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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. FLEISCHMANN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 22, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CHARLES J. FLEISCHMANN 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.

TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will consider a surface transportation reauthorization. Unfortunately, calling it a "reauthorization" doesn't make it so.

This legislation calls for a 6-year period of reauthorization and hopes to be funded for 3 years, but it doesn't actually provide a single dime of revenue

from the highway trust fund. It is simply an empty shell.

It really doesn't have to be this hard. There is a single solution that is supported by everyone outside of Capitol Hill, one that has been employed by six red Republican States already this year and championed by Ronald Reagan when he was President: raise the gas tax. Our problems are that we are trying to fund 2015 infrastructure with 1993 dollars—the last time we raised the Federal gas tax.

I have a bill that will accomplish this fact. H.R. 680 provides that assurance and certainty by phasing in a gas tax increase over 3 years. It will permit us to fully fund a 6-year reauthorization for the first time since 1998 without resorting to gimmicks. It is cosponsored by over three dozen House Members, but, more importantly, it enjoys the broadest base of support for any major piece of legislation before Congress.

Is there any other bill of any significance that is endorsed by the U.S. Chamber and the AFL-CIO, countless business and trade associations, as well as individual unions, the American Trucking Association, representing that industry, and auto users, represented by AAA?

The answer is "no."

The coalition includes bicyclists, engineers, local government, transit agencies—virtually anyone who builds, maintains, or depends upon our transportation system.

For all the rhetoric about "strengthening the economy," this will be the one proven way of putting several million people to work at family-wage jobs while it reduces the deficit and strengthens our communities from coast to coast. Every State, every metropolitan area, every rural region of America would benefit both by the transportation improvements as well as the economic impact this work will create.

This has been recognized by independent analysts, editorials in major

newspapers, and in small newspapers all across the country. There really is no controversy.

Indeed, in the over two dozen States that have raised transportation revenue since 2012, the legislators who voted for more transportation revenue got reelected by a higher percentage than the legislators who voted against it. It is broadly supported, not politically controversial, and is desperately needed.

I am glad my colleagues were able to reach a compromise on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and put forward some interesting ideas. It gives a hint of what could happen if we had a real funding source, which we don't; and the bill being marked up raises more questions, therefore, than it answers. Even if the House were to embrace it unanimously, we would still be where we were 3 months ago, 6 months ago, and many times before that.

We are facing another short-term extension—this will be the 35th—and are providing zero assurance or long-term certainty to the many who rely on our transportation system. No country became great building its infrastructure 8 months at a time.

We can have markups and pass a reauthorization shell on the floor of the House; but until we embrace H.R. 680 and raise the gas tax, finding revenue that is sustainable, dedicated, and big enough to do the job, we are still going to be spinning our wheels; and America will be stuck.

ASHLEY MITCHELL

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the accomplishments of a truly remarkable lady in my district.

□ 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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Ashley Mitchell is a student at Alexandria High School in Louisiana, and her hard work and dedication to the sport that she loves so much has paid off in huge dividends.

Miss Mitchell just broke two world records while participating in the World Powerlifting Championships in the Czech Republic. Those records were the deadlift at 326.5 pounds and the other at 762 pounds. Now, those are impressive numbers, but even more impressive when you keep in mind that this young lady is 94 pounds. She represented the United States well and has returned home as the world champion for the United States of America.

It is young people like Ashley, who are leaders among their peers and who will be leaders in our communities very soon, whom we encourage.

I urge my colleagues to keep these young people, their potential, and their impressive accomplishments in mind as we do our jobs here in D.C. I commend Ashley for her talent, for her tireless effort, and for representing this country on an international stage in such an impressive manner.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, this morning, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced that last month was the warmest September in recorded history. Our reality can no longer be ignored. Climate change is here, and communities across the country—and the world—are feeling its effects. Just take the events we have seen unfold in 2015 as an example.

In April, drought-stricken California witnessed a snowpack with virtually no snow. On the other side of the country, Boston recorded its snowiest year with 110 inches between July 2014 and June 2015. Boston had so much snow, it did not melt until mid-July. 2015 also brought us the wettest months ever recorded in the U.S. within the 121 years of NOAA's recordkeeping; and this year, Tropical Storm Ana became the second-earliest tropical storm in history to make landfall in the U.S., in early May.

So what does all of this mean?

