

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. NEGUSE 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.

## COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, June 16, 2021.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
*The Speaker, House of Representatives,*  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on June 16, 2021, at 10:58 a.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 475.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

CHERYL L. JOHNSON,  
*Clerk.*

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

## ACT ON UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

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

Ms. DEAN. Madam Speaker, last Saturday, we remembered the murder of 49 people at the Pulse massacre 5 years ago. Tomorrow, we will mourn 6 years since nine people were killed in their place of worship at Mother Emanuel AME Church.

It sits with me every single day that in this country we lose friends and family to the tragic and avoidable scourge of gun violence.

As of this weekend, we have reached 272 mass shootings in this country. It is madness. These acts of violence, sometimes motivated by hate, continue.

Yet, we—and the Senate in particular—have failed to enact common-sense gun violence prevention legislation that would stem bloodshed and end this loss. I implore the Senate to hear the cries of those in their communities, our constituents, and pass the two universal background check bills that the House sent over to the Senate in March.

Families should no longer have to bury their loved ones when we have the ability and the responsibility to close deadly loopholes in our system.

Gun ownership is an important part of our American culture and our Con-

stitution, and now is our chance to come together in a way that preserves this part of our heritage while protecting our constituents and saving lives.

## HONORING ROBYN RICHARDSON

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

Mr. WOMACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a milestone in the life of one of Russellville, Arkansas' most admired citizens, Robyn Richardson.

He is a beloved fixture in the community and one of the River Valley's biggest sports fans. I first got to know Richardson when playing football for my alma mater, Russellville High School, and, later, Arkansas Tech University. Robyn never missed a game.

I will always remember him in the end zone of football games, ready to catch field goals and extra points, then promptly returning the football to the game officials. He was as much a part of the game as the players on the field.

But, Mr. Speaker, the milestone I speak of is the fact that he is now the longest-serving employee of Pope County, Arkansas, celebrating his 50th anniversary of employment.

I had the pleasure of joining the city and county last week in a tribute to Robyn's service. Not surprisingly, he told me he feels great and has no intention of retiring anytime soon.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of Robyn Richardson, and I want the Nation to hear of his amazing record of service.

Congratulations to my friend.

## CONGRESS SHOULD MAKE DECISIONS TO DECLARE WAR

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

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, the most solemn decision a country can make is to send its sons and daughters to war. The most solemn responsibility Congress has is to make that decision. Yet, Congress has delegated that authority too often and too long to the executive.

It resulted from an AUMF vote, Authorization for Use of Military Force, for a lie-based war in Iraq, resulting in the loss of life of over 4,500 of our fellow citizens, 200,000 Iraqis killed, and destruction and instability in the Middle East.

That authorization will be repealed by a vote of Congress, and I will vote to repeal that authorization and restore to the Congress its responsibility to make that solemn decision about whether and when we send our sons and daughters to defend us abroad.

## IN SUPPORT OF THE HELP WANTED ACT

(Mr. JACOBS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JACOBS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my legislation, the Help Wanted Act, which would reinstate work search requirements for unemployment benefits and end disincentives to work.

We have now gotten two job reports that fell short of projections. Meanwhile, it was reported that there were a record 9.3 million job openings in the United States.

In my home of western New York, there are reports that restaurants are turning customers away when they need them most because they are short-staffed.

In February, the Congressional Budget Office published a report stating our economy would return to pre-pandemic strength without additional government spending. Yet, the President and Democrats forced through a highly partisan and unrelated \$2 trillion package.

The result is it has now become more lucrative to stay at home than to seek employment, a detriment to our overall economic recovery.

Vaccines are rolling out; the CDC has updated their guidance; and positivity rates are dropping. It is time to get back to work.

## CONGRATULATING BOULDER COUNTY, COLORADO, ON JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION

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

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Boulder County on their inaugural Juneteenth celebration this year.

In 1863, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing millions of enslaved people. Two years later, on June 19, 1865, the impact of this proclamation reached Texas, where the last enslaved people were liberated when Union soldiers marched into Galveston to deliver the news.

Over 150 years have since passed, and while there is still much work to be done in the fight for racial justice and equality, we celebrate the resilience of Black Americans and the long struggle for freedom and justice that they have led.

I am incredibly proud that Boulder County is holding an inaugural Juneteenth event. By exposing more people to the importance of this day and educating our community, we have the power to make a difference in Boulder County.

Thank you to everyone for putting the work in to organize this event, and I look forward to celebrating the event with you.

## COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF BRYCEN GRAY

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

Mr. GONZALEZ of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the

life of Brycen Gray, a talented and bright young man who was sadly taken away from us this past April.

A native of Strongsville, in my district, Brycen was a student-athlete at St. Edward High School. Dubbed a comedian by his friends and family, he had the power to bring a smile and joy to everyone he encountered.

Unfortunately, we lost Brycen in April. Following a battle with COVID-19, Brycen began to exhibit symptoms associated with COVID psychosis. Though he fought to the bitter end, he tragically passed after taking his own life.

