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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. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 4, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable GLENN THOMPSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
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.

THIRTY-EIGHT PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the House of Representatives, the Republican Conference, and my friend PAUL RYAN for his election to be Speaker of the House. Those on the other side of the aisle are lucky to have him.

It is sad that he had to promise Members of his Conference in writing to not address a national issue on behalf of the American people. He had to swear

that he would not allow a vote on immigration reform as long as President Obama, well, is President Obama. The new Speaker had to promise to put party unity ahead of national public policy in order to be elected Speaker.

One of my colleagues from Alabama, who was so vehement in his opposition to immigration, came to the floor last week to read Speaker RYAN's pledge into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

So the Congress that did nothing on immigration reform for the last 2 years will do nothing for the remainder of the President's term. It is really stunning. You must promise to do nothing in order to be Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Maybe those on the other side of the aisle will come up with a new oath of office for leadership positions: Raise your right hand and repeat after me, they will say. I swear I will not let anything happen on my watch. I will faithfully uphold and defend the principles of the do-nothing Congress and pledge allegiance to the do-nothingness for which it stands; that I will ignore all cries for help, no matter how loud from the American people; that I will not let public policy get in the way of party politics; and that party unity is more important than the United States of America, so help me Tea Party.

Why would one faction within the Republican Party demand a promise from the new Speaker that he not bring up any immigration legislation to the floor? Because the opponents of immigration and immigration reform would lose. They must demand from the Speaker that the majority not rule in the House of Representatives because the opponents of immigration know they are actually the minority.

This is a telling moment for the Republican Party, and it is not confined to immigration. The majority of the country supports Planned Parenthood continuing to provide basic health services and contraception to women.

But playing to a smaller segment of their base, Republicans threaten to close down the government in order to block its funding. They want the minority to rule, and they want the tail to wag the dog.

On the environment, in the wake of decades of scientific evidence that human beings have helped to cause climate change, what is the Republican response? Do nothing. It is a liberal hoax, they say. We can buy another beach house farther inland when the beach house is, well, farther inland.

Members on the other side of the aisle celebrate the antics of a county clerk who refuses to follow the law and do her job, which includes issuing marriage licenses to two men or two women who want to spend their lives together.

Maybe House Republicans think they are standing on principle, but the majority of the country has been fighting against exclusion, second-class treatment, and bigotry for decades. The rest of us have embraced equality. We support voting rights, the same pay for the same work, and police in communities that protect and serve, not just stop and frisk.

Here in Congress, as we saw last week with the discharge petition to preserve the Export-Import Bank, sometimes the majority can break the gridlock of this minority and actually take action.

As we saw last week on the bipartisan budget and debt ceiling vote, sometimes Republican leaders take action for the good of the country, despite the calls from the do-nothing caucus, well, to do nothing.

On all these matters, do nothingness comes with a cost. It is the cost of deported immigrants, and businesses that cannot hire people legally, of women who are denied lifesaving health screenings, honoring families as first-class citizens no matter who heads them, a cleaner planet, and safer neighborhoods.

□ 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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