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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. BACON).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

April 11, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DON BACON 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 8, 2018, 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.

MY COMMITMENT TO DEFEND THE CONSTITUTION AND THE RULE OF LAW AS A CITIZEN OF THIS NATION

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, the President said to reporters at the White House on Monday: "And it's a disgrace. It's, frankly, a real disgrace. It's an attack on our country, in a true sense. It's an attack on what we all stand for."

While I agree that there has been a disgraceful attack on our country, I

don't think it is the investigation that is closing in on the President, but rather his disgraceful reaction to it.

We now know, without any doubt, that the special counsel's investigation is closing in on the President and those very, very close to him. I don't think lawful warrants legally executed against the homes, office, and hotel rooms of the President's chief fixer and fellow grifter are the problem.

Rather, it is the constant threats to further obstruct justice by a sitting President, to thwart those lawful investigations from reaching their logical conclusions. That is what I and a lot of patriotic Americans are worried about.

What we find disgraceful is the President's attitude toward law enforcement and the circumstances that have led us to this moment, including the apparent dealings with the Kremlin, the campaign finance violations, the hush money payoffs to silence witnesses, and using one's elected office to influence and even try to end an investigation in which you are the target.

When he is the target, it is called disgraceful.

Before we left for the Easter break, Democrats on the Judiciary Committee made a commitment that we would be on the first plane back to Washington to initiate hearings if the President took action to further obstruct justice, including firing the Attorney General for recusing himself or the deputy attorney general or the special counsel.

The President reiterated his threats to subvert justice by firing key Justice officials this week. So I feel obligated to reiterate my commitment to defend the Constitution and the rule of law as a citizen of this Nation.

Let's be clear. Republicans have no intention of investigating, holding hearings, or taking seriously their constitutional mandate, no matter how far this President goes.

When athletes kneel during the national anthem or the former President

wears a tan suit or salutes a marine while holding a cup of coffee, that is a constitutional crisis. But when the President threatens to fire the special counsel, well, you know.

We cannot rely on Republicans to defend democracy and our system of government as long as they find political and personal advantage in walking lockstep with the President, or they tremble in fear of what would be in a tweet if they stepped out of line.

And we as Democrats, well, we are in the minority, so we are almost powerless unless some of our fellow colleagues put country ahead of party.

But human beings are very resourceful and fight fiercely for their own freedom. When we are united in great numbers, we can accomplish any goal.

In Selma and elsewhere, Dr. King and others showed us that beatings, lynchings, and State-sanctioned discrimination could not withstand the power of the people fighting for justice and equality.

In turn, they inspired, in part, the resistance known as the Prague Spring in Central Europe, when people stood up to tanks and repression, and eventually the wall came down.

In Africa, the Americas, Asia, and across the Arab world, people are still fighting to secure their freedom.

And in China, the image of a lone man standing up to tanks to defend his country moved the world.

One man standing up will not be enough, but many American women and men are already heeding the call. Young people from Parkland, Florida, called us to Washington by the millions, despite viscous attacks.

Women led the way by the millions in Washington and around the world.

And when our Muslim brothers and sisters called us to the airports to oppose Trump's religious ban, we came in numbers.

We have to be ready to come to Washington quickly, massively, energetically, in huge number when the

□ 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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