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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. BOST).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 15, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE BOST 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. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS MUST BE HONEST, FAIR, AND RECIPROCAL

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

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, on his recent trip to Asia, President Trump reminded us and our international trading partners that our commercial agreements must be honest, fair, and reciprocal. With this admonition, he called on our Asian friends to build automobile plants that

would employ American workers. Three cheers for him for doing that.

The United States already has experienced the benefits and the liabilities of foreign-controlled multinational automobile companies manufacturing in our country. These companies have provided good jobs for America's working people, but having these foreign companies here hasn't always worked.

A few years ago, we discovered that one of the world's preeminent car manufacturers, Volkswagen Group of America, had engaged in an illegal and clandestine strategy to circumvent U.S. emissions laws.

Volkswagen has a longstanding relationship with the American people. Like so many young people in my generation, my first car was a Volkswagen Beetle, so Volkswagen enjoyed an enormous goodwill in our country. Despite that, Volkswagen Group of America intentionally did us wrong. Volkswagen intentionally violated our emissions regulations and, by many accounts, they even engineered their systems to falsely indicate that they were complying with the emissions standards.

This was nothing more than pure arrogance and a hostile intent and an egregious violation of our best legislative efforts to regulate our way to clean air. Unfortunately, this issue with Volkswagen has not been totally dealt with and put behind us.

The deal with the German Government that got them off the hook remains cloaked in mystery and left many questions unanswered. We do not know yet, for example, whether Volkswagen will compensate Americans in a full and just manner. Those uncompensated Americans may include the owners of the bogusly engineered cars, as well as auto importers, as well as, perhaps, service stations who officially were authorized to repair Volkswagens.

Mr. Speaker, the VW deal between the Obama administration and the Merkel government needs to be revis-

ited with a full airing of the details. We need to know if Volkswagen has complied fully and if the settlement was demonstrably fair to Americans who relied on their good faith.

Wolfgang Porsche, the family who owns 52 percent of Volkswagen, he was the chairman during this time of the emissions scandal; as well as Matthias Mueller, the CEO of Volkswagen Group, they need to be put on the record about what the details of this subterfuge of American law was all about.

We need to send a message also. By putting them on the record, we need to send a message to all the multinational corporation executives who, when they do business in the United States of America, have to play by our rules.

I applaud the President for trying to encourage people to invest in building factories here, but that means all of us must make sure that that works out for the best for the American people.

SCORE ONE FOR DONALD TRUMP

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, after spending a bizarre week in the Ways and Means Committee with a moving target of the Republican tax plan, we find out, amazingly, that it is actually getting worse and worse.

We have just discovered that the Senate is going to repeal the individual healthcare mandate to provide funding for more tax cuts for America's wealthy.

The cost of that?

There will be 13 million additional uninsured Americans, and everybody in the individual market will see their premiums increase another 10 percent next year and every year thereafter.

Well, tomorrow, Trump is going to come to Capitol Hill to hold a rally

☐ 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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with Republican Members to try to make some of these nervous people feel a little more comfortable. No wonder Donald Trump is eager to see this bill pass. It is designed for Donald Trump.

First, he is the self-proclaimed king of debt. Well, you got it in spades with this bill because the Republicans have raised the debt ceiling \$1.5 trillion to finance these tax cuts for people who, frankly, don't need them. Because you have to pay interest on that, it is a \$2.3 trillion additional burden on our children and grandchildren.

It eliminates the alternative minimum tax. Even though Trump refused to honor his commitment to release his tax returns, one was leaked to David Cay Johnston, and it showed the only reason he paid substantial taxes in 2005 was because of the alternative minimum tax. Getting rid of that would save him \$31 million in one year.

There is a special break for pass-through entities. It is, theoretically, for small businesses, but many of the passthrough entities are not small businesses. They include hedge funds. Donald Trump's disclosure form lists hundreds of passthrough entities. That is how he does business.

Of course, the biggest and most outrageous loophole is to completely eliminate the inheritance tax over the next 10 years. This will save a couple thousand people, extraordinarily wealthy people, \$172 billion that would otherwise come to the government to be able to fund programs for our veterans, deal with the opioid crisis.

Donald Trump will be able to pass off hundreds of millions, maybe a billion or two, tax free. Remember, most of that money had never been taxed in the first place. You don't become a billionaire on W-2 income. It is all appreciated, untaxed capital.

Well, it also shatters a bipartisan agreement for alternative energy. Donald Trump is doubling down on energy of the past, trying to breathe life into a failing coal industry. Their bill would break a bipartisan agreement for wind energy, which we carefully negotiated on a bipartisan basis, and the industry has gone ahead and pledged billions of dollars.

