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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 17, 2022.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ANN M. KUSTER 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 10, 2022, 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, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

JUST SAY NO TO EARMARKS

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, the announcement of MIKE GARCIA's election makes it official: The American people have entrusted Republicans with the House majority.

They do so at a time of unprecedented fiscal peril for our country: 40-year high inflation, economic recession, and an approaching debt crisis, all driven by the most reckless spending in our Nation's history. History is screaming this warning at us: nations that bankrupt themselves aren't around very long.

Republicans must reclaim the mantle of fiscal integrity and fiscal responsibility, and we should start by renouncing the tawdry, corrupt, and irresponsible practice of congressional earmarks, in which individual Congressmen direct spending to pet projects in their districts or grants to favored supporters, bypassing merit-driven competition.

I have proposed to the House Republican Conference a rule forbidding congressional earmarks and expect a vote on it when we return after Thanksgiving.

Earmark supporters argue that the power of the purse rests with Congress; therefore, its elected Members, and not unelected bureaucrats, should make these decisions.

Well, no, not exactly. Representatives are supposed to be biased toward their districts; that is why Congress is designed to act collectively. Ever since Magna Carta, it has been a settled principle of good governance that the power to appropriate funds should be separated from the power to spend them.

This is at the heart of the constitutional separation of powers: Congress appropriates funds but cannot spend them; and the President spends funds but cannot appropriate them. This is the single most important protection we have against political corruption and pork barrel spending. Earmarks undermine this principle, and it is no coincidence that most of the congressional scandals over the years have involved earmarks.

A local company produces a product the Pentagon neither needs nor wants. So what to do? Well, it simply ingratiates itself with the local Congressman and has him tell the Pentagon what it needs and who will provide it. Then it rewards him lavishly at election time and repeats.

Worthy projects, in open competitive bidding, do not need earmarks; they rise or fall on their merits. And if there is such a thing as a ''good'' earmark, the price to be paid is all the bad ones. That is a high price indeed.

Just the last omnibus spending bill in March included nearly 5,000 congressional earmarks totaling $9 billion for some of the most egregious examples of waste in the Federal budget: feral swine management in Arkansas, a national atomic testing museum in Las Vegas, a sheep experiment station in Idaho.

Now, Members can and should advocate for their districts, and make the case for projects they deem worthy of the money that Congress has appropriated. The problem with earmarks is blurring these two rules and having Members both advocate and decide.

Now, many say they don't trust this President and his deputies to administer these funds appropriately and evenhandedly, and I agree. But if you don't trust the President to administer the funds that we appropriate, then don't give him the money, period.

We hear that earmarks simply assure that local governments get a fair break. No, what they actually do is turn the Federal budget into a grab bag for local pork spending by the most powerful Members in Congress; and they undermine the central tenet of federalism: that local projects should be financed by local communities and Federal spending reserved for the Nation's general welfare.

When a local government proposes an earmark, what is it saying? It is saying the project is so low on its priority list it doesn't dare spend its own taxpayers' money. But it is perfectly happy to have taxpayers in other communities foot the bill.

The result is a long list of dubious projects that rob St. Petersburg to pay

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