

featured seven businesses, seven manufacturing plants, and had a population of 330 people.

In the 1800s, Hickory was a primary trading center along the Western North Carolina Railroad, and it grew into one of the largest hubs for business manufacturing and textiles in the Southeast United States.

Today, Hickory is home to more than 40,000 people. It holds data centers operated by the world's largest technology companies, and over 40 percent of the world's fiber optic cable is manufactured there.

Hickory's history goes even beyond its industrial roots. Some other noteworthy features are: the Hickory Motor Speedway, one of the most legendary short tracks in the history of American stock car racing; the local community college, Catawba Valley Community College, which is providing some of the most excellent education offered anywhere in the country to the citizens of the area; Lenoir-Rhyne University, one of North Carolina's premier schools, which was founded in 1891; a wonderful art center; and a Minor League Baseball team, the Hickory Crawdads, which was founded 25 years ago.

While the city continues to grow, its historical landmarks still stand as a testament to its rich history. From the Propst House to Maple Grove, Union Square to the Henry River Mill Village, Hickory's legacy as a leader in textiles manufacturing and trading is ever-present.

Hickory has played a pivotal role in North Carolina's history, and it continues to make a sizeable impact on North Carolina's economy.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent Hickory, North Carolina, and I am certain it will continue to prosper and celebrate many more significant milestones in the future.

IMPEACHMENT TRIAL NEEDS WITNESSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the impeachment of President Donald Trump has forced our Nation into a constitutional crisis.

On the one hand, Democrats have led a good faith effort to discover the truth and hold President Trump and his administration responsible for their destructive and corrupt actions in Ukraine. While on the other hand, Republicans have refused outright to meaningfully engage in the fact-finding process.

In our House, Republicans have ignored the fact that Russia has invaded Ukraine, a sovereign nation. Ukraine is a scrimmage line for liberty in Europe today, a continent whose liberty we restored and paid a deep price for it.

Despite overwhelming evidence in the Senate, Republicans have complained they have learned nothing new

from the impeachment trial. Yet, they have voted over 10 times to block new evidence and witnesses.

For instance, it is clear that President Trump's former National Security Advisor John Bolton's testimony has relevance to the Senate's efforts to find the truth—the truth. Bolton has firsthand knowledge of the administration's duplicitous actions in Ukraine and President Trump's malintent. Yet, Republicans in the Senate have refused to subpoena Bolton, despite his statement that he is willing to testify.

Additionally, this week, The New York Times reported that President Trump told his former National Security Advisor John Bolton that he wanted the \$391 million in security assistance to Ukraine frozen—a nation at war—until Ukrainian officials agreed to carry out investigations into Democrats and the Bidens.

According to a manuscript written by Bolton, such a claim is relevant and warrants immediate investigation by Congress. Yet, Politico reported today that Republican leadership in the Senate remains opposed to additional witnesses, including Bolton, though dissent is emerging in their ranks.

Mr. Speaker, I feel strongly that if the Senate fails to allow additional witnesses relevant to the impeachment trial and subsequently votes to acquit, such inaction will set a dangerous and perhaps even irreversible precedent, one that allows the executive branch to ignore congressional oversight with impunity.

Today, President Trump has refused to comply with any congressional subpoenas obstructing justice, even going a step further as to block any and intimidate executive branch officials from cooperating with the House investigation.

An executive branch unaccountable to Congress, the branch of government most connected with the American people, is a dangerous prospect. We cannot allow this to become the new norm.

Ours is a nation of laws, not men or women. Laws protect us. The balance of power between our three branches of government at the local, State, and Federal levels is the only protection we have from ourselves.

Our Founders wrote into our Constitution the means to hold a lawless President accountable and remove him from office. The rule of law is sacred, and that is why no one is above the law.

Regardless of anyone's opinions of President Trump, personal affections are not the issue. The issue at hand is independent of party or politics. The question is: Who among us will sit silent and allow the voice of the people to be trampled, and who will rise up to keep the Presidency accountable to our Republic?

Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege to serve alongside public servants in both parties. While I have had disagreements with Republican colleagues on

policy, I remain immensely thankful for their bipartisanship in so many ways and willingness to engage on issues to strengthen our Nation's national security and improve the lives of working people, calling many Republicans, actually, my friends.

But that is why, Mr. Speaker, I am so disappointed today. My Republican colleagues have so far failed to act in defense of our democracy. They seem to live in an alternate reality from our own.

The American people have made it clear they want additional witnesses to ensure a fair trial. They want to hear what Ambassador Bolton and other witnesses have to say. Senate Republicans should let them testify under oath.

Finally, I enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the words of Dr. Daniel Rapport, a constituent and a distinguished medical doctor at the University of Toledo Medical Center, urging the Senate to convict President Trump.

His words: "The impeachment of President Trump has forced our Nation into a constitutional crisis. If the Senate fails to hold President Trump accountable, as is its constitutional duty, then a dangerous precedent will be set, one that empowers the executive branch to ignore congressional oversight with impunity.

"Combined with the increasing power of the executive in recent decades, in addition to the President's veto power, the capacity of the legislative branch to rein in the executive will be ever more limited, weakening the American's people will in their own government.

"This is an outcome that must be avoided at all costs. The Senate alone has the power to do what is right to preserve the balance of power between the legislative and executive branches. The Senate must vote to convict President Trump."

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

PAIN IS THE PRICE OF AMERICA'S HEALTHCARE

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, the \$3 trillion healthcare industry continues to crush the middle class. Americans are paying more than ever and getting ever less as they struggle to access care. The cost of care for both workers and employers is outpacing wage growth.

