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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FARENTHOLD).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC, November 15, 2012.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BLAKE FARENTHOLD to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 6118. An act to amend section 353 of the Public Health Service Act with respect to suspension, revocation, and limitation of laboratory certification.

H.R. 6131. An act to extend the Undertaking Spam, Spyware, And Fraud Enforcement With Enforcers beyond Borders Act of 2006, and for other purposes.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 17, 2012, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, a group of Members from both parties are going to meet together to discuss the possible legislative options to start a process of bringing our troops home from Afghanistan in 2013.

Yesterday I was on the floor speaking about Army Specialist Joshua Nelson, from my home county, who was killed by the very Afghans he was sent to train. Specialist Nelson is just one of 60 U.S. servicemembers who have been killed this year by the Afghans that they were sent to train.

I don't know where the outrage is by the United States Congress. I am very disappointed in both parties and their leadership to allow our young men and women to stay in a war that has no end to it. This makes no sense to the American people. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the American people have said time after time, in poll after poll, that they want to bring our troops home now—not in 2014, but now.

On October 7, there was a national article written, and the title was, "A Mother Mourns a Grim Milestone," referring to the 2,000th American casualty from the Afghan war. Lisa Freeman, who was interviewed in the article, lost her son Captain Matthew Freeman in 2009. He was shot by a sniper in Afghanistan. Ms. Freeman said:

I just sat here, reliving the pain and wondering: Where is America's outrage? Where is America's concern that we're still at war.

And, Mr. Speaker, I made reference to this yesterday. The October 14 New York Times editorial, "Time to Pack Up," with the subtitle, "It should not take 2 more years for the United States to leave Afghanistan."

"It should not take 2 more years for the United States to leave Afghanistan." Since I strongly agree with that statement, I have started an online petition to start bringing our troops home in the summer or fall of 2013. The

petition can be signed through my Web site at jones.house.gov. And, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to tell you that in just 3 weeks, we have over 2,000 Americans that have signed this petition. Our goal is to reach as many people as possible to put the pressure on our leadership to stop the loss of life and treasure in Afghanistan.

Congress, let's get together and work on legislation to bring our troops home before the current timeline of December 2014.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, this is one of the many posters that I have that I bring to the floor. There's a flag-draped coffin. There's a group of Army officers. There's a woman holding the hand of a child. And you can see in the face of the child, Why is my daddy in that flag-draped coffin?

Congress, let's wake up. Let's come together. Let's start the process of bringing our troops home in 2013. Please, God, continue to bless our men and women in uniform. Please, God, continue to bless America.

BEYOND "BIKE-PARTISANSHIP"

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. For years, I have traveled the country preaching "bike-partisanship," using bicycle and pedestrian facilities to help people burn calories, not fossil fuel, improve their health, have fun, and enrich the community. Red State, blue State, Republican, Democrat, Independent, it doesn't matter; the public gets it and has been part of an amazing renaissance. Let's redouble our efforts at creating a stronger Federal partnership to help more communities realize this vision.

But let's not stop with bike-partisanship. Are there other areas that are low or no cost that enjoy broad public support, solve problems, and bring people

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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together rather than divide them? What about rebuilding and renewing America? Certainly the need is there.

Until recently, the T&I Committee was an island of congressional consensus. Since we merely extended the last transportation reauthorization and the new Congress must act in about 97 weeks, let's work on a bolder vision of investing in America, one that puts people to work, improves the economy, the environment, and saves money in the long run. Congress can begin on this now.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, Congress can't ignore the near bankrupt flood insurance program. While we fix the short-term problems, however, let's make it more effective, efficient, and actuarially sound so that it will spare lives, property, and the Federal Treasury. Overhauling the flood insurance program would solve the most immediate challenges caused by extreme weather events likely due to global warming. We may even be able to discuss climate change in a more thoughtful and rational way.

Based on the work I've done in the past with Congressman PAUL RYAN and Senator-elect JEFF FLAKE, I know agricultural reform is a ripe opportunity. Taxpayers cannot afford to lavish unnecessary subsidies on large agribusiness while harming the environment and shortchanging small farmers and ranchers.

Surely Tea Party Republicans and members of the Progressive Caucus can come together to improve nutrition, wildlife habitats, hunting, and fishing while strengthening family farms.

And since Big Bird dodged a bullet during the Presidential campaign, maybe it's time to address the vital role that the Federal support for public broadcasting plays, which we all rely on—not just for news and information, but education for our kids and, as illustrated by Hurricane Sandy, emergency communication.

With incredibly broad public support from Americans regardless of political party, Congress should make a long-term financial commitment to funding the most trusted brand in broadcasting so it can plan for the future.

