



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2015

No. 24

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 12, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable EVAN H. JENKINS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2015, 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, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

INTRODUCTION OF A MARIJUANA BILL

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, for more than 70 years our government has followed the most spectacular failure in policy since the disastrous 13-year experiment with the prohibition of alcohol.

Forty-three years ago, the National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse released a report, finding that the Federal ban on marijuana is un-

justified and inappropriate. Yet, for most of that time, Federal policy has been frozen in amber.

Countless lives have been ruined for the use of a substance that a majority of Americans think should be legal; untold billions of dollars have been spent on a failed effort at prohibition; and still 25 million adults use it every month.

Despite a finding in Federal law that marijuana is a schedule I controlled substance with no therapeutic value, 213 million Americans live in 34 States and the District of Columbia where medical marijuana is recognized and legal in some form, and over a million people use it as medicine.

In 1996, voters in California marked a significant change in course when they legalized medical marijuana with a vote of the people, and almost three dozen States have followed. In the fall of 2012, voters in the States of Washington and Colorado approved the adult use of marijuana, and it should be noted that the sky didn't fall, big cracks didn't appear in the Earth, and problems with marijuana didn't get worse. In some instances, they became more manageable.

For the Federal Government, the tide continues to turn. Last session of Congress had six successful votes on the floor of the House to rationalize our foolish policies, including reining in Federal enforcement and opening opportunities for legal industrial hemp cultivation. Last fall, voters in my State of Oregon, looking at the evidence and experience like in Colorado, approved adult use by an even larger margin than in the previous States.

The marijuana reform train has left the station, and it is time for the Federal Government to redouble its efforts on developing policies that work. Congressman JARED POLIS and I will reintroduce this week our legislation to establish a Federal framework to end the failed Federal prohibition.

It will pave the way for States to chart their own course to legalize, tax, and regulate marijuana according to what individual States want to do—just like they do with alcohol. We will save tens of billions of dollars on failed enforcement, incarceration, and lost revenue. We will choke off a profit center for drug cartels that has been enriched by our failed policies, and we will make it easier to enforce laws to keep marijuana out of the hands of our children and have money for government services rather than waste money on failed policy, arresting people for something that a majority of Americans now thinks should be legal.

For those of us who have worked in this field for years, it is an exciting time. My legislation will deal with the taxation of marijuana, and we look forward to refining it, to being able to have the tax at a proper level to support government services but also reasonable enough to choke off black market supply.

It is time for us to enter a new era of marijuana policy for research, for protecting our children, for economic development and individual liberties. I strongly urge my colleagues to examine the legislation that we have advanced and be part of this long overdue effort at reform.

STUDENT SUCCESS ACT

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, back in December, President Obama gave a major speech regarding the United States policy towards Cuba. The President said:

I do not believe we can continue doing the same thing for five decades and expect a different result.

In other words, the President is saying that, when something isn't working, we need to try a new approach.

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

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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