

There was no objection.

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege this morning to welcome a very good friend to the Halls of Congress.

Pastor David Anderson, who gave the morning prayer, is a great spiritual leader in Sarasota, Florida. He has more than 35 years of pastoral experience as a Baptist minister, and for the past two decades, he has served the Faith Baptist Church of Sarasota, located in the heart of my district. That is where my wife, Sandy, and I first met the pastor 5 years ago. He is devoted to his family and to helping other people in our community. He has made himself a beloved member of our community.

I commend Pastor Anderson for his longstanding service to our community and to our Nation. It is my honor today to welcome him here to the House of Representatives.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HOUSE WILL ACT TO REVERSE ADMINISTRATION'S ATTACK ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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

Mr. BOEHNER. My colleagues, in recent days, Americans of every faith and political persuasion have mobilized in objection to a rule put forward by the Obama administration that constitutes an unambiguous attack on religious freedom in our country.

This rule would require faith-based employers, including Catholic charities, schools, universities, and hospitals, to provide services they believe are immoral. Those services include sterilization, abortion-inducing drugs and devices, and contraception.

In imposing this requirement, the Federal Government has drifted dangerously beyond its constitutional boundaries, encroaching on religious freedom in a manner that affects millions of Americans and harms some of our Nation's most vital institutions.

If the President does not reverse the Department's attack on religious freedom, then the Congress, acting on behalf of the American people and the Constitution that we are sworn to uphold and defend, must.

The House will approach this matter fairly and deliberately through regular order and appropriate legislative channels. Because it has primary jurisdiction on the issues involved, the Energy and Commerce Committee is taking the lead on the legislative process that will be necessary to enact an effective and appropriate solution. Chairman UPTON convened a hearing late last year and began laying the groundwork

for legislative action when this flawed rule was first proposed, and I welcome his efforts to consider all possible options as his committee proceeds with its efforts.

This attack by the Federal Government on religious freedom in our country must not stand and will not stand.

ASIAN CARP

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, the Great Lakes are the largest source of freshwater in the world, and they support vital shipping and recreation jobs. The fishery alone accounts for \$7 billion in annual economic activity.

But the Great Lakes face a very real threat from the Asian carp, which are progressing from the Mississippi River to the Illinois River and are nearing Lake Michigan. If this invasive species enters the lakes, it could decimate Great Lakes fishing and recreation.

Last month, the Great Lakes Commission released a report recommending the construction of a barrier to separate the Mississippi River from Lake Michigan in order to protect the lakes from the Asian carp. I joined my colleagues from the Great Lakes Task Force in sending a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers asking them to consider this report as they study the best ways of keeping the Asian carp out of the Great Lakes Basin.

Madam Speaker, the Asian carp have not yet entered the lakes, but there are very real reasons for concern, as scientists say that the conditions of Lake Erie are perfect to support this species of fish. It is essential to our economy and our environment that we all work together to protect and restore this underappreciated asset.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S ATTACK ON THE FIRST AMENDMENT AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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

Mr. RIGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong objection to the President's decision requiring employers to provide insurance coverage for services which clearly violate their religious convictions. Many American employers are deeply offended and strenuously object to being forced by the administration to pay for contraceptives, sterilization and abortion-inducing drugs for their employees.

This is an egregious violation of the First Amendment, which protects religious freedom. Preventing government intrusion into the faith and religious convictions of Americans is precisely why our Founders embedded religious freedom into the First Amendment.

This is not a slight to the Constitution; it is an assault. The White House has said that adequate exemptions have been made, but this is simply not so.

I stand with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and in both Houses of Congress in defending the right of conscience, our Constitution, and the right of all Americans to exercise their religious beliefs freely without intrusion from the Federal Government.

I call on the administration to reverse its decision today.

TAXES

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

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, it has been 400 days since the Republicans took control of the House of Representatives, and we still have no bills designed to create jobs in America. Now the Republican political games are bringing us to the brink of yet another crisis.

If Congress does not act by the end of the month, 160 million Americans will see tax increases, millions more will lose their unemployment benefits, and seniors across the Nation will have access to their doctors put at risk by cuts to Medicare payments. The American people deserve better. Families need unemployment benefits and a payroll tax cut to put food on their tables and to keep roofs over their heads.

Let's do the right thing. Let's end tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires, and let's work to strengthen the middle class. We can't wait for another last-minute fix. Let's extend the payroll tax cut, unemployment benefits, and the Medicare doc fix today.

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FIXING THE FEDERAL DEFICIT

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

Ms. HAYWORTH. Madam Speaker, this past week, I had the pleasure to visit Fryer Machine Systems in Patterson, New York, in our beautiful Hudson Valley, Congressional District 19. They have spent 30 years in the Hudson Valley making the big machines that make components for manufacturers around the world. A local employer, loads of potential being held back by nearly every aspect of Federal policy. Trade, environment, education, financial services, and health care all are burdening this great local business. But the number one problem that Mr. Fryer would like us to fix here in the Federal Government is the Federal deficit.

So as we approach our work this year, I will bear this vividly in mind. We must have sympathy, respect, and a sense of awe for our hardworking, hard-pressed taxpayers and job creators. They are the true engine—not the Federal Government. They are the true engine of growth and the ultimate purchaser and securer of our liberties.