



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2017

No. 148

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 13, 2017.

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

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, 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. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

VALUABLE FARM BILL LISTENING SESSIONS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, over the course of the summer, I was able to join some farm bill listening sessions with Chairman MIKE CONAWAY and Ranking Member COLLIN PETERSON. These sessions were titled "The Next Farm Bill, Conversations in the Field," and they allowed committee members to gather input di-

rectly from farmers, ranchers, and stakeholders across the country.

As the House Agriculture Committee works to craft the next farm bill, these listening sessions have allowed us to hear firsthand from those who are directly impacted by the farm bill. They provide us with real world examples of what is working and what isn't.

With farmers in every region of this country, we heard many different perspectives. This feedback will help us write the best legislation possible.

Now, my schedule permitted me to attend listening sessions in Gainesville, Florida; San Angelo, Texas; and Decatur, Illinois. I also hosted a listening session in my own district. Our "Barnyard Discussion" at Penn State's Ag Progress Days focused on issues driving the state of agriculture in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I was joined by my Democratic colleague, Congressman DWIGHT EVANS of Philadelphia; as well as Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Russell Reading; and Rick Ebert, president of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau.

We heard from a variety of stakeholders, including those from the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, the Center for Dairy Excellence, the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, and the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts.

Penn State's Ag Progress Days is Pennsylvania's largest outdoor agricultural expo. Proudly, there are numerous opportunities for attendees to hear from their State and Federal lawmakers about regulations, policies, and government programs through various events and exhibits.

The Barnyard Discussion is an annual event for me and, in the same fashion, as the committee's listening session, it allows me to hear how our Federal policies are working for those who are directly impacted by these decisions. Producers from across the Commonwealth flock to Pennsylvania

Furnace for the 3-day event that features the latest technology and research exhibits, educational programs, and guided tours.

This year marked the 42nd year, and it is one of only three agriculture exhibitions in the country to be sponsored by a major university. I especially enjoyed the Barnyard Discussion, and I gathered excellent insight about the challenges and successes facing the agriculture industry.

These sessions were particularly important to me, as chairman of the Nutrition Subcommittee, because Federal nutrition programs are vital to ensuring that all Americans have access to healthy foods, especially our low-income populations, the elderly, and those living in areas with strained access to nutritious foods, or what we call food deserts.

Programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—or SNAP—support agriculture and lessen the effects of poverty on our most vulnerable citizens.

As we begin to work on the next farm bill, we will continue to identify ways—through Federal, State and local programs—to provide safe and nutritious food for those who need it most. Gathering feedback from Americans who farm every corner of this Nation is essential as we work to construct the next farm bill. I am grateful to all those who shared their stories and their insights with us.

Our farmers feed. They are the stewards of our land, and their insights are invaluable to the Agriculture Committee.

SOLVING PROBLEMS OF REPETITIVE FLOODING

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

□ 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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H7317