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House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 31, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable SHEILA JACKSON-LEE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, 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 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

“CARS” BILL A PRESCRIPTION FOR IMPROVED AUTO SALES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) for 3 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Madam Speaker, yesterday was a very, very tough medicine, I would say that is an understatement, tough medicine for the people of Michigan, as President Obama put down very quick timelines for General Motors and Chrysler to complete the restructuring plans that will make them viable both in the short term, and long-term viability as well.

At that same time, the President indicated his support for the industry,

which we took to heart, and we find that very, very encouraging, and the President indicated his desire to work with the Congress to produce an incentive to get customers in the showroom. And this is key: How can we incent people to actually purchase an automobile in these economic times?

Madam Speaker, recently I was very proud to join with my Democratic colleagues, BETTY SUTTON of Ohio and BRUCE BRALEY of Iowa, to sponsor H.R. 1550, which we call the Consumer Assistance to Recycle and Save Act of 2009, or the CARS Act, or as it is now commonly being referred to as the Cash for Clunkers bill.

This bill, Madam Speaker, would provide consumers with up to a \$7,500 incentive to trade in an older, less fuel-efficient vehicle for a new, more fuel-efficient vehicle. And we know this is an idea that will work because it already has.

In this case, consumers actually get the immediacy at the point of sale, not later on in the year when they might be doing their tax returns to get a credit or something, but when they are purchasing a car they would get a voucher for this. And the good thing is as well that dealers don't actually have to take that trade-in and have it sitting on the lot, either. That car would be scrapped. But, as I say, we know it would work because we have seen what has happened.

Recently, the German Government introduced a similar incentive, and in February German car sales were up 22 percent, as sales fell, as we all are painfully aware, around the rest of the world.

There was an op-ed in today's USA Today by Bill Ford, and it is titled, “Cash in Old Cars for New Ones. Economy, Consumers, Automakers Would All Benefit.” This is written by Bill Ford of the Ford Motor Company. And I will also say that this bill is supported by all of the Big Three, General

Motors, and Chrysler, as well as supported by the UAW.

I submit for printing in the RECORD this op-ed.

CASH IN OLD CARS FOR NEW ONES

(By Bill Ford)

In spite of the many challenges our country faces, I strongly believe the government stimulus and other steps to thaw credit markets will be effective in driving economic growth over time.

But we still face an immediate and serious challenge. Last week, President Obama observed that U.S. auto sales have seen a huge drop-off, starkly noting “every automaker is getting killed right now.” In just one year, U.S. auto sales have fallen by nearly 50%. And March's sales numbers promise to be sobering for foreign and domestic automakers.

This unprecedented trend is sustainable for neither the industry nor the economy. We urgently need to draw reluctant consumers back into the marketplace. The good news is that there is a proven initiative, outlined by the president on Monday, that can help consumers overcome their fear. The plan also would help the environment and increase energy security. It has been called a “fleet modernization” or a “scrappage” program. Whatever the name—it works.

In January, the German government enacted a consumer incentive equivalent to \$3,200 to scrap automobiles that are at least 9 years old and buy new, more environmentally advanced vehicles. By February, sales of new vehicles jumped 21% over the same month a year before. Countries such as Japan, France, Italy, South Korea and others are considering or already have similar programs.

This model can work in the U.S., too. President Obama said that he would like to use parts of the economic stimulus package to fund a program that would give consumers a “generous credit” when they replace an older car with a new, more fuel-efficient car.

President Obama has rightly emphasized the importance of vehicle fuel-efficiency gains and expressed concern about shrinking U.S. auto sales and the risk it poses to the

□ 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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