It means that we are no longer at a place where talking about climate change is enough. We need to act, and we need to act now.

I am proud that we have a President who is taking actions like reducing dangerous greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate climate change. Altering our current policies and enacting new ones will help reduce the impacts of climate change in the future. But mitigation is only one piece of the solution. We also need to adapt our policies to handle the effects of our already-changing climate in the present.

Climate change is already happening; and adaptation to climate change is

the only way we can help protect the people, the infrastructure, businesses, and ecosystems that are already threatened. We know that societies have adjusted to and have coped with changes in climate with different degrees of success; but our modern life is tailored to the stable climate we have been accustomed to. As the President recently pointed out, our climate is changing faster than we are adapting to it.

While climate change is a global issue, it is often felt on a hyper-local scale, so our cities have to be at the front line of adaptation. We need communities that have better flood defenses, plans for dealing with higher temperatures and heat waves, as well as better management of our water storage and use. Some cities are already taking steps to create these adaptation plans. Roughly 20 percent of cities around the globe have adopted adaptation strategies. My city of Chicago is included on that list.

The most obvious changes that Chicago is dealing with are hotter summers and more intense heat waves. Increased temperatures are leading to countless unforeseen consequences, such as heat-related illness and a deterioration in air quality. Higher temperatures are also boosting the demand for electricity, placing stress on our power plants. Heavy rains and snow are becoming more frequent in winter and spring. Increasing downpours make travel more dangerous, pollute our drinking water, damage crops, and disrupt infrastructure and transportation across the city.

But adaptation means more than protecting our cities. We must also protect our national defense. Many of our most critical military installations are already at risk.

A 2011 National Research Council report found that 128 U.S. military sites could be impacted by a sea-level rise of just 3 feet. Of those 128 sites, 56 are naval facilities valued at \$100 billion. Recent hurricanes have pushed water levels to dangerous heights in Norfolk, Virginia, threatening the largest naval base in the world. As sea levels rise and storms intensify, climate change threatens to require the relocation of that naval base.

This proves that local and State efforts are simply not enough. We need congressional action to produce lasting solutions that address the root causes of climate change and to prepare us for a very different future.

In closing, I defer to Charles Darwin, who said, "It is not the strongest of the species that survives nor the most intelligent; it is the one that is most adaptable to change."

I urge my colleagues to heed this warning and adapt to the reality in front of us.

SENSE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to paint a picture of the incredible progress of an industry that is making my district in western Pennsylvania a better place to work and live.

For many years, the coal industry has been an important part of the economy in Pennsylvania. Historic mining activity, unfortunately, left behind large piles of coal refuse. These piles consist of lower-quality coal mixed with rock and dirt.

For a long time, we did not have the technology to use this material, so it accumulated in large piles in cities and towns, close to schools and neighborhoods, and in fields across the region. This has led to a number of environmental problems: vegetation and wildlife have been harmed, the air has been polluted, acid mine drainage has impaired nearby rivers and streams, and problems compound when these piles catch fire.

The cost to clean up all of this is astronomical. Pennsylvania's environmental regulator estimates that fixing abandoned mine lands could take over \$16 billion, \$2 billion of which would be needed for the coal refuse piles alone. We needed an innovative solution to this tough challenge. A commonsense compromise was necessary to get the job done and protect the environment. That is where the coal refuse to energy industry comes in.

Using advanced technology, they have been able to use this previously unusable fuel to generate electricity. This activity powers remediation efforts that have, so far, been successful in removing over 200 million tons of coal refuse and repairing formerly polluted sites. I visited the Nanty Glo waste coal site, in my district, earlier this week and witnessed the massive transformation this area has undergone.

In this picture, you can see an example of the progress that has been made across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In the foreground are the remnants of a coal refuse pile that is up to 40 feet deep. In the distance, you can see what used to be a coal refuse pile that is almost completely restored. A little bit of work remains. This hillside has been restored, and, soon, it will be covered with trees and wildlife. This is an example of the environmental progress that is being made.

□ 1015

The Nanty Glo site is one of the many examples of the good work being done by the coal refuse energy industry in Pennsylvania and in historic coal sites across the country.

We can all agree that we want to be good stewards of our natural resources and to use them as efficiently as possible. We also want to ensure that regulations do not hamper job creation, the economy, and opportunity for our families.