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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

June 19, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CHARLES J. FLEISCHMANN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2014, 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 each party limited to 1 hour 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.

IMMIGRATION CRISIS

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I usually come here to talk about the ongoing crisis in American cities and towns related to our unrelenting deportation of moms and dads and longtime residents with no criminal history.

There is no doubt we will see substantial action to dial back the record deportation this country has suffered over the past 5 years and a retargeting of deportations at criminals.

The only question is whether the Republican majority gets its act together

to participate in that process as legislators and leaders in the next 6 legislative days before the July 4 recess.

Now, in addition to the deportation crisis, we face a new crisis quickly becoming a human tragedy of catastrophic proportions. Thousands and thousands of young children are fleeing Central America because they think it is their only option for survival.

Faced with death threats, sexual assault, poverty, and no legal immigration options, little boys and girls are simply leaving their Central American countries by the tens of thousands.

Some are coming to the United States to reunite with relatives, while many others are seeking asylum in any country they can get to, including this one.

Girls as young as 11 and 12, threatened with rape in their own country, are risking rape, smugglers, murder, and exploitation for the slim chance of a life in the United States. Eighty percent are coming from just three countries—Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala—countries that top the list of the highest murder rates in the world.

Gangs, drugs, poverty, and hopelessness are driving kids as young as kindergartners to countries like Belize, Costa Rica, Mexico, and the United States. It is a complex international crisis that does not have easy solutions.

The Obama administration, Homeland Security, and FEMA are mobilizing like they would for a major natural disaster. They are trying to address each case one by one, following the laws of this country we have for unaccompanied minors, families, and asylumseekers.

The first goal must be to get the children in a safe place. Eventually, some may pass the rigorous test for asylum. Others may be considered for legal status as victims of traffickers, but many have no legal avenue and had none to begin with.

In many cases, children will face an immigration judge alone, without a lawyer and without a clue what is going on. The majority get orders of removal and face deportation immediately.

I have urged parents in the home countries that the risks are too great, the dangers too real, and the survival rate too low to attempt such a perilous journey, but let's be clear, adults on all sides of the border are failing when children feel they have no way to survive, other than risking their lives to cross thousands of miles.

I do not see the countries of Central America stepping up to take responsibility for the danger, dysfunction, death, and despair in their other countries, cities, and towns. The Congressional Hispanic Caucus told their embassies that in a very testy meeting yesterday.

Nor do I see the United States taking responsibility for the insatiable appetite for drugs on our streets—that, in most cases, fuel the drug trafficking, gangs, and desperation in Central America.

In Congress, we are quick to point fingers of blame—especially in an election year—but surely, we must accept some of the responsibility ourselves.

For decades, no realistic legal immigration options have existed for most people, and this breeds a clandestine network of smugglers that feeds on desperation and hopelessness.

Invading or propping up failing states on the other side of the world—like Iraq—has meant we have paid little attention to the failing states in our own backyard in this hemisphere.

Opponents of immigration and immigration reform mock the children on their radio shows and have even cooked up a new conspiracy theory that claims that President Obama has been calling these children to our country, so he can put more of them on welfare, so

□ 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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