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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. WEBER of Texas).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC.

April 18, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RANDY K. WEBER, Sr., 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.

CUBA'S SCAM TRANSITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, today, many around the world might herald what they call a transition of power in my native homeland of Cuba, but that couldn't be further from the truth.

This sham transition is more smoke and mirrors—another play out of the Castro playbook. The reality is that Raul Castro will continue to maintain

his grip on power. The reality is that the Cuban people will be no closer to freedom today than they were yesterday—no closer to democracy today than they were yesterday.

The reality is that the murderous regime in Cuba will continue to oppress and will continue to abuse the people of Cuba.

We are not fooled, Mr. Speaker, and U.S. law dictates that we do not recognize this so-called transition government or any successor government until certain conditions are met, conditions such as: all political prisoners be released; until free, fair, and transparent elections monitored by international observers are held; and until the Cuban people's human rights are respected.

Until then, and only then, Mr. Speaker, we must continue to oppose this farce orchestrated by Castro and, instead, we must stand with the people of Cuba in their fight for freedom, democracy, and human rights.

CHANGES TO SNAP IN THE NEW FARM BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, a major responsibility of the farm bill is intended to address the growing issue of food insecurity in America. As a matter of fact, roughly one out of every six individuals in Dallas County will go to sleep each night not knowing where their next meal will come from.

Hunger is not just a major issue within any one district, but it is one that affects Americans in virtually every district in every part of the country. It is an important issue. It is one on which Congress needs to focus.

Sadly, the farm bill introduced last week will hurt far more Americans

than it will help. The proposed changes for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program within the farm bill are downright draconian. SNAP was intended to help the poor so they can find meaningful work on a full stomach. The new proposed work requirements would starve individuals who are unable to find sustainable employment due to economic, medical, or family-related issues.

Organizations such as Feeding America and the Food Research & Action Center have come out opposing these changes because they would lead to an increase in hungry Americans and is counterproductive to solving America's hunger problem. It is much harder to climb out of poverty and onto a path of independence when you must devote much of your energy in wondering where your next meal may come from.

Instead of throwing people off SNAP, Congress should be focused on giving greater access to nutritional meals so that these individuals are able to go on living their lives and trying to find employment that will get them out of poverty and into the middle class.

SNAP was intended to assist the working poor to ensure they are able to put food on the table for their children. These changes would throw many children off the program and subsequently deny access for them to get food from school breakfast and lunch programs. The cuts in SNAP benefits for these students would force them to face the challenges of hunger in addition to the rigors of school.

Countless studies show that students retain more information when their focus is on school in front of them and not on the fear that they will go to bed hungry.

Making certain that the next generation of Americans have every opportunity to grow up with a healthy diet and learn on a full stomach is not just an investment in the fight against hunger; it is also an investment in this country's future.

□ 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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Mr. Speaker, I speak not just for African Americans. The majority of the ones who are utilizing this program are non-African American, and the majority are Anglo Americans. So Congress should be working together to strengthen the program so that it fulfills its original goal: ensuring that all Americans, regardless of ethnic origin or status, have the dignity of a day's work and a day's worth of food.

Mr. Speaker, many districts' voices have been muted through the intentional gerrymandering so that they don't have to address the poorest people.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to address all of the American people.

HAPPY SESQUICENTENNIAL TO RENO, NEVADA

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

Mr. AMODEI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with birthday wishes for the premier municipality in the Nation—not the Big Apple, not the Windy City, not the City by the Bay, or the Big Easy.

I am talking about the Biggest Little City in the World, Reno, Nevada. Reno turns 150, celebrating its sesquicentennial.

Congratulations to you Mayor Hillary Schieve and the city council.

Happy birthday, Reno, Nevada.

CONGRATULATING MONSIGNOR GEORGE FARLAND

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

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor of the House this morning to pay tribute to a close friend of mine, Monsignor George Farland, who is celebrating the 50th anniversary of his ordination as a Catholic priest.

On May 4, 1968, Monsignor Farland received his ministerial orders at Cathedral of St. Michael the Archangel in my hometown of Springfield, Massachusetts. I know because I was the CYO basketball coach at Sacred Heart upon his arrival.

For the next half century, he has been a source of inspiration and comfort to his faithful parishioners at Sacred Heart Church in Springfield. Every Sunday, he provides a strong spiritual message, frequently laced with a special grace and a sense of irony and good humor, but always a powerful message. We have watched and witnessed as he has rebuilt and sustained a vibrant parish in the life of its members.