What drives the cost of care in America today is lack of transparency, consolidation, and overregulation that is leading to administrative glut. The time is now to confront these cost drivers. President Trump has addressed these exact issues in recent months.

Obtaining coverage has allayed the fears as costs rise, yet coverage itself keeps costs hidden and high. Our opaque, third-party payment system has obscured the true cost of receiving care from patients and physicians alike.

Prices are rising with no end in sight. We see examples of it every day, people who believe they are covered because they have insurance only to find out that, in some cases, they are just as vulnerable as those who are uninsured. The current system allows people who have insurance to end up paying more for a CT, for example, than if they had just paid cash.

This process and complexity of billing can allow this to happen. This lack of transparency in our healthcare system is a culprit, and it harms patients, physicians, pharmacists, and others who rely on it.

Consolidated hospital systems, the completely unregulated pharmaceutical middlemen, PBMs, and the insurance companies that are tied to both hospitals and PBMs have been increasingly profiting. These corporate giants have no motivation to offer transparency and discounts.

Costs remain deliberately hidden until the patient receives a bill. The number of healthcare administrators has grown more than 4,000 percent between 1970 and 2020. Consequently, spending on healthcare has increased 3,200 percent.

Is there any other conclusion than to tie rising costs to administrative glut? No. Administrative glut is largely to manage the regulations that our government has put in place, regulations that make healthcare more complex than the tax code. It is past time to cut the glut.

Medicine's malignant mergers, both vertical and horizontal, are creating behemoth healthcare systems like CVS, where insurance companies, PBM, pharmacy, and drive-by clinics are all together. This leads to patients being forced to go somewhere to receive their drugs and, in some cases, are told that they have to purchase brand-name drugs even when the generic equivalent is available. It is not about what is a better deal for the patient but what is a better deal for the PBMs and their ilk.

Americans are paying more than ever for coverage that limits their choices and doesn't always provide them access to care. The bloated bureaucratic special interests must be unveiled and Americans must educate themselves on cost drivers to forge sustainable solutions.

We need to focus on returning to a patient-centered healthcare system. Some people are starting to do this with things like direct primary care, which provides the patient with an array of services for a fixed cost that is actually transparent.

□ 1030

We need a system that allows patients to choose and fosters competi-

tion. The only way we are going to get a system like that is by shining a light on the shadows of our healthcare system. The answer is not more government, not more regulation but, rather, a concerted effort by Congress to bring our healthcare system out into the sunshine and to allow our sunshine to shine on these hidden practices; these practices are actually causing our prices to go up. No longer can we allow patients to bear the brunt of this complicated and very, very complex system.

The time is now to follow healthcare's money trail, unwind existing laws, or enact new laws that demand cost transparency, cut administrative glut, stop consolidation, and bring regulatory relief. Your health depends on it.

CONGRATULATING THE CAMP HILL LIONS GIRLS SOCCER TEAM

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

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my heartfelt congratulations to the Camp Hill Lions Girls Soccer Team for their victory at the PIAA Class A State Soccer Championship, and for their excellence throughout their undefeated 2019 season.

Led by Coach Jared Latchford—who, to no one's surprise, was just named the Pennsylvania Soccer Coaches Association Girls Class A Coach of the Year—the Lions dominated the season, achieving a stunning overall record of 25 wins, zero ties, and zero losses.

This is the Lions' second appearance at the state championship in the last 3 years. They took an early lead in their contest against Shady Side Academy and held it throughout the game.

Aggressive and selfless offense, vigilant defense, and stellar goalkeeping earned the Lions a 2-0 victory and their first State championship trophy in school history.

These amazing athletes are the epitome of remarkable dedication and discipline, outstanding skill, exceptional sportsmanship, and an unyielding team spirit. Their dedication to excellence, to say the least, earned them this championship.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's 10th Congressional District, I congratulate the Camp Hill Lions for their incredible performance. We are proud of you.

HONORING THE LEADERSHIP AND CAREER OF SERGEANT JOHN AITON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize the exemplary leadership and career of Sergeant John Aiton, a native of the Palmetto State, born and raised in my hometown of Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Upon graduating from Rock Hill High School, John Aiton attended East Coast Bible College, where he received a bachelor of arts in pastoral ministries, later earning a master's degree in biblical interpretation from Pentecostal Theological Seminary.

After a brief teaching and coaching stint at the Heritage Academy in Fort Mill, Sergeant Aiton joined the Rock Hill Police Department. John always had a special place in his heart for helping the community, so after 2 years of patrol work, he left to join the juvenile division as a DARE instructor.

During his work early on, he was promoted to special investigator, and was selected to serve on the police force's first crisis negotiating team, forming the department's neighborhood watch program.

Because of his dedication to the local community, he began to serve as the department's chaplain and continued work with the Worthy Boys and Girls Camp. This ultimately led him to his best-known role, a school resource officer for 22 years; 11 years at Northwestern High School, followed by another 11 years at South Pointe High School.

Throughout his distinguished career, Sergeant Aiton went above and beyond his job to protect and serve the community. Due to his service, he was promoted to sergeant of the Community Service Division, but because of his commitment to student safety, he relieved himself of those duties.

John is a truly inspirational citizen and a community servant whose pride and joy is found in protecting students.

After a distinguished career, Sergeant John Aiton retired from the force in June of 2019. It is truly an honor to recognize and congratulate Sergeant John Aiton on his well-deserved retirement. Rock Hill could not have asked for a better, selfless role model for our community.

In the words of Winston Churchill, who made famous a quote when Great Britain was about to be under siege, he said:

There will be a time when doing your best is not good enough. You must do what is required.

Sergeant Aiton did what was required to make a true difference.

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 35 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. TRONE) at noon.