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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,
January 4, 2017.

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 3, 2017, 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.

JUMP-START AMERICA

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

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, last November, the American people spoke loud and clear about wanting real change in Washington. The American people want Washington to work for them—no more empty promises and no more talk.

Mr. Speaker, the American people want their government to act, and Congress' time to act is now. I come here today to offer a solution to an issue that has been discussed, but not truly

acted on, for decades. Time and time again, from Congress to Congress, lawmakers come down to this floor to talk about the need for tax reform.

As a current small business owner for all of my working life, I understand what is killing small businesses firsthand. Since I came to Congress, I have been outspoken on the need to reform our Tax Code, and I have a proposal to make it happen. My tax reform plan will simplify our Tax Code. It will give job creators the tools they need to succeed and empower America's greatest asset—the American worker. My tax reform plan will do exactly what its name says it will do—jump-start America.

Today, the Internal Revenue Code is often called complicated, uncompetitive, and unfair; and rightfully so. According to the Tax Foundation, Federal tax laws and regulations have grown to more than 10 million words in length. Imagine how much easier tax season would be for all of us if we shrank our individual income tax thresholds to two brackets. What if our Tax Code actually put American taxpayers first, in other words, treated us like a customer?

The United States has the highest corporate tax rate in the free world. Sure, deductions, exclusions, and tax credits occasionally lower that rate, but these add further to the Tax Code's complexity, and they allow carve-outs for special interests.

To those who believe our corporate tax rate is okay the way it is, I ask you to consider why American companies are moving their headquarters overseas. In order to incentivize these companies to return their investments in expansion and employment back home in America, my plan will implement a permanent tax holiday to allow repatriation of funds at 5 percent.

While the corporate tax rate is putting the United States at a disadvantage in the global economy which we

all live, the most unfair tax facing many Americans is inheritance tax. The death tax, as it is more commonly referred to, is a form of double taxation that can take a generation's worth of sweat equity and hard work and destroy it if a family business, for example, is passed down to a next of kin.

That is what nearly happened to me after the death of my parents. Fortunately for me, I was able to gather the resources to keep my father's business afloat. Many of my friends have not been so lucky.

We cannot force owners and operators to sell off parts of a business just so the Federal Government can collect a few extra dollars equal to less than 1 percent of Federal revenue. Especially considering our government is running a huge deficit and a \$20 trillion national debt, I would argue that the private sector is a much better steward of budgeting, investing, and creating return on investment than the Federal Government. That is why Jump-Start America will repeal the death tax once and for all.

These are a few of the notable reforms of Jump-Start America that I talk about on the road in Texas and nationwide. Jump-Start America has gained the support of Americans for Tax Reform and former Congressional Budget Office Director Douglas Holtz-Eakin. It was called "a good plan" by the Cato Institute.

As a small business owner, I can tell you my plan will put people back to work, encourage business and individuals to spend money they didn't have before, and grow the economy. It is a thing called the American Dream. While Jump-Start America is a small business perspective on tax reform, it will benefit every American individually and our Nation as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues, especially the newer Members, to familiarize themselves with my plan as we work to implement an aggressive pro-

□ 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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FUNDING OUR PORTS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, during this last Presidential election year, there was a tremendous amount of discussion about the Nation's infrastructure and the need for investment to make America more competitive and move goods and our citizens more efficiently.

There wasn't a lot of particular discussion about ports, but they are an incredibly important part of our infrastructure. More than \$470 billion of exports went through America's ports. Three-quarters of our exports are waterborne through these ports around the United States.

Now, the Corps of Engineers says that, of our 59 busiest ports depicted here, they are fully available less than 35 percent of the time, and that is even before we begin to deal with the larger cargo ships that are going to be coming through the expanded Panama Canal to the Southeast and other ports in the United States, and that is because of a lack of funding.

Now, obviously, that is a very difficult problem. We are estimating about a \$20 billion shortfall over the next 10 years in funding. Where, oh where, could Congress find that money? Actually, we already have it.

Now, Congress, in its wisdom in 1986, with the cooperation and consent of shipping interests, imposed a tax, an ad valorem tax, on the value of imports. It is a very small tax, but it adds slightly to the cost of any good that any American buys every day that is imported.

Now, Americans are paying the tax and Congress is stealing the money. Yep, that is true—for stupid purposes, no less. We are pretending to make the deficit smaller by collecting twice as much tax as we invest in our ports.

