

time of year it is, but around the holidays, their sacrifice is magnified.

Today, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Rayburn foyer, we can all play a small role in brightening the spirits of those in our military by signing a holiday card.

Mr. Speaker, it is an initiative that I look forward to participating in every year, and I encourage my colleagues and their staff to participate as well.

For more than a decade, the Holiday Mail for Heroes program has worked hard to remind our heroes just how much we appreciate their service and their sacrifice.

Last year around this time, I had the privilege of sponsoring a congressional delegation abroad where we met with our troops and had the pleasure of spending time with them during the week of Thanksgiving. My colleagues and I traveled to Kuwait to serve and to share a meal with soldiers stationed there. It was an honor to meet with so many individuals who have committed their lives to protecting our great Nation.

We can all do our part to support our dedicated servicemen and -women now and throughout the year. A gesture as small as sending a card can brighten the holiday season for those who are deployed.

This holiday season, I encourage each and every one of us to take a moment out of our days to let a soldier know how much we appreciate them.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 34 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: God of wisdom, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Prior to the great compromise, Benjamin Franklin addressed the Constitutional Convention: "We indeed seem to feel our own want of political wisdom, since we have been running about in search of it. . . . In this situation of this assembly, groping as it were in the dark to find political truth, and scarce able to distinguish it when presented to us . . . have we now forgotten our powerful friend?"

Lord, You are the powerful friend referred to by Franklin, and we turn again to You to ask that Your wisdom might break through the political discussions of these days.

Bless the Members of the people's House and all of Congress with the insight and foresight to construct a future of security in our Nation's politics, economy, and society. May they, as You, be especially mindful of those who are poor and without power.

May all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KELLER 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

U.S. AND BULGARIA FRIENDSHIP

(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, last week, President Donald Trump warmly welcomed Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov to the White House and reaffirmed the strong alliance between our two countries.

Based on this successful meeting, the United States and Bulgaria announced a new strategic partnership framework to deepen our historic bilateral relationship which spans over 100 years.

According to a joint statement to face a growing concern about the security situation in the Black Sea, Bulgaria offered to provide a maritime coordination function at Varna in support of NATO's Tailored Forward Presence Initiative. This is so important and will be a welcome step in the formation of an intelligence hub in the region to counter destructive activity. The two also agreed to work more closely on energy diversification to advance Bulgaria's energy sector, reduce prices for citizens, and allow for Bulgaria to become a true gas hub and key source of regional energy security.

These two measures underscore the important role that Bulgaria continues to play as an ally and a valuable NATO

member. I am grateful that President Trump is prioritizing a relationship with a beloved ally like Bulgaria.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

RECOGNIZING NAACP ATLANTIC CITY BRANCH

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

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to express my gratitude for the efforts of the NAACP Atlantic City branch to make south Jersey a place of inclusion, acceptance, and equality.

In the past few years, this organization has worked to improve access to the polls for marginalized voters, to protect maternal and infant health with the Infant Mortality Task Force, and to provide scholarships for the education of our vulnerable youth.

The NAACP of Atlantic City has also focused on tackling hatred in our community by organizing vigils to call out hateful and unacceptable actions against minorities and by addressing the environmental injustice disproportionately suffered by these groups.

This group has worked tirelessly to support minority groups in south Jersey, and our region is safer, healthier, more inclusive, and happier because of it.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Atlantic City NAACP for their commitment and service to our community. South Jersey and the State of New Jersey appreciates all the work that they do.

DEMOCRATS ARE TRYING TO TEAR THIS COUNTRY APART

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

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, after weeks of secret depositions, selective leaks, and public hearings, the Democrats trying to tear down this country with their impeachment sham have not proven any of their assertions against President Trump.

Unfortunately for those Americans who expect Members of Congress to work for their benefit, the majority in this Chamber is instead obsessed with overturning the will of the people expressed in the 2016 election. That obsession caused substantive legislation to come to a standstill.

While some Democrat Members of this House have pointed to the number of bills passed as evidence of success, I would like to point out that just because people are busy, it does not mean they are working. While bipartisan bills to address issues like lowering prescription drug prices, better trade deals, and funding our national defense are ready to be voted on, Speaker PELOSI has instead chosen to focus on