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No. 150

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 18, 2019.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOSH GOTTHEIMER 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.

CONGRESS MUST PASS USMCA AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Speaker, it is time. It is time for Congress to pass the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, the USMCA. This is not, as many of you know, a new issue. The administration finished its work months ago—292 days ago, to be exact.

That is 292 days that Congress has had to ask questions. That is 292 days

that we have had to assess the benefits of the agreement. That is 292 days we have had to analyze the text of that agreement.

During the August recess, I had conversations with hundreds, maybe thousands, of folks. Their message was clear: USMCA is a clearly better agreement, and Congress needs to do its job for the good of this country.

There are a number of ways in which the President has negotiated a USMCA that is stronger, that is better than NAFTA.

First, USMCA ensures that the digital economy will be more open and that it will be more secure.

Second, the strong language on currency manipulation and on intellectual property provides a model for our way forward with other agreements, especially one with China.

Third, Mr. Speaker, the benefits to the ag community are compelling. My colleagues have heard me speak before about the fact that our ag producers have not had the easiest time of it lately. They need USMCA.

This agreement opens up new access to Canadian markets for wheat, wine, eggs, poultry, and dairy. It increases agricultural exports by \$2 billion a year. That is why 1,000 ag groups from across the country have endorsed USMCA. They know that with fair access to markets, American producers can compete and win.

USMCA is not perfect, but collectively, these improvements would create 176,000 new American jobs and would increase our GDP by \$68 billion. That is real value, and it is value across the agricultural, manufacturing, and service sectors.

The administration has done its job. It has negotiated an agreement that powers economic opportunity and grows American jobs.

So, it is time. It is time for this body to act. It is time for the Speaker to bring this bill to the floor. Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to pass USMCA.

PUT PRINCIPLES ABOVE POLITICS

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, and still I rise because I love my country. And I rise today because we are witnessing clear and convincing evidence of a Presidential coverup. We are witnessing this evidence live and in living color on national TV.

Just yesterday, before the Judiciary Committee, two witnesses did not appear pursuant to the coverup, and the one who did appear brought with him the clear and convincing evidence. He brought with him a letter from the President of the United States, by and through his agents, that indicates that he should not give certain testimony—clear and convincing evidence of a coverup.

The President of the United States is engaged in a continuation of obstruction that is creating the coverup. He obstructed. This is why we are having the Judiciary Committee hearings, in part.

He continues his obstruction, which means he is covering up. We cannot allow this to continue.

The President is making a bet. The President's bet is this: The President is betting that we will put politics above principle, that we will not use Article II, section 4 of the Constitution as the radical Republicans did in 1868 to impeach President Johnson for merely speaking ill of Congress.

He is betting we won't use that. He is betting we won't put the principle above the politics. He believes that we will put winning the next election above the Constitution of the United States of America. He believes that we are going to put the politics above the moral imperative to do that which we know should be done when a President has committed impeachable acts.

I believe that we will not be driven by the polls. We will not. Those who

☐ 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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crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge weren't driven by the polls. They were driven by a moral authority that they had to do that which was right, and we must do the right thing, too.

We cannot be driven by polls. We must drive the polls. We must stand on principle. We will not allow the next election to determine what we will do now.

Mr. Speaker, it is a risky thing to make this kind of decision. You don't know what the next election will bring. You have to use this power that the voters have given us, the constituents have given us, the people of this country have given us to do that which is right.

We must impeach this President. If we don't impeach him, Article II, section 4 of the Constitution will become meaningless. There will be no guardrails. There are none now, as he sees it, because he has made a bet.

Well, I am betting that this Congress will do the right thing. I am betting that we are going to put principle above politics and the people of this country above our political parties. I am betting we are not going to try to save a few people at an election at the expense of all the people who are suffering because of the cover up and because of the insidious discrimination this President is perpetrating upon this country and his policies.

I am betting on the American people. I am betting that the American people will stand with us. I am also betting that principle above all is what we must stand with.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

CONGRATULATING WICK'S PIES ON ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise with the sweetest news from the Sixth Congressional District of Indiana. On September 25, the famous Wick's Pies will celebrate its 75th anniversary in business.

Hoosier families have come to know Wick's for its delicious pies and baked goods that have been a staple in Randolph County since 1944. Duane "Wick" Wickersham started this business by delivering pies from his 1934 Buick sedan. Within 4 years, he was producing over 300 pies a day.

