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Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, June 17, 2016

JUNE 18TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, June 17, 2016

Why did this happen?

June 17, 2016

Disbelief, horror, devastation, sorrow. As we saw the images and news unfold from Orlando, Florida this week it was hard not to feel some of these emotions. For me, I wanted answers, but I understand we don't always have the answers, and the answers given by those in Washington, DC often trying to rally partisans are hard to accept. However, it is hard to find a reasonable answer when someone so consumed by hate believes the murder of defenseless party goers, those out to dinner, or people taking in a sporting event is a way to make a societal or religious statement. The behavior defies reason and is rooted in evil. In the coming weeks and months we will learn more about who shooter Omar Mateen was, who he had communications with, who may have helped him and where he traveled and why - but what is clear already is that those who inspired him have a deep loathing for our country, our democracy, and our freedoms and liberties. We do know that Mateen was an American citizen, the son of an Afghan immigrant, born in New York City. However, there are thousands more like Mateen currently residing outside the U.S., many in the Middle East, wanting to do equal harm to those who live in the big cities, small towns and rural communities which make up our great nation.

That is what we know, but to me these are still incomplete answers because if we cannot feel safe here at home, other basic functions of our society and economy cease to matter or exist.

Admittedly, my own judgement is fueled by events of just the past year - the release of Guantanamo detainees back to the front lines to kill American soldiers, a dangerous nuclear deal with Iran, a spectacle of our own sailors forced to their knees, the failure to permanently dismantle and remove the threat ISIS poses, and a refusal to call the terror attacks from this week the actions of Radical Islamists. It is clear to me that the actions or 'inactions', of this President has made us less safe here at home and I firmly believe that. However, a rush to assign blame does not provide the strength that the families and community of Orlando need to move forward and that is what I believe we need most.

Our country is a great one, we believe in equal treatment under the law, in undeniable freedoms such as speech and religious liberty, we don't appoint our leaders we elect them, and while we may disagree with one another, we can do so without violence. Because of this there are people out there who wish to cause American's harm.

Those who inflict such terror direct their actions so that we see ourselves as they want us to be seen - weak, scared, inferior, and ultimately intimidated. Our partisan fighting only leads to the divide and allows the intimidation to continue, but standing strong in the face of tragedy, standing together as Americans, and supporting one another in communities across the country defies the terrorists of the intimidation they seek. Obviously it will not replace the pain, anguish, anger, or anxiety but it is an important reminder that we sometimes forget – we are all Americans and we have much to be proud of and a great deal worth fighting for, particular each other.

We need not let the acts of cowards like Omar Mateen intimidate us or change our day to day lives. But we are naive to think that this threat is simply going to go away without action on our behalf and without leadership prepared to do what is necessary to wipe those who inspire these actions from the face of the earth. America is home to many great things, but it doesn't need to be home to radicalized Islamic terrorists inspired by those who freely spew hatred for our country, cut off the heads of their enemies and target innocents for murder. We are the greatest nation on earth, founded on the grandest principles, and we should not be intimidated by those who want us to see ourselves as anything less.

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Congressman Smith Announces Annual Art Competition Winner

JUNE 16TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Congressman Smith Announces Annual Art Competition Winner

Cape Girardeau, Missouri - The halls of the U.S. Capitol could be looking a little brighter in the near future and all thanks to a local high school student. Macie Werner from Jackson High School was selected as the winner of the 30th Annual Eighth Congressional District Art Competition and will represent Missouri's Eighth Congressional District in the U.S. Capitol.

Submissions were taken at four of the Eighth Congressional District offices in Cape Girardeau, Farmington, Rolla and West Plains. Werner's piece was submitted along with more than 100 other submissions across Missouri's Eighth Congressional District and one of eight finalists chosen by the Regional Art Council.

“The number of submissions we received and the overall quality of the submissions was truly outstanding and these students are incredibly talented,” said Smith. “I also had the chance to talk to a number of these students and in addition to their ability, I have to say these are really great young people and our whole community should be proud of them.”

At a reception ceremony held Friday evening the finalists, their families, friends, and members of the Regional Art Council were invited to view the artwork where Congressman Jason Smith announced the overall winner. As the Best of Show winner Werner will receive an award, and two ticket vouchers from Southwest Airlines to attend the reception for the National Congressional Art Competition in Washington, DC. Werner’s piece will then be showcased in the U.S. Capitol for one year along with the other winners from around the country.

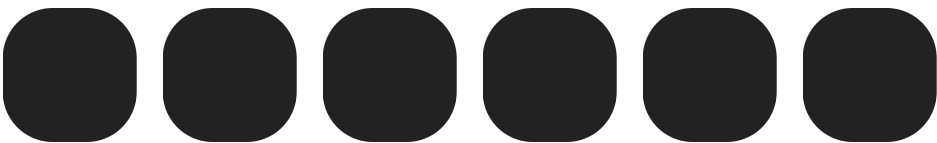
“I think this is an incredibly opportunity for aspiring young artists and we are really honored to be able to showcase their talent and hopefully encourage all of these artists to make a career out of their skills,” said Smith. Adding, “I can’t speak enough to the caliber of these young students, they are amazing and I know beyond their artistic ability they will be ones to watch in the future.”

The finalists from the Eighth Congressional District will be on display in the Cape Girardeau office until May 28th where they can be viewed by the public. The Congressional High School Art Competition was created by the Congressional Institute in 1982 as a way to recognize and encourage artistic ability in each congressional district throughout the country.

