

The passage of 21st Century Cures also represents an important step toward the discovery and development of new treatments for many diseases, like cancer and Alzheimer's, in addition to empowering individuals, families, and employers across the country with more healthcare options.

I was proud to have supported this pioneering legislation, and I look forward to its swiftly being signed into law.

WIIN AND CEPP

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act, or the WIIN Act. Included in this package, which is expected to be considered in the House later in the week, is the Central Everglades Planning Project, which is of critical importance to the ecological health of the State of Florida. This project will significantly increase freshwater flows from Lake Okeechobee through the Everglades and down into Florida Bay, providing critical relief to our water reservoirs and to a stressed ecosystem in the bay.

The health of Florida Bay is a moral and an environmental cause. It is also vital to south Florida's multibillion-dollar tourism industry, making Everglades restoration an important local issue as well as a major national priority. Long-term restoration will be achieved primarily by constructing projects for the conveyance, treatment, and storage of water and, ultimately, the restoration of freshwater flow from north to south. CEPP contributes to all of these goals.

I thank Chairman SHUSTER for working with me to include \$1.9 billion for the Everglades Restoration Program in the WIIN Act. I am proud that, through bipartisan efforts, we were able to include this much-needed funding for Everglades restoration, and I look forward to getting this bill signed into law.

FY 2017 NDAA AND SPOC ACT

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to applaud the House's passage of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2017.

This bipartisan legislation strongly supports our servicemembers by providing a much-deserved 2.1 percent pay raise and improves access to health care for them and for their families. It prohibits the administration from transferring our naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to the Castro dictatorship. It also protects victims who report sexual assault from personal and professional retaliation by making "retaliation" a separate offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

In addition, I am grateful that my bill, the Service Provider Opportunity Clarification Act, was included in the final package. Any large business that receives a contract for more than \$650,000 must show the Federal Government how it will use small businesses as subcontractors.

Subcontracting is an important entry point for new Federal contrac-

tors. Without a robust and wide base of subcontractors, we will have fewer prime contractors tomorrow—meaning fewer suppliers, manufacturers, and innovators—and this will all result in increased costs to American taxpayers.

I thank Chairman THORNBERRY and Chairman CHABOT for including my bill and for their hard work in moving the NDAA forward. Their efforts serve as an excellent example of Congress' working together on behalf of the brave men and women who are tasked with keeping our country safe. I look forward to the legislation being signed into law.

CONGRATULATING SOUTHRIDGE SPARTANS FOOTBALL

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Southridge Spartans football team on their first trip to the State finals since 1999.

After a 2-2 start to the season, the Spartans' defense stepped up and shut out all future opponents from scoring a touchdown. The Spartans outscored their final five opponents by a whopping 151-0, finishing the season with a 7-2 record and earning a spot in the Florida State playoffs.

After defeating Coral Gables in the quarterfinals, Southridge faced off against Deerfield Beach in the semifinals. The Spartans overcame six turnovers, five of which came in their own territory, to defeat Deerfield Beach 26-7 and to clinch their rightful place in the championship game this Saturday in Orlando v. Dr. Phillips High School.

I congratulate head coach Billy Rolle and principal Miret, along with the players, students, faculty, and alumni of Miami Southridge High School, for their amazing season thus far.

Good luck. Bring the championship home.

VIETNAM VETERANS

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Veterans Day last month, I introduce Louisiana House Concurrent Resolution 43 into the United States CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

This resolution recognizes November 13, 2013, through November 11, 2025, as the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. It is important that we recognize our Nation's heroes who served with valor and honor through this long war, which in many ways defined an entire generation of Americans. By the end of the Vietnam war, nearly 3 million American servicemen and servicewomen had served within the borders of Vietnam in some capacity in that conflict. We would like to take this time to honor all Vietnam veterans and, especially, the more than 58,000 patriots who paid the ultimate sacrifice during this difficult and painful period of war.

Of the millions of Vietnam veterans who served our country, over 106,000 reside in my home State of Louisiana. Though we remain thankful for all of those who served our great Nation, we would like to take this time to remember the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. It is important that we honor our veterans while they are still alive so that they can take honor for the sacrifices and know that they do not go unnoticed.

HELP AND HOPE FOR THE MENTALLY ILL

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

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today is a day of joy, and it was, indeed, a long time in coming, but here we are.

My time in Congress was redefined 4 years ago, on December 14, 2012, when 26 innocent lives were taken at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. Now, it is neither my district nor my State, but when it comes to children, all of us represent all children. Afterwards, when I met with the families, they gave me pictures of their children and spouses whom they lost that day, and I made a promise—the promise that we would not continue to watch passively or just offer moments of silence as these tragedies continue, that we should deliver, instead, treatment before tragedy.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I say thanks to the Members of Congress who changed the course with me—who teamed up to finally change the way the United States treats the mentally ill. We set our eyes on one goal: to fix our Nation's broken mental health system. Since then, we have come together to work towards protecting millions of Americans who suffer from mental illness. We traveled to every corner of this Nation and listened to doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists, experts and advocates—most importantly, to patients, consumers, and their families.

