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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,
June 17, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BLAKE FARENTHOLD 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.

END IMMIGRANT FAMILY DETENTION

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, you are in the presence of greatness. No, not me, but I am flattered if that was your first thought. Rather, I speak of my excellent grandson, who has come to Washington and to the floor of the House of Representatives to see his grandpa at work.

Tonight, Luisito, who is 12, will be my escort, along with his grandma, at the annual White House picnic for

Members of Congress and their families. It would take way more than the allotted 5 minutes to enumerate all of the reasons for this grandfather's pride, so let me just say I am looking forward to showing him off at tonight's gathering.

But more than tonight's picnic, what I am really looking forward to is Father's Day. This Sunday, in Chicago, along with Luisito, my grandson, I will be with his dad and my daughters, who always make the old man feel loved.

And this Father's Day, I will be especially thankful for being allowed to have my family around me, because on Monday, I will be visiting with hundreds of children who cannot be with their dads.

On Monday, I will be joining seven of my colleagues in San Antonio to visit the two largest family detention facilities in the country. Karnes and Dilley are where moms and their children are being kept behind bars awaiting resolution of their immigration cases seeking asylum.

Remember a year ago when tens of thousands of children and young people were fleeing violence in three countries in Central America? The Republicans thought that these children would bring this country to its knees, and anti-immigration groups organized mobs to protest and keep children out of detention facilities in their communities. Do you remember that?

Well, many mothers with small children were also fleeing to the U.S. last year, and they are still being held in detention facilities, which are operated by private prison companies in Texas and Pennsylvania. They are detained for the completely lawful act of seeking asylum. My colleagues and I are going to see firsthand what is going on.

The minority whip, Mr. HOYER, and two of my closest allies on the family detention issue, Ms. LOFGREN and Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, both of California, are going, and we will be hosted by our col-

league from Texas, Mr. CASTRO, as we visit the two facilities.

I am sure that Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel, and even private companies who are contracted to run the facilities and profit from the incarceration of other people, are trying their best to make the conditions of detention for these moms and kids as humane as they can.

But, you see, that misses the point. We shouldn't be holding vulnerable women and children in detention. We have mothers and small children living in jail-like facilities with uncertain futures, limited access to legal counsel, and this has been going on for some time, for almost a year for some of them. Even with schools and laundry and TVs, they are still being held behind fences.

Moms still have to explain to the youngest children that, no, in fact, they do not know when they can leave or whether they will be deported back to the violent countries they fled after months in detention.

Children who face trauma, gangs, murder, and sexual assault in their neighborhoods were forced to leave alone or in groups or with a parent. They faced all sorts of dangers—smugglers and predators—on the journey to northern Mexico, where we know assault, robbery, and rape are commonplace. Then they crossed the U.S. border, often with the guidance of additional smugglers and criminals, and, following the process in the U.S. law, presented themselves to authorities to request asylum.

Now, because we have not put money into our immigration court system and, by the way, because we have not created ways for people to come here with visas instead of smugglers, we are all paying a higher price to house and feed moms and kids when much cheaper monitoring and supervision options are available. Why? The government feels that imprisoning these children

□ 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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