



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 171

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2025

No. 203

House of Representatives

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

PRAYER

Dr. Yancey C. Arrington, Clear Creek Community Church, League City, Texas, offered the following prayer:

O Lord, high and mighty King of kings and Lord of lords, who from Your throne reign with power supreme and uncontrolled over all kingdoms, empires, and governments; look down in mercy, we implore You, on this, our country, the United States of America, and upon this body who have been given charge of governance.

May they overcome appeals tempting them to rule in favor of the oppressor over the oppressed, the wicked over the righteous, and the guilty over the innocent; on the contrary, knowing that "the Lord," Yahweh, "the most high God, is to be feared, a great king over all the Earth," and that, "God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne," may these honorable men and women "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with" Your lordship in the wise and peaceful exercise of their duties.

All of this, we ask in the name and through the merits of Jesus Christ, Your Son and the Savior.

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 Tennessee (Mr. DESJARLAIS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. DESJARLAIS 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 DR. YANCEY C. ARRINGTON

The SPEAKER. Without objection, Mr. ARRINGTON of Texas was recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, what a joy and honor it is to hear the voice of my older brother leading the people's House in prayer this morning, continuing the sacred tradition since 1789 of calling on Almighty God to consecrate our service for the good of the American people.

Dr. Yancey Cook Arrington is an eighth-generation Texan who, for over 25 years, has served as the teaching pastor at Clear Creek Community Church in the bay area of Houston.

He is joined today in the Chamber gallery by his lovely wife, Jennefer. They are proud parents of my three nephews, Thatcher, Haddon, and Beckett.

Mr. Speaker, I am eternally grateful for my brother's spiritual influence over the years and have always been inspired by his unwavering devotion to God's Word, to God's people, and to God's only begotten Son, Jesus, our Lord.

Thanks be to God for men like Yancey, pastors and preachers throughout these United States, who have dedicated their lives to reminding us that America is great because God is good, and only—and only—if we continue to trust in Him, the sovereign and eternal source of that goodness, will America continue to be great.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 3, 2025.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a letter received from Mr. Mark Goins, Coordinator of Elections with the Tennessee Office of the Secretary of State, indicating that, according to the unofficial results for the Special General Election held on December 2, 2025, the Honorable Matt Van Epps was elected Representative to Congress for the Seventh Congressional District of Tennessee.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

KEVIN F. MCCUMBER,
Clerk.

TENNESSEE SECRETARY OF STATE,
TRE HARGETT,
Nashville, Tennessee, December 3, 2025.

Hon. KEVIN F. MCCUMBER,
Clerk, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. MCCUMBER: Per your request, the unofficial results of the Special Election held on Tuesday, December 2, 2025, for Representative in Congress from the Seventh Congressional District of Tennessee, are as follows:

Matt Van Epps, 96,988.
Aftyn Behn, 81,044.
Jon Thorp, 932.
Teresa "Terri" Christie, 610.
Bobby Dodge, 196.
Robert James Sutherby, 129.

Your office has asked if we know of any contest of election. As of 1:00 p.m. Central on the date of this letter, we are not aware of one.

As soon as the official results are certified, an official Certificate of Election will be prepared for transmittal as required by law.

Sincerely,

MARK GOINS,
Coordinator of Elections.

□ 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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**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