

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a treasured member of our Buckeye community, Jana Detty, and celebrate her retirement after a storied career spanning 50 years.

While studying at Hocking Technical College to pursue a career in medical records, Jana set out to look for a summer job. At the time, she had no idea of the great career it would launch for her. Her neighbor was the manager at a local McDonald's on Western Avenue, so Jana threw her hat in the ring.

She nailed the interview and started her job as a crew member, quickly climbing through the ranks and moving to shift manager, then assistant manager, general manager, supervisor, and, finally, human resources manager in 2009.

Jana is known for her kindness and commitment to excellence. She also demonstrated her leadership by raising over half a million dollars for charity, to provide a home away from home for families of children undergoing serious medical treatments.

Mr. Speaker, southern Ohio is proud to call Jana one of our own.

We thank her for her years of dedication to our community and congratulate her on her retirement.

□ 0910

E-CIGARETTES ADDICT YOUNG PEOPLE

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

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my outrage about recent FDA regulatory actions on e-cigarettes. On April 30, Reynolds American donated \$5 million to MAGA Inc.,

a Trump-backed super-PAC. In the following 8 days, the President dined with top tobacco executives, and the FDA issued guidance making it easier for tobacco companies to sell flavored e-cigarettes.

In 2024, 1.63 million middle and high school students in America used e-cigarettes, and nearly 90 percent of them used flavored products. The tobacco industry is openly paying bribes to advance policies that will get the next generation of young people hooked on nicotine.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in condemning this blatant, pay-for-play corruption and the harm it will inflict to generations of young Americans.

TAKE CARE OF AMERICA'S VETERANS ACT

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1423, I call up the bill (H.R. 9237) to amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, and other Federal laws, to improve benefits for veterans and the administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1423, the amendment printed in part B of House Report 119-749 is adopted, and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 9237

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Take Care of America's Veterans Act".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—COMPENSATION

Sec. 101. Major Richard Star Act.

Sec. 102. Love Lives On Act.

Sec. 103. Extension of increased dependency and indemnity compensation to surviving spouses of veterans who die from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

Sec. 104. Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson Veterans Benefits Expansion Act of 2026.

Sec. 105. Claims: prohibition on denial solely for certain reason; improved efficiency of adjudications and appeals.

Sec. 106. Annual report on causes of death among veterans.

Sec. 107. Plan for use of automation tools to process claims under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 108. Reforms relating to Department of Veterans Affairs disability ratings.

Sec. 109. Improvements to temporary licensure requirements for contract health care professionals who perform medical disability examinations for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 110. Disability examinations: study on access in rural areas; review of training; review of inadequate or unnecessary examinations.

Sec. 111. Improvements to processing and outreach regarding claims involving military sexual trauma.

Sec. 112. Independent assessment of notices that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs sends to claimants.

Sec. 113. Independent assessment of forms that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs sends to claimants.

TITLE II—EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Sec. 201. Vets Opportunity Act.

Sec. 202. Improvements to process for making payments to automobile sellers for automobiles purchased for certain disabled veterans.

Sec. 203. Monthly housing stipend under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program for individuals who pursue summer programs of education solely through distance learning.

Sec. 204. Clarification regarding inclusion of medically necessary automobile adaptations in Department of Veterans Affairs definition of "medical services".

Sec. 205. Digital communications: Solid Start program; educational assistance.

Sec. 206. Improvements to Transition Assistance Program and Skillbridge.

Sec. 207. Transition Assistance Program: presentation in preseparation counseling to promote benefits available to veterans.

Sec. 208. Elimination of requirement that on-campus educational and vocational counseling is provided by certain Department of Veterans Affairs employees.

Sec. 209. Expansion of entitlement for payment for licensing or certification tests for veterans entitled to educational assistance.

Sec. 210. Increase of amount of educational assistance paid by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for first year of a full-time program of apprenticeship or other on-job training.

Sec. 211. Improving emerging technology opportunities for veterans.

TITLE III—HEALTH CARE

Sec. 301. Extension and modification of transportation grant program of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 302. Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act.

Sec. 303. Veterans TBI Breakthrough Exploration of Adaptive Care Opportunities Nationwide Act.

Sec. 304. Department of Veterans Affairs assignment of traveling physicians to serve territories and possessions.

Sec. 305. Inclusion of adaptive prostheses and terminal devices for sports and other recreational activities in medical services furnished to eligible veterans by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 306. Modifications to and reauthorization of Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 307. Reports on the use of hyperbaric oxygen therapy.

Sec. 308. Department of Veterans Affairs pilot program to provide grants to mental health care providers for the provision of mental health care for veterans.