Through congressional hearings and investigations, we have discovered the abhorrent and sometimes fatal disconnect between the 112 Federal agencies that were assigned to treat the mentally ill. We exposed \$130 billion spending in a system that has done little but to watch the rates of homelessness, incarceration, suicide, and drug overdose deaths soar. We came together across party lines and went to work. We passed legislation that will save lives.

I thank FRED UPTON for his leadership on our Committee on Energy and Commerce with regard to H.R. 2646, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, and for his tremendous medical innovation bill, the 21st Century Cures Act.

I thank EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas for her conviction and determination and for applying her experience as a psychiatric nurse to champion the cause that someone in crisis should be able to get treatment in a hospital and not just be locked up in a jail cell.

I thank Speaker RYAN, who, in his very first days as Speaker of the House, pledged his support and determination to ensure that we would take action in the way that we treat the mentally ill in this Nation.

To all of my colleagues in the House who spoke up, stepped up, and teamed up in our efforts to end the mental health crisis in America, thank you.

I thank our colleagues in the Senate as well—Senator CHRIS MURPHY, Dr. BILL CASSIDY, and Senators CORNYN and ALEXANDER—for their leadership in bringing this bill to a vote before the Senate. As the Senate takes up the bill today, I ask them all to cast their votes while being mindful of the millions of American lives it will save.

Most importantly, I close by thanking the millions who had the courage to come forward and share their stories of pain and suffering under this broken system—those who have lost a loved one, those who have a loved one who is sitting in a jail cell or who is homeless in the streets.

To those who have been the last, the least, the lost, and the lonely, know that we will continue to listen. In the final version of the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, we did not get everything we needed, but we needed everything we got, and we will continue to work together.

When we began this journey 4 years ago, I challenged us all to realize the sad reality of, where there is no help, there is no hope. Know now that, as we pass and enact this bill, we will finally be able to say there is help and, most assuredly, there is hope.

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 43 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: Gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Throughout history, You have been ever present to all believers. In times of darkness, we readily turn on lights.

Millions of Americans in this season have variously turned to the celebration of the Christmas season, with its trees and lights, and Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights.

Even so, in our political world, there remains the reality of considerable disagreement and contention. Where there is darkness here, send forth a spark of inspiration and grace to enlighten minds and warm hearts to respond to Your love for Your people.

Eternal Father of us all, fill Your children with the delight that comes from light. May we walk no longer in the darkness of distrust, but join together in mutual understanding and peace toward the common well-being of our Nation.

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 gentleman from New Hampshire (Ms. KUSTER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. KUSTER 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.

NICARAGUA

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, days leading up to the November 30 and December 1 protest in Nicaragua against the Ortega regime's proposed interoceanic canal and a corrupt election, the National Police, instructed by Daniel Ortega, sent heavy machinery, created checkpoints, and used barricades to block farmers and indigenous communities from attending the protests. Nicaraguans were severely beaten. Some were even shot. But Ortega's repression did not stop the Nicaraguan people who yearn for freedom and prosperity from participating in the protest.

Mr. Speaker, in September of this year, this legislative body passed the NICA Act—legislation I authored, along with my colleague, ALBIO SIREs,

from New Jersey, which calls for free elections, respect for the rule of law, and freedom of expression. The Ortega regime seems eager to neglect these basic important conditions and is doubling down on its tyrannical tactics. We must hold Ortega accountable with the NICA Act and tell him we will not ignore his terrible tactics.

REBUILD AMERICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, how does America, the strongest economy in the history of the world, accept a world ranking of 23rd behind Spain and Chile in the quality of our roads and bridges—American infrastructure? Let's look at the facts.

In 2005, Congress passed a roads bill that was 35 percent smaller than what was needed just to bring our roads and bridges to a state of good repair. In 2009, Congress passed an economic stimulus bill, directed just 7 percent to our transportation and infrastructure, and, last year, we passed a transportation bill that provided less than half of what was needed to reverse the decline of our roads and bridges. This is not only weak, it is pathetically weak.

Standard & Poor's reports that for every \$1.3 billion invested in roads and bridges, it creates 29,000 jobs—American jobs—produces \$2 billion in economic growth, and reduces the Federal deficit by \$200 million.

Both Presidential candidates talked about a large investment in American infrastructure, but I am concerned that the President-elect's program may be comprised of tax cuts for already-planned projects. This would be selling the American people and the American economy short. You just spent \$105 billion rebuilding the roads and bridges of Afghanistan. You just spent \$76 billion rebuilding the roads and bridges of Iraq. It is time the Nation built here at home and in America.

CONGRATULATING COACH JAMES FRANKLIN

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

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Coach James Franklin and his football team from my alma mater, Penn State, on winning the Big Ten Championship on Saturday over the Wisconsin Badgers.

Many counted out the Nittany Lions in the second quarter after Wisconsin took a commanding 28-7 lead. As expected, Penn State turned things around quickly with their lethal passing attack and always formidable defense.

Quarterback Trace McSorley set a Big Ten Championship game record with 384 passing yards and 4 touchdowns, as number 7 Penn State