Mr. Speaker, when I hear these stories and when I talk to the family, it is impossible not to get emotional. We lost a gifted, talented young man. And the hurt and pain that is inflicted upon those left behind is something no one should ever have to endure.

This is a moment where we should turn grief into action and actively find solutions. To start, we should work with the scientific community to gain a better understanding of the mental health implications of COVID-19 on Americans and other root causes of suicide, in particular amongst young Americans. This will help us look for further warning signs and make sure that young Americans get the help that they need.

We must not let Brycen's memory be forgotten. I pray for his parents, Shawn and Tara, and his two brothers, Ricky and Patrick, and the rest of the Gray family that has had to battle this horrible loss.

#### INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I couldn't be prouder of this House for passing the American Rescue Plan, an aggressive response to the pandemic, to pull us out of the doldrums in this country.

As a result, millions and millions of Americans are back in jobs; millions and millions of American kids are back in schools; and so many people are vaccinated. We are back on the road to recovery.

But we can't stop there. We have infrastructure to address. I have been waiting for close to 10 years for us to pass an aggressive infrastructure program. We have 7,500 miles of substandard roads in Pennsylvania alone to fix.

China is investing in itself: its roads, its bridges, its rail systems, its transit systems. What would make us think we don't have to compete with China? What would make us think that our companies don't need every advantage to compete on the world stage?

Let's get infrastructure done, and let's do it boldly and aggressively to build up and invest in our own country.

#### TAKE ACTION ON SOUTHERN BORDER CRISIS

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, America's southern border is in crisis, and this issue has been solely facilitated by the destructive policies of President Joe Biden.

Illegal aliens attack the border, while dangerous drug cartels take advantage of weak policies, putting children at risk. This is truly a disaster, and it is time that the border czar, Vice President KAMALA HARRIS, take action to protect American families.

The numbers speak for themselves. Encounters at the border reached a 21-year high in May of 180,034 persons. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency seized 934 pounds of fentanyl at the border in May, which is a 300 percent increase in a year capable of killing every American citizen. Criminal crossings have almost tripled since the previous fiscal year to 6,918 convicted criminals. Drug trafficking and human smuggling have also increased, putting children's lives in danger.

Biden named the Vice President with overseeing the crisis. It has been 84 days, and she still has not visited to see the children at risk.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we should never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

Congratulations to Julianne and Hunter Wilson on the upcoming December blessed event.

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#### EL PASO IS A 2021 ALL-AMERICA CITY

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

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Speaker, for the fourth time since 2010, the city of El Paso is honored to be named an All-America City for our resiliency, response to tragedy, and vaccination efforts against COVID-19 this year.

The National Civic League awards the All-America City award to communities where residents, organizations, and government work together to address challenges and improve quality of life. When President Biden announced his goal to vaccinate 70 percent of our Nation, El Paso not only met the goal a month early, but we have surpassed it and currently lead the country by 10 percent.

The All-America City award reaffirms our resiliency and outstanding civic accomplishments in the face of the tragic August 3 domestic terror attack and the devastating COVID-19 pandemic as well as our continued goodwill toward migrants seeking refuge at our Nation's front door.

El Pasoans are no strangers to challenges, and our strength is tested over

and over. Each time we grow stronger because we are and always will be El Paso Strong.

It is an honor to represent this extraordinary community here today, and I congratulate the city of El Paso.

#### INVESTIGATING COVID'S ORIGINS

(Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an incredibly important national security issue.

We all know that Wuhan, China, where the COVID-19 virus originated, is the home to the Wuhan Institute of Virology. The WIV is China's only cellular level 4 biosafety super laboratory that researches human infectious diseases. This lab is in very close proximity to the wet market that is reputed to be the origin of COVID-19.

Last year, Senator TOM COTTON was thoroughly dismissed for questioning the true origins of this virus, citing the Chinese Communist Party's duplicity and dishonesty from the very beginning.

We all know that the Chinese Communist Party lied to the world about the severity of COVID-19, how it is transmitted, and the dangers associated. There needs to be a thorough and serious investigation into the origins of COVID-19, what the Chinese Communist Party knew, and when, and what the World Health Organization knew and when.

Uncovering the true origins of COVID-19 will be incredibly helpful in helping us prepare for the next pandemic, which I think is something we can all agree on.

#### OPEN THE UNITED STATES-CANADA BORDER

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

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, it was recently announced that the European Union is lifting travel restrictions to allow Americans to visit once again.

Over a year under the crush of a devastating global pandemic, highly effective vaccines have made this game-changing moment possible.

Still, our border between the United States and Canada remains closed, leaving people unable to access their property and keeping loved ones separated for over 15 heartbreaking months.

This move by the EU would allow my Buffalo neighbors to take a 9-hour flight to Paris, France, but they can't take a 90-minute drive to Paris, Ontario.

The administration has set a goal of returning to a pre-pandemic sense of normalcy by July 4. For many living along the northern border, normalcy includes the ability to cross to check