



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015

No. 147

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC.

October 7, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CHRIS STEWART 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 6, 2015, 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.

CONGRESS SHOULD FOCUS ON FIXING OUR PROBLEMS HERE AT HOME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, the recent news about Afghanistan is, at best, distressing. Soon Congress will be debating an increase in the debt ceiling so we can borrow more money to pay our bills. The sad part is that some of that money will go to Afghanistan.

Three recent headlines are most discouraging:

One from the Fiscal Times, September 23, "U.S. Wasted Billions of Dollars Rebuilding Afghanistan."

The second headline from the New York Times, October 1, "Afghan Forces on the Run."

The third headline, "U.S. Soldiers Told to Ignore Sexual Abuse of Boys by Afghan Military Leaders."

I am so outraged about the third headline story that I am demanding answers on the Pentagon's policy of permitting Afghan men to rape young boys on U.S. military bases. I have written a letter to the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee and asked him to hold hearings on this issue. We need to get to the bottom of this.

Afghanistan is the graveyard of empires. We are headed to the graveyard. We need to borrow money just to carry on the needless war. We need to borrow money just to pay our bills.

We are over \$18 trillion in debt, and President Obama signed us up for 8 more years in Afghanistan, 8 more years of wasted money. No one even listens to John Sopko, the Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction, who has testified before Congress many times. He releases report after report detailing the waste, fraud, and abuse in Afghanistan, and no one in Congress seems to care.

According to Sopko, we have spent more in 14 years trying to shape Afghanistan into a functional country, which is a fool's errand, at best, than we did on the entire Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe after World War II.

In the next fiscal year, we will spend \$42.5 billion in Afghanistan, and the Congressional Budget Office estimates that we will spend \$30 billion a year for the next 8 years. We are committed to staying in Afghanistan. This is the longest war in the history of America.

History has proven that we will never change this tribal nation and we should stop trying. Instead, let's focus on fixing our problems here in America.

The little girls beside me, Mr. Speaker, Eden and Stephanie Balduf, their daddy was training Afghanistan citizens to be policemen, and they were shot and killed by the man they were training. Poor little girls represent so many families whose loved ones have died in Afghanistan for nothing but a waste.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform, please bless America, and, God, please wake up the Congress before it is too late on Afghanistan.

UMPQUA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SHOOTING

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday another horrific episode of gun violence—the seemingly unrelenting stream of tragedy and horror—only this time it was visited on Oregon, in a modest mill town of Roseburg.

The scene of the carnage was a picturesque, some would say idyllic, community college campus just north of town, where a shooter burst into a classroom at Umpqua Community College and started methodically killing nine people, wounding seven others.

On the 274th day of 2015, this was the 294th such episode. President Obama made an impassioned, forceful, and poignant response—at once fierce and sad, as eloquent as anything I have heard him say throughout his political career.

And who could blame him? Not a single calendar week has passed during his second term without another mass shooting.

The core of his message was the question for all Americans, especially the apologists for gun violence: Why is the United States the only developed country in the world that cannot protect

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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