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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. HARPER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 26, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable GREGG HARPER 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.

REAUTHORIZING THE FARM BILL

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, last week, the House Agriculture Committee passed a bill out that would reauthorize the farm bill. This is the most important bill that most Americans don't pay that much attention to. Sadly, I don't think it gets the attention that it needs here in Congress.

This is just the beginning of a long process to deal with the bill that is

going to be the most important health bill that this Congress will consider, because it would have us continue to subsidize a diet that literally makes Americans sick. It is the most important environmental bill, in terms of carbon emissions and water quality, and it makes a big difference for the men and women who are in the agriculture sector.

There are long-term challenges that we face, such as beginning farmers and ranchers and what happens in terms of transition. The average farmer is 58.2 years of age. What are we going to do to provide the workforce for the future, to transition lands, to be able to get the most out of the investment in the lands?

The bill that is awaiting House action—and I hope it awaits House action a long time, because there are many things we can do to make it better—would cut environmental funding, even though only one out of four applications for environmental programs ever get funded. The environmental programs are not performance-based to make sure that we get the most benefit for those dollars.

The bill does not rein in unnecessary subsidies. Indeed, it broadens loopholes and coverage to have subsidies go to more people who are only tangentially related to operating the farm and people who don't necessarily need it.

But the thing that I find most troubling is the provision known as the King amendment. This provision in the farm bill would prohibit State and local governments from being able to set their own protections for agriculture, food, and the environment.

Every State has agriculture and fishing industries that have their own special needs: pests, disease, and protections for consumers. The interest of various industries are widely different across the country. The needs of the fisheries of the Great Lakes are different from those of the Gulf Coast,

New England, and the Pacific Northwest.

The King amendment would prevent States from being able to tailor protections to their own industry and their own consumers. I strongly urge my colleagues to investigate what this provision would mean.

There is a great study from the Harvard Law School about an analysis of H.R. 4879 and the King amendment preempting State laws, for instance, on sell-by or best-used dates for shellfish, meat, dairy, and eggs. It would prevent States from stopping the import of pests that kill fruit, nut, and lumber trees. It would allow fishing vessels to fish waters of the various States without complying with the rules of those States, if their States have different provisions. It would even prohibit pet distributor licenses from being denied animal abusers.

These are the sorts of things that, when the public looks at it, they are shaking their heads in wonder. Why would Congress have a race to the bottom for protections for the environment, consumers, and animal protections?

It is interesting. There was a provision voted on by people in Oklahoma in the fall of 2016. The so-called "freedom to farm" has many of these same provisions. When the voters in Oklahoma did a deep dive, they rejected the Farm Bureau's initiative by a 60-40 margin. That is the State that gave Donald Trump his largest margin of victory for any State, other than West Virginia.

I hope Congress does what the people of Oklahoma did: look at the details, understand what it would do, and reject unnecessary restrictions on the ability of your State and local government to tailor protections for the people who fish, farm, and shop.

We can do better. I hope that we are going to be able to enlist the support of the vast majority of Congress to take a moment, pause, and look at a farm bill that is worthy of this body.

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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TUESDAY'S CHILDREN

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

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize three amazing kids: Arianna, Julius, and Kaydin, who join me today on the floor. All three are taking part in Take Our Children to Work Today hosted by Tuesday's Children. This is my second year participating in this wonderful event, and both times it has brightened my day.

Tuesday's Children provides support to children whose parents passed away in the military or due to terrorism. More than 15,000 individuals directly impacted by the events of September 11 have been supported by Tuesday's Children, and more than 6,000 individuals are currently served by Tuesday's Children's First Responder Alliance program today.

In my 30 years in the Air Force, I was able to meet with the families of loved ones who passed. I know how important organizations like Tuesday's Children are for our Nation's youth.

Today, it is about kids like Arianna, Julius, and Kaydin. They are shadowing me this morning and seeing what life is like in Congress. Julius is 9 years old. He is from Maryland and enjoys robotics and LEGOs. Kaydin, from Pennsylvania, is 10 years old, and is a big New York Giants fan. I tried to make him a Chicago Bears fan, but I couldn't do it. Finally, Arianna is from Maryland. She is 7 years old, and loves to play tennis.

I hope they enjoy their time in Washington and remember this day as a very special one, because they are special. I look forward to spending more time with them this afternoon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all Members to refrain from references to guests on the floor.

BIPARTISANSHIP

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, bipartisanship is often applauded in Congress, but seldom rewarded. Let me repeat that. Bipartisanship is often applauded, but seldom rewarded, which is an important part of why we have been unable to pass any meaningful immigration reform in this body for years.