Meantime, we are forgoing the investment that is needed in those ports to become even more efficient and more competitive in the world economy. Congress is collecting the tax, yet the Budget Committee and the appropriators here in the Republican House are saying: Let's hide that money over here. We will put it in the Treasury harbor maintenance trust fund. Don't worry. It's there. Some day we might spend it.

Nine billion dollars today—\$9 billion—that would address half of the long-term shortfall in our ports. This could be an incredible boon for shippers, for American competitiveness, and for jobs in this country. We don't have to levy a new tax. All we have to do is spend the tax that is being collected from the American people by jacking up the price of imported goods for the purpose for which it is lawfully intended.

Now, the appropriators don't like it because, hey, they don't get to mess around with it, and the Budget Committee doesn't like it because that means they either have to look like they have another half a billion dollars a year of deficit or they would have to raise some funds somewhere else to spend somewhere else.

But the point is this money should be spent as intended. So today I am sending a letter to President-elect Trump. He has said time and time again he wants to invest in our infrastructure. Obviously, it is going to be a little longer term before we get to surface because we are going to have to raise additional revenues there to deal with our crumbling roads, bridges, and transit systems.

But for our ports, we don't have to wait. Day one, he can send a message to Congress saying: Hey, get off your butts down there and spend that money for the purpose for which the tax was collected. Stop gouging the American taxpayers and shorting our ports.

It's time to do things a little differently around here, and I am hopeful that the President perhaps will tweet about this and get some action out of the Republican majority like he did yesterday in reversing them on a rather drastic change to the rules of the House.

RELIEF FROM EXCESSIVE EXECUTIVE ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEBSTER of Florida). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, for the past 8 years, President Barack Obama has used his pen and phone to create a fourth branch of government that overreaches through executive orders and Federal rules and regulations. But today is a new day—a day when this Congress begins to dismantle this fourth branch of government and drain the swamp in Washington.

Through the entirety of this President's administration, Republicans have fought against out-of-control growth of Federal bureaucracy and rules and regulations that have suffocated the American economy. The last time I checked, the President's job was to enforce existing laws and work with the elected Members of Congress whose responsibility it is to pass laws as the people's representatives. Instead, I believe he has undermined not only our Constitution but also the American people through this executive power grab.

It is time to get rid of the Washington-knows-best, top-down, one-size-fits-all rules like the EPA's waters of the U.S., the Clean Power Plan, the Department of Labor's overtime rule and restrictions on your retirement savings. These regulations have consequences, and what these bureaucrats do have, consequences. In 2015 alone, the Federal Government leveled 3,400

regulations on Americans. Those regulations cost us \$1.9 trillion in lost productivity and growth—a cost of \$15,000 per American household.

Now, for the first time during my tenure serving the Second Congressional District of Missouri, Congress has a unique opportunity. This week we will pass a bill that I have had the pleasure of cosponsoring and voted for twice before—the REINS Act, and I expect it to become law. The REINS Act puts power back in the hands of the people as Congress—the people's House—can implement an up-or-down vote on any new major rule before they can take effect. Congress should decide what rules are necessary for our constituents—not unelected bureaucrats.

We will also pass this week the Midnight Rules Relief Act which will allow Congress to stop the Obama administration's last minute regulations from taking effect as they turn out the lights and head out the door.

The American people spoke loud and clear: They want results. They are tired of working harder for less money and tired of wondering how they will make ends meet at the end of every month. They have had enough and are tired of the constant chipping away of their freedoms.

Taken together, these two bills clearly demonstrate that this Republican Congress is unified and will work with President-elect Trump to help alleviate the day-to-day burdens felt by Americans across the country. By passing these bills, we are demonstrating that we are listening to our constituents and we are telling them that their elected representatives are in charge, not Washington bureaucrats.

□ 1015

DON'T ABANDON AMERICANS IN NEED OF HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the story of Mary and her son, two of my constituents from the Lakeview community of Chicago. Mary wrote to me on her son's behalf, expressing their deep appreciation for the Affordable Care Act and what the law has meant for their family.

In 2001, Mary's son was diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disease called Addison's disease. It occurs when your body produces insufficient amounts of certain hormones produced by your adrenal glands. When left untreated, Addison's disease can be life-threatening.

At the time of his diagnosis, Mary's son was fully insured through his employer. Then, in 2011, Mary's son left his employer to pursue the American Dream of entrepreneurship and start a small business on his own. Leaving his employer to bravely chase the American Dream meant leaving behind his insurance coverage, too. He did not anticipate being denied coverage due to a preexisting condition.