Sacred Heart Church was built by immigrants, and to this day, it welcomes immigrants, as he frequently says in the opening phrases of his powerful homilies: "No matter what your status or station in life, you are welcome in this church."

He has found time to serve as a police chaplain for the Springfield Police De-

partment and also a hospital chaplain in the Sisters of Providence Health System in Mercy Medical Center. He has surely reinvigorated the life of the church, and is a son of Hungry Hill, a graduate of Cathedral High School and Saint Anselm College.

His spiritual leadership in western Massachusetts has become, in fact, legendary. He has a well-deserved reputation for compassion, humility, and kindness. Again, the welcoming message of his inclusivity continues to deeply resonate with those who worship at Sacred Heart Church.

He leads his parishioners up and down that middle aisle, oftentimes in joy and happiness or in grief of the funeral, but he always does it with a special tolerance and grace.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States, I want to congratulate Monsignor George Farland for reaching this important milestone in his life, thank him for his decades of thoughtful ministry, and acknowledge the remarkable contributions he has made to the people of all walks of faith in the Diocese of Springfield in western Massachusetts.

RAW DEAL VERSUS BETTER DEAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, in this country, our democratic republic, we have a brilliant system of government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

It is a system that consists of two predominant parties with a contrast of ideas. And nowhere in this country is that contrast more prominent than here in the House of Representatives where we have got a vision of the country on the Democratic side of the aisle that wants to move America forward, while the folks on the other side of the aisle want to turn back the clock.

We want to bring people together. They are tearing us apart. We believe in an economy that works for everybody. They are all about an economy for the wealthy and the well-off. They have a raw deal. We have a better deal.

They want to take away healthcare for more than 20 million Americans, impose a draconian age tax on people between 50 and 64, and take away existing protections for preexisting conditions. We want to strengthen the Affordable Care Act and dramatically lower the cost of prescription drugs for every American. Raw deal versus better deal.

They have a fake infrastructure plan that would do nothing to fix our Nation's crumbling bridges, roads, and tunnels. We have a real infrastructure plan that would invest \$1 trillion and create 16 million good-paying jobs. Raw deal versus better deal.

They support a budget that would cut more than \$2 trillion from Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. We support a budget that would strengthen

Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid for working families, middle class folks, and senior citizens all across this country.

They recklessly jammed a tax scam down the throats of the American people where 83 percent of the benefits go to the wealthiest 1 percent of this country—tax cuts for millionaires, billionaires, corporations, and big donors to subsidize the lifestyles of the rich and shameless. Raw deal.

We support tax cuts for working families and middle class folks that are made permanent and that meaningfully put money back into the pockets of everyday Americans. That is a better deal.

□ 1015

They are all about chaos, crisis, confusion, and special interests.

We are about the people's interests: better jobs, better wages, and a better future for the American people. We believe the American people deserve a better deal.

SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

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

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, there is a civil war in Syria and a humanitarian crisis that the United States simply cannot and should not ignore.

Today there are some 2,000 U.S. soldiers and marines on the ground in Syria who have spent the past several years engaged in the fight to defeat ISIS. That fight has been largely successful, yet troops remain in Syria to prevent a resurgence of ISIS. U.S. forces are engaged in hostilities against ISIS, not in the Syrian civil war.

Congress was informed in 2015 that our forces are in Syria pursuant to the AUMF enacted in 2001, in response to the attacks on 9/11.

Although U.S. ground forces aren't engaged in the Syrian civil war, our forces have engaged Syrian forces and its regime. Last year, a U.S. Navy F-18 shot down a Syrian war plane in the collective self-defense of our coalition partners. The use of force in self-defense is unquestionably authorized, however risky that may be in potentially drawing the U.S. into armed conflict with Syria or into the Syrian civil war.

In the fall of 2016, U.S. forces mistakenly and unintentionally killed Syrian troops in an air strike that was intended for ISIS fighters. Last year, the Syrian regime launched an aerial bombing with sarin, causing the deaths of nearly 100 civilians.

In response to Assad carrying out these war crimes, the United States military, at the direction of President Trump, fired 59 cruise missiles against a Syrian air base. It was the air base from which the aircraft were launched to drop nerve gas on innocent women, children, men, and civilians.