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## House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. VALADAO).

### DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,  
December 14, 2023.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DAVID G. VALADAO to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

MIKE JOHNSON,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

God of grace and truth, dwell among us today in all Your glory. In Your gracious arms, receive all of us, sinners though we are, and show us Your compassion. Welcome us into Your steadfast loving-kindness, though we are all undeserving of such divine mercy.

But isn't that the truth You have been trying to tell us all along? You have created us to be the agents of Your love, the hands of Your compassion, the mouth of Your message of righteousness and justice. But too often we fall short of Your will in our service to You.

Yet with unmerited favor, in Your fullness we have received grace upon grace. You have forgiven our faithlessness, redeemed our waywardness, and offered us the promise of Your salvation.

In this holy season, may our lives reflect the light You have shone in our darkness, the blessings You have bestowed on us. And may we find countless opportunities to share the joy we have found in You, that all may know of the depth of Your love.

By Your grace in the truth of Your name we pray.  
Amen.

### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. COLLINS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

### FINISHING APPROPRIATIONS LEGISLATION

(Mr. COLLINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the importance of the House taking up the remaining appropriations legislation as soon as we get back in the new year.

The past 12 months have certainly been trying, but our Conference has shown that we can pass strong conservative policy that puts America first.

To my colleagues, enjoy your time with your family. Come January, let's

be prepared to finish what the American people expect us to do, and that is to get these remaining appropriations bills across the finish line.

### COMBATING RISE IN BOOK BANS

(Ms. PRESSLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PRESSLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Books Save Lives Act, legislation to combat the rise in book bans.

This past school year had more than 3,000 instances of books banned across 33 States, and in my home State of Massachusetts, libraries saw challenges to books quadruple.

Let me make it plain: Book bans are discriminatory and harmful, and Congress must unite against them. As a child who endured sexual abuse, when I read Maya Angelou's "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," it was the first time in my life I knew I was not alone, and it helped me move forward. When I say that books save lives, I mean that.

My bill would recognize this by ensuring libraries offer diverse books and treat discriminatory bans as violations of Federal civil rights law.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation for all the people who are saved by books each and every day.

### BOLSTERING MILK CONSUMPTION

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last night, in a bipartisan manner, the House passed my legislation, Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act. This bill addresses the importance of providing whole milk in school cafeterias.

□ 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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