The last 10 years have been characterized by bipartisan cooperation to promote access to safe drinking water and sanitation around the globe. My 2005 legislation, cosponsored by Henry Hyde, Bill Frist, HARRY REID, saved lives and made friends for America.

In this Congress we have another bipartisan bill, Water for the World, which is cosponsored by my friend TED POE, which would build on that foundation and accelerate progress. It's all teed up and ready to go and could be easily passed next week.

Mr. Speaker, 86 percent of Americans think getting full information about their situation as a loved one faces the end of life should be a top priority for health care. Before the 2009 political "lie of the year" about "death panels," this provision in the health care reform enjoyed broad bipartisan support.

There is new legislation to personalize people's health care so that they get the information they need to make these difficult, sometimes painful, decisions and make sure their decisions, whatever they are, are respected by doctors and hospitals. This refined legislation could easily be achieved now that we're implementing health care reform.

These are all bipartisan, cost-effective initiatives that are overwhelmingly embraced by the public. Is it perhaps time to have a Legislators' Caucus, where Members in both parties who just want to get something done can come together with ideas like these? Who knows? Working together to get something done might become habit-forming.

LOOK OUT FOR OUR FINANCIAL FUTURE

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to share a plea from home, from Tony, about the impending fiscal cliff.

Tony writes:

We are going to have to go over the fiscal cliff and see the economy crumble before the majority of the people realize how much trouble we are really in.

I have end-stage renal failure, am on Medicare, and receive disability each month. I do dialysis three times a week. That said, I will willingly and gladly take a reduction in my benefits if it means we can reduce our deficit. I have two young nieces, and I am looking out for their financial future. In fact, if I knew that taking away all my benefits would get rid of our debt, I would do that today.

Mr. President, hear Tony's plea. Don't take us over the fiscal cliff. Tony and his nieces need you to lead. They need it now.

□ 1010

AMERICA'S LATINOS

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

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I'm here today to make an introduction. I would like the Republican Party to meet America's Latinos. There are more than 53 million of us. But let me tell you a little bit about who we are and what we do.

First of all, most Latinos are citizens; and, in fact, most of us have been here for many generations. We live all over the United States, and our population is growing fast. In fact, every single year, 500,000 young Latino citizens turn 18 and become eligible to vote. Of Latinos under the age of 18, 93 percent are already citizens of the United States of America. In this last election, one in 10 voters were Latino. In another decade, we will be 25 percent of the voting age population in this great Nation of ours.

Here's a key fact about the more than 16 million Latino immigrants.

They work; and they work hard, often in jobs that are the hardest to fill, picking grapes and garlic, caring for young children in day care centers, sweeping and cleaning as janitors, and, yes, digging ditches and making sure our dishes are washed. You know what else they do? They pay taxes, regardless of their legal status.

But here's one last fact you should know about Latinos. They love America. And, my Republican friends, I promise you, in time, you'll love us, too.

I hope this introduction is helpful, but I know it's a little late. The Republican Party really met Latinos on Election Day. At about 11 p.m., when the race was over, pundits, political strategists, and Republican candidates opened their eyes to discover who really lives and votes in the U.S. It looked like we were watching Columbus stumble across America. Latino voters, who knew? Demographic changes moving as slow as glaciers, but this one seemed to sneak up on the news media like a sudden thunderstorm.

I've been trying to introduce my colleagues to real Latinos and immigrants for some time. I've worked on bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bills and stayed at the table to work out a compromise even after all Republicans had left the table. But the Republican Party seemed much more interested in the imaginary Latinos they tried to use as a wedge issue, so they crafted messages aimed at the very few Americans who are not offended when immigrants are referred to as criminals, gang-bangers, freeloaders, and lawbreakers whenever they are spoken about in America.

The party nominated a Presidential candidate who carried around a to-do list of creative ways to offend Latinos. It called for the deportation of more than 10 million families and say to self-deport, check; celebrate the extreme Arizona post-immigration laws, check; threaten to veto the DREAM Act and let hundreds of thousands of young people who have applied for deferred action fear for their future, check; stand with other Republicans and begged for their endorsement when they have called for electrified fencing to keep out immigrants because "that works on livestock," check, check, check.

I believe Election Day was a checkmate for extreme, unfair, and intolerant anti-immigrant policies. Now, we need to come together to make progress.

In truth, some Democrats did not seem to really see this new electorate either or see the change coming. Too many Democrats did not see immigration reform as an urgent issue or recognize the need for change in a country that departs 1,000 people a day.

We need to set aside the mistakes of both parties and do what is right for the American people, including Latino immigrants. We need to invite Democrats and Republicans to sit at a big