



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2019

No. 144

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. DINGELL).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 10, 2019.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DEBBIE DINGELL to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2019, 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.

THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN THE BELTWAY AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, we often hear about the disconnect between the beltway and the American people. It is usually not intentional. It is not based on malice, but it is real. The perfect example of this disconnect is found in my district in southern Illinois.

Alexander County is home to the Len Small levee along the Mississippi

River. The levee breached during the winter floods of 2015 and 2016. The aerial photo here shows just how devastating the breach was for farms and communities. There is about 1,000 acres, and that river is now trying to cut a new gorge to change the course of the river.

We immediately went to work in our office to try to get Len Small repaired. However, the Army Corps of Engineers told us that the levee wouldn't receive Federal funding because it failed to meet the benefit-cost ratio based solely on its flood protection criteria.

But the Len Small levee provides much more than flood protection. It is critical to navigation and commerce on the Mississippi River. If it cuts through that gorge, it changes the course of the river and it becomes a rapids.

So I introduced legislation directing the Army Corps of Engineers to consider navigational benefits, along with flood protection, when determining if a levee was worth a repair.

The Corps then informed us that there was no navigational benefit to the repair in Len Small. So over the months, the flood waters receded, leaving nothing but the sand and debris behind. And that was until earlier this year, when record rainfall into the Mississippi flood plain and southern Illinois once again brought the river up.

In August, I toured the where the levee is, and this was left behind: six barges, not counting the tolls that were sucked in. We managed to get all of them out but two.

Now, this is three-quarters of a mile inland on a person's farm, but yet they are saying that it has no navigational problems?

Look, I believe the Washington staff of the Army Corps has good intentions. They don't want to hurt people. They want to make a bad situation better, and they are trying to balance the needs of the communities across this country. It can't be easy, and I appreciate that.

But how in the world can anybody look at this photo and say there is no navigational benefit to the Len Small levee?

When the floodwaters crested earlier this summer, the Coast Guard issued a warning. Now, another Federal agent. What does it say? U.S. Coast Guard Safety Advisory, June 27, 2019, unclassified:

The U.S. Coast Guard has issued this safety advisory due to an outdraft at the break in the Len Small levee. It is recommended that the vessels stay approximately 800 feet off the shore. Use extreme caution. Keep a sharp lookout, and report navigational hazards to the Coast Guard immediately.

That is right. The U.S. Coast Guard issued a safety warning to vessels in the river to avoid the Len Small levee. They urged ships to use extreme caution and report any navigational hazard.

Madam Speaker, there is a clear navigational benefit to fixing the Len Small levee, and there are huge navigational consequences to not taking action. Weeks, months, or years from now, we will be right back in this situation again when the flooded land and desperate people ask why their government didn't act sooner.

I urge the Army Corps of Engineers to reconsider how important this levee is to flood protection and navigation. We must get the Len Small levee fixed.

AND STILL I RISE

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, and still I rise with love of country in my heart and, I must say, I rise today, unfortunately, some 146 days since the Mueller report was released, some 48 days since Mr. Mueller testified, some 48 days for the President to be above the law since the testimony of Mr. Mueller, 146 days above the law

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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H7561