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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. FITZPATRICK).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 3, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK 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 5, 2011, 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 each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

LONE SURVIVOR OF THE DOUGHBOYS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as we approach Veterans Day, the day we honor those who served and came back home, I want to talk about a very special veteran.

Frank Buckles, Jr., when he was 16 years of age—some say 15—during the beginning of the great World War I, wanted to join the military and go overseas. Remember they sang that song, those doughboys, when they went

overseas, George Cohan's song "Over There." And they wouldn't come back until it was over "over there."

The war started. He tried to join the Marines; they wouldn't take him because he was not 18. He tried different recruiters. He finally found an Army recruiter. He says he just told the recruiter a whopper—that he was 21. The recruiter took him, swore him in; and the fastest way he could get to Europe and get into action was to drive an ambulance. This is a photograph of Frank Buckles, Jr., when he served in the great World War I.

After that war was over with, he came back home, although 116,000 Americans did not come back home. Four million of them served in World War I. Frank Buckles, Jr., joined up as a seaman on a merchant ship. He was in the Philippines when World War II started, and he was captured by the Japanese and held in a prisoner of war camp for 3½ years. He was rescued, came back home to America, went to his farm in West Virginia, and he worked on the farm until he was 109 years old.

Frank Buckles, Jr., died this year at the age of 110. He was the last surviving doughboy from America that served in the great World War I. This is a photograph taken shortly before his death this year.

Frank Buckles, Jr., the loan survivor of World War I, a veteran of that great war, came back home. And his wish before he died, Mr. Speaker, was that we would have a permanent memorial for all who served in World War I on the Mall. You see, we have a memorial for Vietnam veterans, we have a memorial for the Korean veterans, the World War II veterans. There is a small memorial for the D.C. troops that served in World War I, but there's no memorial on the Mall for all of the doughboys like Frank Buckles, Jr., that served. And they have all died, Mr. Speaker. And it's our job, it's important for us to

have that memorial for them, to allow it to be constructed.

There is one memorial in Kansas City for the World War I doughboys, but we need one here also on the Mall. And it's important that we honor these great Americans because they are the veterans that we honor, that we appreciate, and that we should not forget, although all of them, including the loan survivor, Frank Buckles, Jr., has died. So I hope this House will join me and the gentleman from Missouri, EMANUEL CLEAVER, in passing legislation to authorize this memorial for those World War I doughboys.

Veterans Day is approaching. We are approaching the 100th anniversary of the great World War I. We should remember them, and we can do this by erecting and allowing a memorial to be constructed on the Mall. The veterans are the greatest that we have. We should remember every one of them, those that served and came home, those that served and did not come home, and those that are serving and representing us today.

And that's just the way it is.

THE WAR AGAINST SPORTS FANS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. There is a drama being played out in the divorce and bankruptcy court with the McCourt family and the Los Angeles Dodgers. It's another chapter in the sad war against fans, the very people who make these multibillion-dollar enterprises possible in the first place.

It's an all-too-familiar refrain. No city is exempt from the threat of bankruptcy or being held hostage by an owner threatening to move if their demands are not met. No one, that is, except the fans of the team that is arguably the most successful franchise in

□ 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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professional sports, the current Super Bowl champions, currently undefeated—and maybe the strongest team in the NFL this year—the Green Bay Packers.

Packer fans will tell you they're unique: little Green Bay, Wisconsin, with only 104,000 people, a metropolitan area of less than a third of a million, the smallest sports media market in the United States, but arguably the most successful franchise.

Green Bay is special perhaps for another reason: it's the only franchise in all of Major League sports that doesn't have to worry about some billionaire egomaniac running the franchise into the ground or being tired of it and selling it off to another city, or just the community being held hostage by obscene demands for even more revenue, more sacrifice from fans and the community.

You know, that's been the fate. About one city a year since 1950 has had a franchise change, and many others have had the screws put to them. But the Green Bay Packers, are owned by 112,158 shareholders. Each shareholder is given voting rights in the franchise, and no shareholder can hold a controlling stake in the company. The Packers can raise funds for team expenses through prudent decision-making by the board of directors and by offering public shares.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there is something to be said for the approach of the long-term success of the Green Bay Packers; but, sadly, the billionaires who run the NFL and other professional sport franchises have decided otherwise. All Major Leagues, formally or informally, prohibit public ownership. The NFL formally outlawed public ownership in 1961—the same year it instituted a radical revenue-sharing policy—but grandfathered in Green Bay. Major League Baseball outlawed public ownership through an informal resolution passed in the mid-1980s when Joan Kroc sought to donate her baseball team, the Padres, to San Diego.