I have worked with good men and women on the other side of the aisle on many occasions to advance immigration reform, but none of those efforts forced the Speaker of the House, whoever he or she was at the time, to allow a vote, except for the time the House passed the DREAM Act in 2010.

I continue to work with partners on the other side, because I know if a vote is allowed, those who see immigrants and immigration as important assets to this country will prevail. It will

take Democrats and Republicans working together to enact commonsense immigration reform.

Just this week, the gentleman from Colorado, Republican MIKE COFFMAN, and I worked together to demand statistics from the Department of Homeland Security to determine if the Trump administration is complying with Federal court orders on the renewal of DACA applications, and to get more information on the DACA processing backlogs.

Working with Republicans doesn't win me many friends among Democrats, who spend their days trying to defeat people like Mr. COFFMAN. They would probably prefer I stop working with him. As I said, bipartisanship is often praised, but seldom rewarded.

Secondly, bipartisanship is more than just signing your name.

JEFF DENHAM of California and some other Republicans are promoting an idea that has a great deal of merit: the so-called "Queen of the Hill" rule, which has almost 50 Republican cosponsors and all the Democrats, myself included.

This rule calls for a debate and votes in the House on a series of immigration reform bills, some of which would address the vulnerability of Dreamers and their families to deportation. It is an unprecedented bipartisan action to demand an immigration vote, and I support it wholeheartedly. But so far, all the Republicans have had to do is sign their names as cosponsors. The next step should be that we demand that Speaker RYAN bring the rule and related bills to the floor for a vote through a discharge petition.

You see, working with people from the other side of the aisle is just one aspect of bipartisanship. When the rubber meets the road is when you take on the leaders of your own party in order to achieve a bipartisan goal.

When I got arrested protesting President Obama's treatment of Dreamers and migrants, I didn't win any popularity contest with the Democratic Caucus. My colleagues were quick to defend the President and the Democratic Speaker at the time. I was shunned and passed over many times by my own team.

Later, when I and other Democrats worked with Judge CARTER, SAM JOHNSON, and RAUL LABRADOR to find bipartisan immigration solutions in the 113th Congress, Members of my own party told me to stay away. Right here on this floor they told me: "Don't help Republicans solve their immigration problem."

But I didn't stay away. I kept working with the Republicans, until they walked away. They were unwilling to take on their own party in the end. Speaker Boehner backed away when the chips were down.

Speaker RYAN came to my district in Chicago and talked about moving forward on immigration, with me standing by his side. We are still waiting for him to put skin in the game. That is

what it will take: taking a courageous position, even in the face of opposition from your own party.

So the 48 Republicans who joined Mr. DENHAM's "Queen of the Hill" rule calling for immigration votes should not declare mission accomplished just yet. Your country needs you right now, today. We need your courage, in addition to your signature. Sign a discharge petition to bring about the vote on immigration solutions for Dreamers. That puts your skin in the game. You may not get invited to the next state dinner or fly on Air Force One, but you will have done a service to your Nation.

A discharge petition on the Denham bill says you are willing to expend your personal reputation and political capital to do what is right and what is necessary in a time of great hatred and divisiveness at the highest levels over immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Will you be praised for your bipartisan courage? I hope so.

Will you be rewarded by other politicians or activists in your own party, or voters in mine? Probably not.

Which is exactly my point. It is hard, it is thankless, but your country needs help that only Republicans in Congress can provide: put pressure on your own Republican leadership. I, and a lot of my colleagues, will work with you, stand by you, support you, but we need you to lead the way.

HONORING THE LIFE OF RICK ANTLE

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

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I sadly rise today with fellow colleagues because we lost a friend way too soon.

Rick Antle was an ag visionary, community leader, family man, and to Sonia and I, a mentor and a friend. His passion and dedication made him not only a leader in California's Salinas Valley, but in the entire ag industry nationwide.

At the age of 26, he became the president and CEO of Tanimura & Antle, one of the largest ag companies in the entire country. He would grow this to become the largest leafy greens and vegetable producer in the region. He set it up as an ESOP, making it an employee-owned business. This is now a four-generation legacy that farms over 35,000 acres, distributing to North America, Europe, and Asia.

Rick worked right alongside his sons, Brian and Jeffrey. He constantly pushed different innovations, even ideas that were against conventional practice, things that were sometimes mocked or said that they would never work, but are now the important innovations that lead the rest of the industry.

Rick emphasized the importance of support and investing in employees, whom he always saw as the backbone