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Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, February 29, 2016, at 3 p.m.

House of Representatives

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2016

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: God of mercy, through whom we see what we can become, thank you for giving us another day.

We thank You that so many Americans have been challenged and have risen to the exercise of their responsibilities as citizens to participate in the great debates of these days.

Grant wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to us all, as well as an extra measure of charity.

Send Your spirit upon the Members of this people's House who walk through this valley under public scrutiny. Give them peace and Solomonic prudence in their deliberations.

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 California (Mr. PETERS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PETERS 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 five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

RECOGNIZING THE VILLAGE OF PINECREST ON ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

(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, I rise today to recognize the 20th anniversary of one of South Florida's grooviest communities, my hometown of the village of Pinecrest.

Since its incorporation in 1996, the village of Pinecrest has been known as a family-friendly community with many parks and recreational areas and neighborhood activities that are open to all South Floridians.

The village is committed to sustainable stewardship and environmental sensitivity, keeping it one of the most beautiful places in which to live and work.

In celebration of its founding, the residents, schools, public officials, and businesses will join together on Saturday, March 12, for a parade starting at Palmetto Elementary School and end-

ing with a community picnic at Evelyn Greer Park.

I encourage my Congressional colleagues to join me in congratulating the village of Pinecrest and to join our community in celebration of this magnificent milestone.

I am honored to represent the families in the village, and Dexter and I have been proud to call this wonderful community our home for almost 30 years.

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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

Mr. ASHFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Black History Month and the countless contributions of African Americans as well as recognizing a man who embodies the best of this celebration.

Michael Maroney is president of the Omaha Economic Development Corporation. Our North Omaha community is a vibrant neighborhood, but one still facing economic challenges.

Michael finds and furthers projects that result in more jobs, business ownership, diverse housing options, and training opportunities. Through Michael's leadership, the city of Omaha is making significant strides to lessen the stress and strain of poverty.

Every American, no matter the color of their skin, should be able to achieve their full potential. One roadblock to this goal is the Supreme Court's flawed opinion in the Shelby v. Holder case,

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which significantly weakens the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Until Congress passes bipartisan legislation to right this wrong, every American's sacred franchise, the right to vote, is under attack.

So this Black History Month, let us make time to recommit to working together to ensure a better, brighter, and more equitable future for all Americans.

ERIC WILLIAMS CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS PROTECTION ACT

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, our Nation's correctional officers risk their safety every day in order to keep prisoners, visitors, and other officers safe.

In most Federal prisons, there are only one or two officers on duty in a cell block, meaning officers are guarding nearly 130 prisoners with virtually nothing to protect themselves.

We have seen the reality of this situation with the death of Correctional Officer Eric Williams, who was murdered by an inmate at a Pennsylvania prison. In addition, last year more than 2,500 weapons were confiscated from inmates in Federal prisons.

The Bureau of Prisons is currently operating a 1-year pilot program that allows correctional officers in some Federal prisons to carry pepper spray for protection.

Mr. Speaker, this week the House passed the Eric Williams Correctional Officers Protection Act, legislation that I have supported, to expand this pilot program to medium-security prisons and require a training course before they can use this pepper spray.

We need to provide our correctional officers the tools they need to protect themselves and others.

VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, San Carlos Park, Florida, June 8, 2014: Maria Navas, 29 years old; Allison Navas-Sanchez, 10; Sophia Medina-Navas, 5; Mia Medina-Navas, 2.

Chicago, Illinois, September 29, 2015: Charles Lewis, 28 years old; Tyrone Spikes, 28; Antian Hardmon, 25; Ayanna Northern, 22.

Houston, Texas, November 20, 2013: Yosselyn Alfaro, 21 years old; Veronica Hernandez, 17; Daniel Munoz, 17.

Long Branch, New Jersey, September 1, 2015: Amanda Morris, 29 years old; Brandon Beharry, 7; Brian Beharry, 4.

Baker, Louisiana, December 11, 2015: Perry Allen, 55 years old; Joseph Allen, 57; Mark Allen, 51.

Ottawa, Kansas, April 28, 2013: Steven White, 31 years old; Andrew Stout, 30; Kaylie Bailey, 21; Lana Bailey, 1.

RECOGNIZING THE STAR FOUNDATION

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 20th anniversary of the Southern Technology Advocacy Resources Foundation, the STAR Foundation, and its unbelievable capability to transform lives in coastal Georgia.

Wally and Katie Orrel and Ellen Murphy founded the STAR Foundation in 1997 with the goal of providing computer training to residents of public housing in Brunswick, Georgia.

Over its 20 years, the STAR Foundation has expanded to teaching life, financial, and work-readiness skills that lead their students to be successful members of their community and the workforce.

The STAR Foundation's 8-week course is open to students outside of public housing as well as residents of McIntosh and Camden Counties.

The impact of this foundation is incredible. Over 1,000 students have graduated from the STAR Foundation, and 70 percent of their graduates improve their employment status within 15 months of graduation. Some outstanding students can even receive a personal computer for their home.

I am grateful for the work that the STAR Foundation is doing in the First Congressional District of Georgia, and I wish the program and its graduates success for many years to come.

NATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK

(Ms. GABBARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, small-business owners make up over 90 percent of private sector employers in my home State of Hawaii, and they are the backbone of our economy both in Hawaii and across the country.

In our close-knit community built on generations of small-business owners willing to lend a hand to a neighbor in need, this is one of the things that makes our State so special and that helps to bring the aloha spirit alive both for visitors and kama'aina alike.

Last week I had the chance to spend some time planting kale and beets at the Palaka Moon Farm with Waimanalo small-business owners Malia Smith and Kevin Vaccarello.

I then went and helped them open their Ai Love Nalo cafe, where they seek to improve the health and well-being of their community around them by feeding them delicious, locally grown food.

It is the hard work of people like Malia and Kevin and the love that they put into their business and work that are at the heart of our economy in communities across the country and in Hawaii.

As we recognize National Entrepreneurship Week this week, I want to say thank you to all of our small-business owners and entrepreneurs for their dedication and for what they do to strengthen and serve our communities every single day.

THE PRESIDENT'S MISSING PLAN

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when I was in law school, if a person did not turn in a term paper, they flunked. But the former constitutional law professor has missed a deadline required by law.

Under the bipartisan 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, the President is required to send Congress a real, comprehensive strategy to defeat ISIS. He signed this law. The due date was February 15. The paper is overdue.

Confronting terrorism and emphasizing the safety and security of the United States is critical. Why hasn't the President complied with the law he signed? Where is the plan? Where is the strategy? People are being killed by ISIS.

The Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Lieutenant General Stewart, stated that ISIS "will probably attempt to conduct additional attacks in Europe, and attempt to direct attacks on the U.S. homeland in 2016."

Mr. Speaker, this is not law school. This is the real world where terrorists kill the innocent. The President should spend more time developing a plan to defeat ISIS than planning to close the jailhouse for terrorists in Guantanamo Bay.

I wonder what grade the President, the constitutional law professor, would give himself, the Commander in Chief, for ignoring this legal requirement to turn in his paper.

And that is just the way it is.

SENATE SUPREME COURT CONFIRMATION

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because the United States Senate is failing to serve the American people.

This week Senate Republicans announced their plan to simply ignore President Obama's nominee to the Supreme Court with no hearings, no votes, no chance for the public to witness an open and honest debate over the future of the Court.

This is what the world's greatest deliberative body looks like under Republican control. Refusing to fill the vacancy until the next election disregards the will of the American people who elected President Obama twice, despite Republicans making it their primary mission to deny him a second term.