

and the newest member of our delegation, Congresswoman SUZANNE BONAMICI, from the First Congressional District of Oregon.

SUZANNE is a former Oregon State legislator, an attorney who has worked on consumer and small business issues with a distinguished record of accomplishments and service for the people of Oregon. I know she'll be a strong and effective addition to our delegation in the House of Representatives.

SUZANNE, welcome, and we look forward to working with you.

With that, I would yield to my colleague from Oregon.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the entire Republican delegation from Oregon, I extend a very warm welcome to the newest representative from the Beaver State, SUZANNE BONAMICI. She cuts a similar path to the people's House as the one I traveled, having served in Salem as a State representative and a State senator, and as my colleague from Eugene points out, is a fellow Duck, having also earned a journalism degree, as I did, from the University of Oregon.

She joins a congressional delegation that has a long history of embracing what we call the Oregon way, to set aside our differences and pursue solutions to take care of the State's most pressing priorities.

From Congressmen DEFAZIO, SCHRAEDER, and BLUMENAUER to Senators WYDEN and MERKLEY are on the floor today, we have mounted a number of bipartisan efforts in the Congress. So we are delighted to have you as part of this team. I think I can speak for the entire delegation in saying we look forward to working with you and continuing in the great service to the State of Oregon. Thank you, and welcome to the Congress.

The SPEAKER. The gentlewoman from Oregon is recognized.

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Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker BOEHNER, Leader PELOSI, members of the Oregon delegation, new colleagues from across this great country, friends and family. This afternoon I'm honored to accept the responsibility and opportunity to represent the people of northwest Oregon in the United States Congress.

I want to start by thanking my family for your love, encouragement, patience, and sacrifice. My husband Michael Simon, and my children, Andrew and Sara, thank you. Thank you also to my mother, Marie Bonamici Woodcock, who's also here with us today, for giving me my first job in your small business and for instilling in me the values I hold today. And thank you to all the individuals and organizations who stood by me and worked so hard over the past several months to help me reach this day.

Finally, and most importantly, to the people across the First Congressional District of Oregon, thank you for giving me this honor.

It's great to be back in Washington, D.C. I started my legal career here more than 27 years ago as a consumer protection attorney at the Federal Trade Commission. A lot has changed in our world since then, but the importance of the work that happens here in the Capitol and the significance of the decisions that are made in this historic Chamber have not.

Oregon's First Congressional District is full of promise and potential. From the vineyards in Yamhill County to the Port of Astoria in Clatsop County, the family communities in Columbia County, the engines of industry in Washington County, and the arts and culture and business districts in Portland, it's a very diverse and dynamic part of the State. Yet there are too many families still struggling to make ends meet, and they want to know that their voices are heard in our deliberations.

Now, our economy and the Nation's confidence are both in need of rebuilding. As we work together, let us remember that the unparalleled prosperity and creativity of this great Nation over the last century can be traced to this promise—that if you work hard and play by the rules, you can succeed in America. That's the America my grandparents crossed the ocean for. That's the America too many people believe is slipping away. That's the America I want to work to rebuild.

I'm excited to begin. I'm humbled by the tremendous responsibility, and very appreciative of the trust that the people of northwest Oregon have placed in me.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the administration of the oath to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI), the whole number of the House is 434.

#### CIVILIAN PROPERTY REALIGNMENT ACT

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 1(c) of rule XIX, further consideration of the bill, (H.R. 1734) to decrease the deficit by realigning, consolidating, selling, disposing, and improving the efficiency of federal buildings and other civilian real property, and for other purposes, will now resume.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

#### MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. MICHAUD. I am in its current form.

The SPEAKER. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Michaud moves to recommit the bill H.R. 1734 to the Committee on Transpor-

tation and Infrastructure with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendments:

Page 4, after line 21, insert the following:

(x) Properties owned by the Department of Veterans Affairs or other properties used in connection with providing services for veterans, including hospitals, clinics, and facilities that provide job training, post traumatic stress disorder treatment, housing assistance, homeless services, and rehabilitative care.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Maine is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I am hoping today we will see a rare bipartisan moment here in the House when both sides can come together in support of our veterans.

The final amendment I'm offering here today will exempt certain VA facilities from the decommissioning process outlined in the legislation today. It will not kill this bill or even delay its passage. If it's adopted, my amendment will incorporate into the bill and the bill will be immediately voted upon.

I agree with my friends across the aisle that we need to address government waste, especially in this fiscal environment. I can understand why it makes sense to target the poor management and underutilization of government properties to reduce government waste, but I don't think our desire to address these issues should come at the expense of our veterans.

The underlying bill already includes plenty of exemptions to the CPRA process, namely for bases, camps, or stations under jurisdiction of DOD. It seems to me that if the bill already excludes buildings from the consolidation process because our troops rely on them, we should also exclude the buildings for our veterans because they rely on those buildings also.

As ranking member of the VA Health Subcommittee, I've heard testimony after testimony from veterans about the difficulties they face in accessing all the VA health services they need. The VA already provides health care to approximately 7.8 million veterans. As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan wind down, more and more of the 2.3 million soldiers from those wars will start to seek care from the Veterans Administration.

DOD says that nearly 45,000 veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan have been wounded in action. Even this high number grossly underestimates the number of wounded soldiers who rely on the VA system for health care because of unseen wounds like PTSD, TBI, etc. We can't consider shutting down VA facilities when the need to help our heroes is increasing.

In addition to health care needs, these soldiers will need help finding jobs. The veterans unemployment rate was more than 15 percent in January of 2011. It's great news that it fell 6 percent over the last year, but at 9 percent, it's still above the national average. That is why we have to ensure that the VA's ability to provide career