Eliminating that agreement, the only retroactive provision in the bill, puts at jeopardy billions of dollars of investment and tens of thousands of jobs. Score one for Donald Trump.

But the worst element of this bill, I think—and there is a lot to choose from—is its Alzheimer's tax. It would deny the medical exemption to over 9 million middle class families to be able to deduct extraordinary medical expenses.

Think of a family that is trying to cope with the challenges of a loved one with Alzheimer's. This costs them tens of thousands of dollars, sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars in a year. It takes away the tax deduction from them.

This is an outrage. It is made for Donald Trump and large corporations,

but, sadly, it increases taxes on many middle-income Americans, especially with the Alzheimer's tax, denying some of the middle class families in the most difficult circumstances a little tax relief. It is inexcusable.

They couldn't defend it in committee. Let's see how the Republicans defend it on the floor of the House. But more important, let's see how they defend that to 9 million American families.

FLOOD INSURANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to lend my support to the flood insurance reform legislation that we considered on this floor yesterday and passed.

Let me tell you the reasons and the importance of that particular legislation. One is, the problems that it deals with is FEMA's flood plain maps can be inaccurate and are based on old technology. Property owners in the insurance flood plain plans are required to pay flood insurance premiums, even though they may not be at risk under the old maps whenever you look at it.

For example, today I brought a map from my district—one of the places in my district where these maps are wrong. This is actually Cartersville, Illinois. If you will notice, as the flood plain comes down here from the north, actually, that is really unique because, if you will notice right beside it, out of the flood plain is the creek that actually flows and the ditch that is the creek, and the flood plain is not in that. Yet it is over in the other area here, where it affects homes that are actually charged larger amounts of money on their flood insurance when they are not even in the flood plain. Yet it never even continues to flow on down to Crab Orchard Lake, where the natural water flow goes. So those areas are out of the flood plain, according to this mapping.

The flood zone maps—here is the problem: property owners can challenge the map under existing law, before we sent this over, and you can challenge it, but it would cost you \$2,000 to challenge that. Or if you wanted to participate with your city, the city taxes would then be charged \$17,000 to challenge the map.

Flood insurance is vitally important and necessary to the people around this Nation and the security that it gives to others that are not in flood plains for not having a cost dropped on them. But the accuracy of these maps are vitally important.

Two things the legislation did that were vitally important, it is easier and more affordable to appeal FEMA about their maps and whether or not something is in a flood plain. It also uses its higher technology to truly draft the flood plain maps in a way that they are fair, and that the costs are not unbearable to many homeowners.

THE GOP TAX BILL IS A FRONTAL ASSAULT ON THE MIDDLE CLASS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, the tax bill being considered, H.R. 1, is a frontal assault on the middle class and it will do lasting damage to our country.

The bill is a dishonest bait-and-switch for the 36 million middle and lower class families who will see their taxes increase under this plan to pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans and large multinational corporations. It is paid for by eliminating the few remaining benefits in our Tax Code for the middle class and charging \$1.7 trillion to the national credit card, leaving our children and our grandchildren to pay for it.

This bill lets the middle class down at every turn, and it should be defeated. It eliminates the deduction for medical expenses, which over 9 million middle class Americans claimed in 2015, including over 1 million taxpayers in my home State of California. This is especially harmful to older Americans struggling with high medical costs and serious illnesses, like cancer and Alzheimer's, and Americans with disabilities.

It takes direct aim at college students across the country, raising the future costs of higher education by \$65 billion over 10 years by eliminating the deductibility of interest on student loans.

It taxes employer tuition assistance benefits for students and tuition waivers for graduate students by treating this as income, making it more expensive for future scientists, medical professionals, educators, and other leaders to get an education.

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It eliminates the lifetime learning credit and the deductibility of interest of student loans at a time when student loan debt in the United States just reached \$1.5 trillion. This is a bitter pill to ask our Nation's student borrowers to swallow.

Very importantly for my constituents, this bill bulldozes the State and local tax deduction. Almost 200,000 of my constituents claimed an average State and local tax deduction of \$31,193 in 2015. Under this plan, businesses can still claim this deduction. For example, the National Education Association estimates are that 250,000 education jobs will be put at risk because of this lack of deductibility. Just yesterday, the Fraternal Order of Police spoke out in opposition to this bill's dismantling of this deduction, noting that their salaries and the equipment that they use are paid for by State and local taxes on property sales and income. The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy found that California stands to be the biggest overall loser in this plan and faces a \$12.1 billion tax increase in 2017 alone.

The bill also takes aim at the most valuable asset of the middle class: