



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 158

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JULY 18, 2012

No. 108

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 18, 2012.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JEAN SCHMIDT 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.

PUBLIC BROADCASTING

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. There is a sad, unnecessary battle shaping up again over the future of public broadcasting. It's not an exaggeration to say that this battle is about the very future, the very existence of public broadcasting. You might have thought that we were past this when, 15 months ago, the Republican House leadership targeted NPR and tried to defund the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Luckily, last year, the 170 million people who don't just listen or watch public broadcasting but depend upon it, unleashed an unprecedented show of support. As a result, the Republican leadership walked back. They cut, but did not kill, the Federal support for public broadcasting despite the rhetoric. And there was actually a constructive sign in last year's appropriations bill that requested a study to examine alternatives to funding public broadcasting with Federal funding so that people would have hard facts to operate on this year.

Ironically, that study—requested by our Republican colleagues—now being circulated, clearly shows that there is no viable alternative to Federal funding for public broadcasting. Many of the proposals that have been suggested would actually end up with less overall revenues in the long term.

The House appropriations bill being marked up this morning would slash funding now, defund NPR Federal support, and end public broadcasting as we know it, within 2 years. At the same time, we have a Republican Presidential nominee who singled out public broadcasting as one of the five programs that he would eliminate.

This is because Governor Romney and the Republicans listen to a tiny fraction of the American public that is even a minority in their own party. A recent poll showed that two-thirds of the Republicans surveyed would either keep Federal funding as it is, or increase it. What resonates with Republican primary voters is not what America wants, needs, or believes.

The unprecedented threat comes at exactly the time America needs public broadcasting most. NPR News, the object of greatest Republican scorn, is the most trusted brand in the American news media. Listeners learn something, unlike Fox News viewers, who, surveys show, actually know less about the facts than people who listen to no news at all.

NPR News has again the highest rating for the ninth year in a row. PBS shows like "Sesame Street" have helped three generations of parents raise their children with effective, commercial-free educational programming.

Locally owned news is becoming only a memory for most of America as larger corporations buy up radio and television stations and local newspapers. There's no money to be made by commercial stations that cater to the special needs of rural and small-town America. But public broadcasting is there because their mission is to serve, not make money. Often, these locally owned and managed public broadcasting stations are the only source that is direct news, education, and entertainment locally managed for local needs.

We must stop the attack on this critical service for rural and small-town America. It's time for the 170 million Americans who depend on public broadcasting every month to speak out again and for Congress to finally listen.

The radical proposal to slash public broadcasting, defund NPR, and terminate public broadcasting as we know it, is the most powerful symbol of how out of step the Republican leadership is from the country they are supposed to represent.

There's no reason to make public broadcasting a partisan issue. The American public has broad support for it, Republicans, Independents and Democrats alike, especially when PBS and its member stations were named number one in public trust and an "excellent" use of taxpayer dollars for the ninth consecutive year.

Since I've been in Congress, we've beaten back this destructive effort, but our challenge now has never been more urgent. It's time for people who believe in public broadcasting to stand up to what can only be termed extremism and settle this question once and for

□ 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.

H4911