Wick's is renowned for its sugar cream pie, a Hoosier specialty since that has become the State's official State pie.

To this day, Wick's Pies remains family owned and can produce 10,000 pies in a single 8-hour shift. Wick's distributes to more than 40 States, though you can't beat a fresh slice from Mr. Wick's restaurant on Cherry Street in Winchester, which I have enjoyed.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Wick's Pies.

LACK OF HIGH-SPEED INTERNET ACCESS IMPACTS ALL AMERICANS

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, earlier in the year, I had the privilege of sitting in Ranking Member GRAVES' chair for a portion of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Members' Day Hearing. Regardless of the diverse backgrounds or districts we represent, my Republican and Democratic colleagues echoed familiar stories of how the lack of high-speed internet access is impacting their constituents.

To address this issue, I worked with my colleague and fellow Hoosier, Congressman VISLOSKEY, to introduce the Broadband Interagency Coordination Act, legislation to close the digital divide in rural America. Our bill directs the FCC, USDA, and NTIA to enter into an agreement to coordinate the distribution of Federal funds for broadband deployment.

We are working to make it easier for rural communities to access high-speed internet. We must close the digital divide and ensure Hoosiers and rural Americans are not left behind.

GUN VIOLENCE IS UNACCEPTABLE

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

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the scourge of mass shootings currently plaguing my community and other communities around the Nation.

The Gun Violence Archive, Mr. Speaker, which is a not-for-profit corporation that tracks and disseminates information on mass shootings, defines mass shootings as incidents where four or more people are injured or killed as a result of gunfire. Using this metric, Mr. Speaker, there have been 33 mass shootings in my district in the past 5 years, and eight so far this year—33 mass shootings in my district in the past 5 years and eight so far this very year.

Mr. Speaker, our national consciousness has been shocked by the tragedies in Ohio and Texas, as it should very well be, but we seem increasingly numb to the everyday violence taking place in cities like Chicago and Baltimore and other places throughout the Nation, especially when that violence impacts people of color.

Mr. Speaker, clearly, the events that took place in Dayton, El Paso, and Odessa deserve our most serious and intense attention. These are despicable acts carried out by despicable actors. I only wish, Mr. Speaker, that every single mass shooting in our Nation received the same intense and undivided attention.

There are men, women, and children being murdered and maimed on an almost daily basis across our Nation. Their names, Mr. Speaker, are easily forgotten and not remembered. Their stories will not be read aloud on the national news. Their families' pain will continue to be ignored.

There are many slow-moving massacres taking place in districts like mine that, unfortunately, do not receive the same widespread attention because the violence is occurring in poorer, minority communities where it is sadly seen as commonplace or par for the course: They deserve to be victims. They deserve to be mass murdered. They deserve to be killed by gunfire. They have earned that. That is how they live. They are subhuman.

Mr. Speaker, as you and I know, this is unacceptable at its core. Throughout my tenure in this Congress, I have introduced and reintroduced legislation that will help reduce the mass shootings taking place today, yesterday, and days gone by in my district and beyond.

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In 2007, I first introduced the Blair Holt Firearm Licensing and Record of Sale Act. I have reintroduced this bill in every Congress since; and in 2019, it is more necessary than ever, as it would forbid unlicensed firearm ownership, prohibit the transfer of firearms without a valid license, and require universal background checks.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, this body has passed two important background check bills that have been passed out of this House, and I was the proud cosponsor of each of these bills. They now, sad to say, are sitting collecting dust over on the Senate side.

WELCOMING AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER SCOTT MORRISON TO THE UNITED STATES

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, on Friday this week, September 20, our country will be welcoming the top official of the country of Australia, Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who will be arriving in Washington, D.C.

It is an important event, I think, for both countries, because this alliance between our two countries is so deep and the bond is so strong. The times that we are living in are so critical in terms of, again, just reaffirming all of the work that our two countries do together in so many ways, whether it is in terms of our military alliance, intelligence, trade, our cultures in terms of everything from movies to literature to music. Again, it is a deep and rich bond between our two countries.

Mr. Speaker, during the August break, we had a bipartisan group, a number of us, who actually went to the country of Australia for a joint Members of Parliament/Members of Congress conference that took place in Perth, Australia. There were about a dozen Members, bicameral and bipartisan. I can tell you that the prognosis is very good in terms of the connection between our two countries.

As I said, the integration of our two militaries could not be deeper and