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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. POLIQUIN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 29, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BRUCE POLIQUIN 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 WORK FOR AMERICA IS NOT DONE

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

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, when I was born, separate but equal was the law of the land. Even in a northern city like Chicago, a young Puerto Rican kid knew where he could and could not go, which beaches and pools were open to him, and which were off-limits.

Segregation and discrimination by race, gender, religion, and sexual orientation were deeply embedded in the

customs and culture of our society, and upheld by the State and Federal Government.

So as I prepare to leave office after 26 years representing the people of the Fourth District of Illinois, I think it is important to reflect on how far we have come and how far we still have to go before this country lives up to its lofty ideals enshrined in our most sacred documents and origin mythology.

That a Puerto Rican born in Chicago in 1953, 65 years ago, the son of Spanish-speaking immigrants with little education who were driven by poverty from the mountains of Puerto Rico, would be able to speak into this microphone at all is perhaps a ringing endorsement for what this Nation stands for.

But let us be clear: People sacrificed and died so that I could speak here today. People I never met, like Medgar Evers, Emmett Till, and countless others, died in the struggle against discrimination and American apartheid, and opened the path for me to be here today.

The Voting Rights Act and other civil rights legislation passed in my lifetime on this floor were soaked in the blood of martyrs, old and young, who kept moving forward until everyone had the right to vote and every vote was counted.

Even as the President and his party challenge the principles of the Voting Rights Act today, I have always tried to honor those who have given their lives to make America freer and stronger.

To be blunt, were it not for the sacrifice of Black Americans, Black people in this country and their allies, who literally had their homes and churches bombed fighting to make this country live up to its own creed, I would not be here speaking to you today. That has always and will always guide me.

When the Fourth District was created to give Latinos an opportunity in

Chicago to have a voice in Congress, I was the first to win that seat. While the majority of my constituents then in 1992 were 65 percent Latino, on election day, the majority of voters were White.

In 26 years and 13 elections, that has changed. Today, voters on election day in the majority Latino Fourth District, which I represent, are, in fact, Latino.

Early on, I realized the constituent services in my district were not restricted to veterans' benefits and Social Security, although we work hard on those issues. In my district, helping people navigate the complex and expensive process of citizenship was a top need and became a top priority for my office.

We helped more than 55,000 people—let me underscore that, 55,000 immigrants—become citizens, sponsoring workshops, helping people resolve issues, and setting a standard that I feel is unmatched by any congressional office.

Just last month, I spoke with a woman who told me a remarkable story. Her daughter had assembled all of her documents and was prepared to apply for citizenship, and then she left the file on a Chicago subway system train. A few days later, this woman told me, a knock came at her door. Someone had found her daughter's folder, and they didn't give it to the CTA's lost and found, but, rather, they made sure it got to my office on Fullerton Avenue in Chicago.

My office and staff were so associated with citizenship and helping the immigrant communities that this Good Samaritan felt there was only one logical place to return the documents. Indeed, we worked with her daughter to make sure all of her documents and fees were filed. Today, she is a citizen of the United States of America.

When I walk through my district and talk with moms and dads, they tell me how my office touched their lives.

□ 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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Whether it was for citizenship or fighting someone's wrongful deportation, my office has done more than just help constituents. We have literally helped them preserve their families.

It is the legacy of helping families and individuals, and making this country a more welcoming place for people, people a lot like my parents from rural Puerto Rico, that is what I carry with me as I leave.

My work for America, her immigrants, and the character of our great Nation is not done. It is simply switching to private life. We who believe in freedom cannot rest. But to all of my colleagues, past and present, thank you for walking with me on this journey these many years.

INCREASING COAST GUARD ASSETS IN THE POLAR REGIONS

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the urgent need for increased U.S. Coast Guard assets in the polar regions of the globe.

America has been a world leader and a dominant force in the Arctic and Antarctic regions for over a century. While both of these areas are currently models of internationally shared territory, the geopolitical relevance of the polar regions is rising, and with it comes a larger and stronger presence of countries such as Russia and China.

Russia and China have both declared plans to grow and strengthen their presence in the polar region. China recently announced its status as a near-Arctic nation and continues to rapidly grow its ice-breaking fleet. Over the last 3 years, Russia has constructed six new bases in Russian Arctic territory.

These are concerning and clear signs that Russia and China have intentions to change the nature of their presence in the polar regions.

