

RECOGNIZING CHANCELLOR MARK A. NORDENBERG, UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Mark A. Nordenberg, chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, which includes regional campuses in the Pennsylvania Fifth Congressional District, in Bradford, McKean County, Pennsylvania, and Titusville, Crawford County, Pennsylvania.

This August, Chancellor Nordenberg will step down after 19 years as chancellor, but will remain at the university that he has served for over 37 years.

During Chancellor Nordenberg's tenure, the university experienced tremendous growth. Annual applications for admission climbed from 7,825 to 27,626. Overall enrollments have steadily increased. Average SAT scores for incoming students are now 185 points higher, and the university continues to expand and to modernize.

Today, the University of Pittsburgh is ranked nationally and competing for the best students in the region, the country, and the world.

Chancellor Nordenberg joined the faculty of Pitt's School of Law in 1977, eventually serving as dean and interim provost of the university. In 1995, he was elected interim chancellor by the university's board of trustees, and in 1996, he was elected chancellor.

Through Chancellor Nordenberg's vision and leadership, the University of Pittsburgh now has an outstanding foundation for success which will last for years to come.

Tomorrow, Chancellor Nordenberg will receive Pitt-Bradford's highest honor, the Presidential Medal of Distinction, which recognizes individuals who have demonstrated outstanding long-term service to the university.

It is my honor to join Dr. Alexander, president of Pitt-Bradford, and the entire University of Pittsburgh team, in offering my congratulations on receiving this important distinction.

Mr. Speaker, we thank Chancellor Nordenberg for his commitment to educational excellence, for his drive and passion to build the University of Pittsburgh into a renowned institution of higher learning.

FREE AMIR HEKMATI

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, this week, I and many others were in Lafayette Park joining the family of Amir Hekmati, my constituent, to commemorate a very sad anniversary.

For 1,000 days, Amir Hekmati, a young man born in the United States, grew up in my hometown of Flint,

Michigan. His parents emigrated to the United States long before Amir was born, in the late 1970s, from Iran. Amir Hekmati has been sitting in a prison—in Evin Prison in Tehran, for 1,000 days.

He traveled to Iran for the first time in August of 2011 because, like many other young men and young women, he wanted to explore his own roots. He had served in the United States Marine Corps, came home; and, before enrolling in school, he wanted to go visit family that he had never met and, in fact, wanted to meet his grandmother whom he had never seen before.

He was there for about 2 weeks before he was arrested. For months, nobody knew where he was, and then soon it was revealed that he had been arrested, tried, and convicted of espionage. Because he was an American who had served in the Marine Corps, he was convicted of espionage.

That death sentence that was initially executed on him was set aside, and that death sentence was suspended. Apparently, there had been a new trial, and he is now, according to a New York Times report, serving a 10-year sentence.

This is a young man who simply went to visit his family, traveled with permission, in a transparent fashion, and is now caught up in the geopolitical struggle as Iran, apparently, seeks to rejoin the international community.

One thousand days in prison—holidays have passed; we experience every one of these days, the changing of seasons. For all of us, we take these moments, these passages for granted.

For Amir Hekmati, every day is the same. Every day, he is in a cell, for many, many months, in a 3 by 3 cell, unable to even sit down for all but 10 minutes of every day.

If Iran truly seeks to rejoin the international community—of course, there are the P5+1 negotiations taking place right now. If Iran seeks to join the global community, and if this Congress is to take any agreement that might be struck seriously, Iran must now free Amir Hekmati. If they expect to be taken seriously, they cannot hold political prisoners.

Now, for most of us, we don't think there is much that we can do about this, but I think every American citizen, every Member of Congress—especially those who have joined me in a bipartisan fashion in calling upon Iran to release Amir Hekmati—can do something. We all can.

For those of you that use Twitter, #FreeAmir. Believe me, it sends a message. It sends a message across the globe. It sends a message to the Iranian people, to the Iranian Government. It sends a message to the friends and the family of Amir Hekmati that our country stands with him.

During those 1,000 days, Amir Hekmati's father has fallen ill. He has brain cancer. It is time, even if for just humanitarian purposes, it is time, long past time, for Iran to do what is right

and to release Amir Hekmati, so he can come home and be with his family.

SUPPORT OUR AIR NATIONAL GUARD

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today's congressional business is to deal with the defense authorization legislation. This is a critical bill, a real opportunity to balance our needs for a strong defense and care for our men and women in uniform, with the hard budget realities and unsustainable trend lines that we are seeing across the budget categories.

But because we are ducking the hard tradeoffs in this Defense Authorization, tradeoffs that at least the administration—to its credit—and the Pentagon laid before Congress with their recommendations. We are going to have to resort to an amendment process on the floor to use these areas of opportunity to make longer-term savings and to use part of that money to address key priorities that are short-changed.

□ 1015

Now, I have an amendment that would help support our Air National Guard. The Guard and Ready Reserves are a cost-effective way to provide support for our military establishments. They have proven their worth time and time again overseas, like in Iraq and Afghanistan, and here at home as they help us deal with natural disasters.