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Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, June 10, 2016

JUNE 15TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, June 10, 2016

Wrappers and Reductions June 10, 2016

We all have those moments that stick with us, maybe it was an achievement, a tragedy, overcoming a fear, or coming to a realization. I had one of those moments 36 months ago when a big number was staring me in the face. It was 285, and it was the one looking back at me from the bathroom scale. Month after month of traveling hundreds of miles every day all across Missouri's 8th Congressional district while running in the Special Election, I was the opposite of a picture of health. The floor of my car was covered with wrappers from Casey's, Mobile or Rhodes 101 and unfortunately represented recent "meals".

My struggles with my weight are something I openly talk about because while humbling it makes me acknowledge it and proactively think about my eating choices.

However, what struck me that day was a simple question, how could I pledge to take the fight to defend rural America all the way to Congress if I couldn't even walk up the steps of the U.S. Capitol without becoming out of breath? Since winning that election 36 months ago to represent the people of southeast and south central Missouri before the U.S. Congress, I am proud to say I have lost over 75 pounds. Well in actuality, over 250 pounds - that last 10 just seems to keep falling off and getting added back each week when I step on the scale! It's a fight each and every day. We all have our vices – mine just comes in the form of feel good comfort food made to perfection in this part of the country that gives me an excuse to sit with family and friends or cope with stress.

June represents Men's health month. It is a month dedicated to recognizing that us guys need to put our pride aside and get the necessary screenings, checkups and education to ensure we are taking the most proactive steps possible to be in control of our own health and our own lives. We owe it to more than just ourselves though, our families and loved ones deserve that dedication from us as well. This is especially true because medical journal after medical journal has published results that show being overweight can lead to so many other health problems. Most notably, being overweight greatly increases your chances of heart disease, which is the number one killer in America, or things like diabetes, stroke, and even some forms of cancer. Further, we know early detection and education are the best ways to put an end to so many preventable chronic diseases which are driving up the overall costs of healthcare in this country.

For me, the wake-up to turn things around was that day when I recognized if I was going to ask people to expect the best from me, I had to be in a position to give the best to them. The catalyst however, was a New Year's resolution at the start of 2014. Those closest to me, those who cared about me, challenged me to reverse the health course I was on. They also knew the best way to get me focused and committed was to tell me they doubted I had it in me to get serious. That was all I needed because like so many things, telling me something isn't possible is exactly what drives me to make it happen. Now, I find myself in group exercise classes every morning, which not only help keep my waistline down, but help clear my head, and meet new colleagues. Even though I am a young conservative member from rural Missouri, it is amazing the respect people have shown me because they know my dedication to fight for an issue starts with a dedication to face my own personal challenges.

There are so many things we are working towards as a nation – things to turn our economy around, rolling back the federal government's encroachment into all of our lives and advancing a common sense conservative agenda that puts the people, not Washington, in control of their lives. I want to be around to see the impact of these changes and I want to help lead that charge, but I'm never going to be able to do that for our district if I can't march up those stairs.

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Presidential Proclamation - Honoring the Victims of the Attack in Orlando, Florida

JUNE 13TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Presidential Proclamation - Honoring the Victims of the Attack in Orlando, Florida

Presidential Proclamation -- Honoring the Victims of the Attack in Orlando, Florida

HONORING THE VICTIMS OF THE ATTACK IN ORLANDO, FLORIDA

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

As a mark of respect for the victims of the act of hatred and terror perpetrated on Sunday, June 12, 2016, in Orlando, Florida, by the authority vested in me as President of the United States by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, I hereby order that the flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff at the White House and upon all public buildings and grounds, at all military posts and naval stations, and on all naval vessels of the Federal Government in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States and its Territories and possessions until sunset, June 16, 2016.

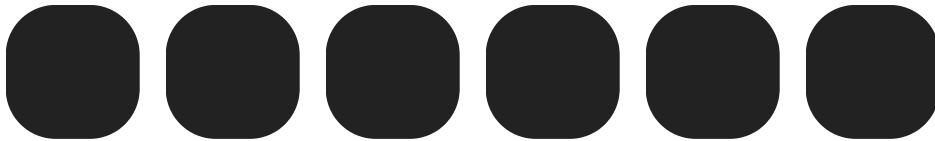
I also direct that the flag shall be flown at half-staff for the same length of time at all United States embassies, legations, consular offices, and other facilities abroad, including all military facilities and naval vessels and stations.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this
twelfth day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand sixteen, and of the
Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fortieth.
BARACK OBAMA

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Miller Family Visits Capitol Building

MAY 31ST 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Miller Family Visits Capitol Building

Jefferson City, Missouri - LeeAnn Miller, her son Mason, and her mom visited the Capitol Building and the office of Tila Hubrecht. Mrs. Hubrecht is the 151st State Representative for Missouri.

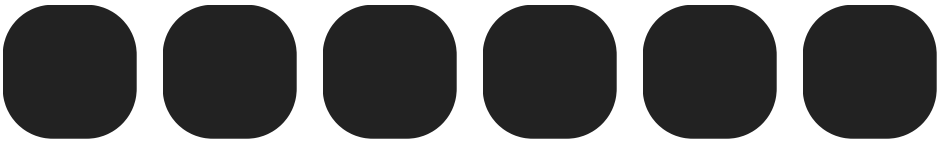
The Capitol, completed in 1918, covers three acres in downtown Jefferson City. The dome rises 238 feet above ground level and is topped by a bronze statue of Ceres, the Roman goddess of vegetation.

Guided 45-minute tours are given, free of charge, Monday thru Saturday, on the hour, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (except at noon), and Sun., at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 2 p.m., 3 p.m. Self-guided maps are available at the tour desk, on the first floor. Reservations required for groups of 10+.

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