



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, APRIL 4, 2017

No. 58

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 4, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable GARRET GRAVES 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.

CLIMATE CHANGE

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot going on around here lately. We have been conducting investigations, holding hearings, and some of us have even tried and failed to fundamentally change the way we provide health care in this country.

It has been easy to get distracted by the dozens of different headlines and breaking news stories we see each week. But no matter what else is going on here in Washington, one thing con-

tinues unabated: each day, the United States, like every other country on Earth, continues to release tons and tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, and now we are starting to see the effects.

Over the last couple of years, the U.S. has joined 20 other countries from around the world in growing its economy while reducing its annual emissions into the atmosphere. This is not a small feat, and decoupling emissions from growth is the first step toward the substantive action needed to address the growing climate crisis. But I find this concept of reducing emissions can sometimes be a little misleading.

In the last few years, the U.S. has reduced the rate that it emits greenhouse gases. But even if we are doing it more slowly, we are still emitting harmful pollution into our air.

Imagine, Mr. Speaker, standing at the edge of an empty swimming pool with a garden hose. For a while, water was spewing out of that hose at a torrent; and each year, the volume got greater and greater. Now, the water is still running, but we have begun to turn the speed down. However, even if we manage to slow the rate of water going in, the pool still has more water than when we started and is still filling up.

Our atmosphere is that pool. For nearly 100 years, it has been filling up with greenhouse gases. And they don't just go away when the calendar flips. Reducing the annual emissions is vital, but we can't lose track of all the gases that have been accumulated year after year.

If we are going to hit the international goal of limiting climate warming to 2 degrees Celsius, we need to start acting now. Yet, this august body has been behind the curve on this issue for years.

Our colleagues seem content to ignore the climate crisis, to hold hearings with discredited, crank

pseudoscientists bought and paid for by corporate interests, or to deny the value of scientific thinking altogether, an approach that is all too familiar given the post-research, post-intelligence, post-truth mindset that we have seen from this administration. They have adopted a "hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil" approach to climate change, hoping they can ignore it until it goes away. Sadly, that is not the way the world works.

We can't unfill the pool by pretending there is no such thing as water. This form of denial has been evolving over time. First, we heard that there was no way that climate is changing at all.

Now that the changes in the atmosphere are beyond doubt, we are starting to hear that climate is changing but there is nothing we can do about it. In addition to being flat out false, that type of thinking is unbecoming of a nation that put the first man on the Moon, pioneered instantaneous communication, and has led the world in the fight against countless deadly diseases.

Last month, we heard the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency question the very fundamentals of atmospheric science, a particularly dismaying thing from the man charged with leading the fight against climate change. This type of willful scientific ignorance has serious consequences. It will cost lives.

Children will be exposed to harmful, asthma-inducing pollution because we didn't act fast enough to clean our air. They will die because crops that could be counted on for generations will no longer grow. They will be forced from their homes because melting polar ice is driving sea levels higher and higher.

We cannot deny these impacts. We cannot continue to hear no evil and see no evil when these changes are happening all around us, resulting in devastating consequences that affect every aspect of our life.

□ 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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