The Air National Guard also operates a fleet of 130 F-15 fighter jets in installations across America, but more than half these planes rely on an outmoded, limited radar technology from the 1970s. That means that for many of our pilots, their radar is older than they are. It went out of production in 1986. It limits their capacity, and it breaks down more frequently. It is less reliable. That is why my amendment will actually save money over the next 10 years.

Soon we will be voting on whether or not we will do the right thing to support this vital work of the Air National Guard. Now, during the debate last night, the opponents couldn't argue against the wisdom of making the Air Guard more effective by upgrading this outmoded radar technology that is unreliable and limits their capacity. In fact, they admitted that the little bit that the budget will do to upgrade some of them actually was helpful. They had no good reason to continue to shortchange the Guard.

Instead, during the debate, they tried to make this modest proposal into a larger debate about the one-half to two-thirds of \$1 trillion we will be spending over the next 10 years for our whole nuclear weapons program. Now, that is a debate I will welcome on the floor of the House.

In fact, I have legislation that would save \$100 billion over the next 10 years and would start us on a much different path to rein in the bloated, expensive, unnecessary, and redundant nuclear deterrent that is many times more than we can afford or that we need. How many times do we have to completely destroy a country from how many different platforms in order to meet our objective of deterrence? We are spending more in inflation-adjusted terms than we spent at the height of the cold war with the Soviet Union. Not only is the program more than we need, but the costs are out of control.

I am pleased that later today we will debate an amendment that the Rules Committee made in order to make last year's Congressional Budget Office report on the reliability of the weapons costs an annual event. That is important because the first report that was issued in December showed that there is a \$150 billion underestimation from the administration's current program projections, and that is before the committee added more money and changed the timelines.

By all means, let's have that debate on the floor of the House, on how many of these weapons we need. We have never used these weapons in 69 years and are too expensive and actually, in and of themselves, are dangerous. Let's have the debate sooner rather than later so that we can set our priorities. In the meantime, let's not confuse the tiny reallocation under my amendment with a larger question that is 1,000 times greater.

What it does show is that the money is there to help the Air Guard do their job right. It would be a shame if we let them down and did not approve the Blumenauer amendment.

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 18 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

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

We pause now in Your presence and acknowledge our dependence on You.

We ask Your blessing upon the men and women of this, the people's House. Keep them aware of Your presence as they face the tasks of this day, that no burden be too heavy, no duty too difficult, and no work too wearisome.

Help them and, indeed, help us all to obey Your law, to do Your will, and to walk in Your way. Grant that they might be good in thought, gracious in word, generous in deed, and great in spirit.

Make this a glorious day in which all are glad to be alive, eager to work, and ready to serve You, our great Nation, and all our fellow brothers and sisters.

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

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 gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. KIRKPATRICK) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK 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

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

(Mr. WILLIAMS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, as we approach Memorial Day to honor and remember the fallen heroes who paid the ultimate price while serving in the Armed Forces, it is vital for Congress to ensure appropriate funding for our troops.

With crises around the world and constant threats to our national defense, we ask a lot of those who wear the uniform. They shouldn't have to ask for anything in return.

In November 2009, an Islamic extremist opened fire on troops at Fort Hood, killing 14 and injuring dozens of others. The victims and survivors have been denied the benefits and honors granted to injured troops in combat zones because the President considers the massacre workplace violence, rather than a terrorist attack.

Nobody in America, but this administration, believes this was workplace violence. The men and women dressed in Army fatigues that day were targets simply because they were American soldiers.

H.R. 4435, the National Defense Authorization Act, brings the victims of

the Fort Hood shooting one step closer to receiving the Purple Heart medal, giving them the benefits they earned and the recognition they deserve.

They were victims of terrorism, and it is time for them to be recognized as such. I urge every Member to vote in favor of our troops. Vote for H.R. 4435.

In God we trust.

EXTEND UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

(Mr. KILDEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, it is just wrong. It is wrong that we have 2.8 million hardworking Americans who have lost their jobs and are looking every day for their next job.

They stand to lose everything that they have worked for, and this Congress has within its power the ability to act to save them from losing decades of hard work, losing their house, losing their car, losing the roof over their head; but this Congress fails to bring up a bill that has passed the Senate, that the President would sign, that would extend unemployment benefits to 2.8 million Americans who work hard every day.

There is one reason that this Congress has failed to act, and it is because the Speaker and the Republican leadership will not bring this bill to the floor.

This bill would not increase the deficit. It is paid for, but it would end the misery and the suffering of so many hardworking people who get up every day, wondering if today is the day that the foreclosure notice will come, if today is the day that the car will be repossessed.

We are all Americans. We have always stood together. We have always helped one another when times are tough. For 2.8 million people, times are tough.

Congress needs to act. I call on this House to bring up H.R. 4415. Let's do this now.

REVITALIZING THE CITY OF MORaine, OHIO

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

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, in 2008, during the depths of the recession, a former General Motors plant closed in the city of Moraine, Ohio. The plant was set for demolition, which would have ended any hope of jobs returning to the site.

Moraine Mayor Elaine Allison, City Manager David Hicks, and Economic Director Michael Davis all worked very diligently to preserve this resource and make certain this plant was not a parking lot. Their tireless efforts paid off.

Last Thursday, the city of Moraine officially welcomed Fuyao, a thriving auto parts manufacturer, back to the