

diseases or manage diseases like endometriosis.

While it would be nice to believe we're in the twilight zone, the recent ploys of Republicans against women's health are all frighteningly too real. In reality, this hearing did take place with the House Government Oversight and Reform Committee blocking the testimony of women, women like Georgetown University law student Sandra Fluke, who later testified during a special hearing convened by Democratic Minority Leader NANCY PELOSI of a fellow female student at Georgetown University who had been denied contraception coverage because of the university's Catholic affiliation. Her friend experienced complications stemming from ovarian cysts that could have been treated with birth control. Sadly, due to nontreatment, doctors eventually were forced to remove her ovary.

There are so many stories just like this that need to be told; but, sadly, you won't hear them on Capitol Hill if my Republican colleagues in the majority have anything to do with it. They are too busy silencing women's voices on these very critical issues.

What if there was a hearing held on access to Viagra or vasectomies with a panel of experts being a group of six women? Could you imagine the outrage if women were allowed to legislate what happens to men's bodies? The horror.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, this twilight zone is real. This attack on women's health is real, but the battle is not over. We cannot and will not allow a few to silence the voices of millions of women across this country. We must continue to stand up for women and their reproductive health.

LEAVE AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I voted to go to war in Afghanistan, but I did not vote for a forever, permanent war that has now lasted almost three times as long as World War II. We should have ended our involvement in Afghanistan many years ago, and many young American lives would have been saved.

The first war against Iraq and Kuwait lasted just 7 months. With the recent killings of four more Americans and with massive anti-American demonstrations being conducted by hundreds of thousands of Afghani citizens, we need to greatly speed up our withdrawal. We need to leave Afghanistan the sooner the better.

We've spent hundreds of billions there over the last decade, a great amount of which has really been just pure foreign aid. We've built schools and medical facilities and helped their farmers. We have trained their police and military and have had thousands of Afghans on our payroll.

□ 1030

We've had to borrow approximately 41 percent of all of these mega-billions we have spent to help the Afghan people. No country has done nearly as much, Mr. Speaker, for another country in the entire history of the world as we have done for Afghanistan.

Now, the people there have made it very clear that they do not appreciate what we have done for them. In fact, not only are they ungrateful, but they are showing, through their actions, that they have anger or even hatred toward us. We should stop spending all these billions of taxpayer dollars just as soon as we possibly can.

I did not criticize President Obama when he apologized for the burning of the Korans. However, I did not think it was something that rose to the level that required a Presidential apology. Some person or persons made a mistake in burning the Korans. They should have apologized, or the commander of the Air Force base, or perhaps our Ambassador.

However now, where is the apology from the Afghan leadership about the Americans who have been killed or for all of the hatred and anger directed toward our country? Where is the gratitude for all that America and Americans have done for the Afghan people over the last 10 or 11 years?

We have a national debt of over \$15 trillion that is headed far higher at a more rapid rate than ever before. It is far past the time that we should have been taking care of our own country and putting our own citizens first.

We need to let the Afghan people run Afghanistan, and we need to stop trying to be everything to everybody all over the world. We simply cannot afford it, and we are jeopardizing the future of ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren if we continue trying to run the whole world.

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 31 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Adam McHugh, Vitas Hospice Center, Covina, California, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, we acknowledge and praise You on this day that You have made.

We are reminded that all power and authority ultimately come from You.

We do not wield our own power, but we are stewards who have been entrusted with a greater power.

May the work that is done today in the Halls of the powerful be done on behalf of the powerless. Would You open our ears to listen to the needs and the cries of those who are seldom heard. May the strong voices today speak out for the sake of those with no voice.

Would You grant our leaders courage and wisdom to do what is right, and would You pour out on them a spirit of peace, love, kindness, and gentleness.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. 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. Will the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia 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.

RESIGNATION AS PARLIAMENTARIAN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENTARIAN,

Washington, DC, February 28, 2012.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: As you know, the skill and dedication of the team with whom I serve in the Office of the Parliamentarian and the Office of Compilation of Precedents are unsurpassed. In my judgment they are ready to continue their commitment to excellence in the procedural practice of the House without me. I appreciate your allowing me to lead the office to this juncture. Please now accept my resignation effective March 31, 2012.

I am grateful to you and your predecessors, Mr. Speaker, for supporting the exercise of independent professional judgment by your parliamentarians. It is a credit to the House that its presiding officers shed their partisan cloaks and follow our considered advice.

It has been my honor to serve in the Office of the Parliamentarian for 25 years. To whatever extent I have made good of the opportunity, I credit the steady support of my wife, Nancy Sands Sullivan, and the inspiration of our children, Michael, Margaret, and Matthew.

Sincerely,

JOHN V. SULLIVAN,
Parliamentarian.