Well, I think the sad record is that the billionaires are not always so brilliant; but they are long on money, political influence and ego, and they know a sweet deal when they've got it. The franchises to this point have been a ticket to even greater wealth in part because these franchises are part of a cartel that would be illegal in most other industries. Guaranteed massive profits, they're the only show in town. They often can threaten to pick up and move and of course witness some of these egregious stadium deals.

I was just in Cincinnati earlier this week; and people there, whether they're conservative, liberal, Democrats or Republicans, are still holding their heads about being saddled with an egregious contract for a recent new stadium that put all the revenue upside in the pockets of the owner.

George Steinbrenner recently passed away. He was a wealthy man to begin with from a family business, but he be-

came a billionaire based on his Yankee empire and his ability to further enrich himself as a result, in part, of the construction of a brand new Yankee Stadium that not only cost an astronomical sum for the taxpayers of New York, but further inflated the value of his ownership of the Yankees.

□ 1010

There have been critical appraisals that have suggested that it would have been cheaper for New York to simply buy the New York Yankees outright for the value of the team than submit to the outrageous demands from Steinbrenner to keep them there.

Well, the gravy train is fueled by another source of revenue; not only having communities and fans over a barrel, but they have an antitrust exemption that enables them to negotiate lucrative television contracts worth billions of dollars. For instance, the current NFL contract worth \$3 billion a year to go with the \$6 billion that has been pried out of locals for stadium deals and parking.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to look at legislation Congresswoman HAHN and I will be introducing today. Give fans a chance. It's time to do that, to broaden the ownership options, allow democracy and the free enterprise system to work.

MAKE THE BUDGET PROCESS TRANSPARENT

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, the American taxpayer is facing a struggling economy, skyrocketing debt, and political partisanship here in Washington. While every American family must balance the budget, the Federal Government does not have to do the same.

Additionally, publicly traded companies are required to provide financial statements for their shareholders, whereas the government is not held accountable to the American taxpayer. That is why Representative MIKE QUIGLEY and I are introducing bipartisan legislation that would require the Federal Government to prepare and publish online periodic financial statements that are independently audited and that accurately reflect the government's true financial condition.

In the short time that I've been in Congress, I've focused my efforts on creating an environment that fosters job creation and gets our economy back on track. Part of that effort involves America's fiscal house getting in order, and that is why I've worked to curb out-of-control government spending.

Moving forward, I believe that we must also reform the way our Federal accounting methods are conducted to make the budget process more transparent and accessible to every American so that they, as taxpayers, can truly know how their money is being

spent and what our government's true liabilities are. That is why I'm introducing the bipartisan Truth in Government Accounting Act, H.R. 3332.

To protect private-sector shareholders, the Federal Government requires each publicly traded company to file periodic GAAP financial statements that are independently audited and that accurately reflect the company's true financial condition. By contrast, the Federal Government's own accounting practices substantially conceal and confuse the Federal Government's true financial condition, especially with respect to long-term unfunded liabilities and year-over-year spending.

To protect taxpayers as much as the private-sector shareholders, the Federal Government should similarly require each Federal agency to file periodic GAAP financial statements that are independently audited and that accurately reflect the agency's true financial condition. The Truth in Government Accounting Act would require the Federal Government to do so, to make the resulting Federal Government financial statements easily available online, and to require zero-baseline budgeting.

This bill will require all Federal agencies to provide three quarterly and one annual consolidated financial statement, just as the private sector must do, using the fair-value accrual accounting method on all their assets and liabilities, including unfunded entitlement liabilities. These statements will be audited by a single entity, the Government Accountability Office, an independent, nonpartisan agency that reports to the Congress. These audited statements will be put online, in terms of a searchable Web site for all Americans to use and to see easily.

As incredible as it may seem, there's not a simple way for the American public to easily view our national budget with all of its liabilities, current and long term. What exists now is a system where information is scattered between Federal agency and government office Web sites. Our bill creates a simple and accessible Web site that can be a one-stop shop for all information related to our Federal budget, based off of Web sites that we know currently exist, like recovery.gov.

Americans deserve a transparent way to see where their tax dollars go and what they are on the hook for in the future. The bill will require the Congressional Budget Office to use current year spending as a baseline for estimating future mandatory and discretionary changes to determine whether the future legislation would increase or decrease Federal spending. It will be measured against current year spending and not against previously anticipated and hypothetical future year spending.

The American people deserve an open and transparent budgeting process, and the Truth in Government Accounting Act provides just that. By requiring