



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 158

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MAY 8, 2012

No. 64

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 8, 2012.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DANIEL WEBSTER 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 17, 2012, 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.

LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL AND TRUCK EXCISE TAX

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, last week an outstanding group of young men and women from Portland, Oregon's Lincoln High School placed first in the "We the People Competition," a contest sponsored by the Classroom Law Project. It is an extraordinary program that allows young men and women to dive deeply into the constitutional process, the legislative

process, and understand what it all means for contemporary America in an all-too-often dysfunctional political arena.

Over the years, it's been my privilege to work with instructors and students on these programs, to have watched them prepare, particularly in Portland High Schools Lincoln and Grant that have vied for the State title for more than 2 dozen years, and of course the national contest as well.

This is testimony to a dedicated core of teachers and citizen volunteers, often prominent judges and lawyers, and alumni of the program who continue their involvement long after they cease to be students. A special shout-out this year to Lincoln instructor Tim Swinehart, local attorney Steve Griffith and his volunteer team, and the extraordinarily supportive principal, Peyton Chapman.

As I met with the Lincoln team earlier this spring in preparation for the national championships, it was clear to me that this was a stellar team even by the standards of this terrific program. That they won this year with a team largely composed of sophomores makes it all the more an extraordinary accomplishment. I would willingly grant them voting privileges here in Congress. They actually would fit right in and I think do an excellent job.

I urge my colleagues to become acquainted with their local high school constitution competition. I hope the day will come when Congress again gives the financial support to the Classroom Law Project for the civic education that today is so important and so critical to preparing students to participate as citizens. You, like me, will feel better about the future of the Republic because of the result.

One way Congress could honor the hard work of the young people who are the future of our country would be for us to get down to business in enacting legislation that improves the country

they will inherit. One piece of legislation all teed up and ready to go is H.R. 4321, the Heavy Truck Fairness Act of 2012, that I've been working on for a number of years. I have been pleased to introduce it in this Congress with my friend and colleague, JIM GERLACH, from Pennsylvania.

This legislation would be deficit neutral, according to the CBO. It would convert the current 12 percent excise tax on heavy trucks and trailers in a revenue-neutral way with an equivalent increase in the truck fuel tax. One of the immediate benefits would be to provide stability to a highly volatile revenue source for the highway trust fund. This large, upfront 12 percent tax on new trucks and equipment is highly sensitive to changes in technology requirements and the economy. Replacing it instead with a slight increase in the fuel tax for the industry would smooth out the revenues for the Federal Government, while it would remove a huge disincentive for upgrading equipment for America's trucking fleets.

It would represent a significant increase in business for the people who manufacture this equipment because it would remove a 12% financial disincentive. It would provide extra American manufacturing and sales, like at a local freightliner truck manufacturing facility in my district. It would allow people who operate a fleet of any size, whether a one-truck operation or a large national trucking company, to reduce their costs with newer, more fuel-efficient engines that would reduce day-to-day maintenance, and reduce fuel costs. They would break down less often, and they would also produce less air pollution and fewer carbon emissions. It's hard to think of something that would be a better expression of our responsibility to boost the American economy, save energy, reduce emissions, and benefit so many people—from those who manufacture,

□ 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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