In order to compete with these countries, we must protect our sovereignty in the Arctic and our national interests in the Antarctic. It is time for Congress to reinvest in Coast Guard assets in this area.

The Coast Guard's sole heavy icebreaker, the Coast Guard cutter Polar Star, is 40 years old, and the task of accessing the polar region becomes more difficult for this ship every ice season.

Immediate investments in new heavy icebreaker ships, the Polar Security Cutter fleet, is critical to ensuring a long-term presence for the U.S. in these polar areas.

The U.S. Coast Guard has created a 6-3-1 approach to rebuilding its polar region fleets. With this 6-3-1 position, the Coast Guard will build a fleet of six polar icebreakers, including three Polar Security cutters similar to the Polar Star, and the U.S. Coast Guard's first Polar Security cutter.

These new heavy icebreakers provide continued access to the polar region

and, ultimately, will prevent the U.S. from ceding any ground to our political adversaries.

I appreciate the hard work done by the folks at the Coast Guard, not only in the polar regions, but across the world. Their efforts play a role in ensuring our national security, and it is vital that we continue to provide the Coast Guard with the funding they need in order to do their jobs.

This investment will arm the Coast Guard with the tools, equipment, and personnel it needs to complete its missions on the polar front.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in Congress to join me in supporting the requested \$750 million in funding.

ELIMINATE BIGOTRY AND HATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, once again, I rise, proud to be an American, proud to have the opportunity to speak for people who cannot speak for themselves in this place.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mention the midterm elections of 2018, said by many who count and who are supposed to know to be one of the highest turnouts ever, exceeding 100 million voters, said to be approximately 48 to 50 percent of those who are eligible to vote, depending on how you count and who is counting.

In Texas, it is said that, on November 1, the number of Texans voting early exceeded the entire turnout for 2014. The numbers indicate that 3.3 million or more 18-to-29-year-olds voted early, a 188 percent increase over 2014. It was a record turnout.

Why was there a record turnout? is the question that we have to grapple with. Yes, people turned out because they wanted better healthcare. They turned out because they want better jobs. They turned out because they want better schools, better education. They want better housing.

But they also turned out because they were opposed to bigotry and hate. Nobody can give you the empirical evidence to support entirely the number that turned out because they were antithetical to bigotry and hate. But we know by anecdotal evidence that many people turned out, in addition to the other things, because they want to see bigotry and hate not managed, but they want to see it eliminated in the greatest and richest country in the world.

Many people turned out with the expectation that we would do something about all of the things that I have named, including bigotry and hate. Many people turned out because they want bigotry and hate to become more than talking points. They want bigotry and hate in this country to become action items.

They want to see us visibly do something about the bigotry and hate that has found a means by which it can multiply, it can grow, in this country.

We have seen evidence of it in elections, a Senator who says: I'd go to a public hanging.

We have seen evidence of it in our places of worship, people killed in a synagogue.

We have seen evidence of it in the streets with words and behavior that are unacceptable. "Jews will not replace us," they said in Charlottesville.

We have to do something about bigotry and hate, and it has to be more than simply talk. Talking points are good; action items are better. It is time for the Congress of the United States of America to stand up for the many people who suffer from bigotry and hate in this country.

THE SPEECH POLICE

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the First Amendment is first for a reason. It is the most important right we have as Americans and at the very core of who we are.

Without the First Amendment, freedom of religion, free speech, freedom of the press, freedom in assembly, the rest of the Amendments are meaningless.

The purpose of the First Amendment is to permit free and open discussion about the important issues of the day. It protects the right to speak freely about the two most controversial subjects of the day: religion and politics. This is exactly what was forbidden under King George, and it is exactly why our Founding Fathers chose to make it first among the original 10 in the Bill of Rights.

□ 1015

But, somehow, the speech police have decided to replace free speech with their self-determined fair speech. If it is not fair to them, then it must be banned.

What does fair mean?

Fair means different things to different folks. In some places in our country like Texas, fair is where you take the chickens or prized pig to sell it or eat anything you want to on a stick when it is deep fried.

Fair means different things to different folks. But the word "fair" is not in the Constitution. The Constitution protects free speech, not fair speech. It says Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, and the Constitution applies to the elitist speech control police whether they think that is fair or not and whether they like it or not.

Our Founding Fathers established individual rights to protect our liberties, not our feelings. We have become so caught up in the politically correct restriction that everyone has the right not to be offended that we are, in fact, losing the right of free speech.

Where does the Constitution say you have the right not to be offended?