



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 160

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2014

No. 90

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 11, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JASON T. SMITH 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 7, 2014, 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, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

NO SUBSIDIES WITHOUT VERIFICATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, more than 1 million Americans who signed up for health care on the Federal ObamaCare exchange may be receiving an incorrect taxpayer subsidy for their plan due to the fact that the Obama administration pushed this law through before the systems were in place to accurately confirm eligibility.

This isn't mere incompetence on the part of the White House; no, this is a

direct result of the administration's insistence on moving forward with their arbitrary October 1, 2013, open enrollment date, regardless of the consequences.

Consider the problem this presents as there is currently no realtime system in place to ensure only those who qualify for subsidies receive them. This means that hardworking American taxpayers may be left on the hook for potentially billions of dollars in fraudulent subsidy payments. Furthermore, it means that someone who simply fills out their ObamaCare enrollment application incorrectly could be hounded for years by the Internal Revenue Service for back taxes owed on improper payments.

This problem was entirely preventable. That is why, in the wake of the clandestine holiday rules change that delayed income verification provisions in ObamaCare last summer, I introduced legislation that would have prevented any ObamaCare subsidies from being doled out until a system was in place to make sure that only those who were determined eligible would receive them. The House acted on this legislation, passing it in a bipartisan vote last September to help protect the American taxpayers from rampant fraud and abuse.

Unfortunately, instead of giving my bill the consideration that it deserved, the Senate stripped the verification provision contained in the bill and replaced it with language requiring a mere report to Congress by Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius at the end of last year, certifying that there is a system in place to verify incomes before subsidies are paid out.

Predictably, this weakened income verification language has failed, and we have now learned from news reports that over 1 million Americans are potentially receiving an amount in error. That is why I have now introduced H.R.

4805, the No Subsidies Without Verification Act of 2014.

The tax credits and cost-sharing assistance for ObamaCare premiums administered by HHS is estimated to amount to a staggering \$10 billion per month, making this one of the largest entitlement programs in the Nation. My bill would simply require an income verification system to be put into place before any additional taxpayer subsidies are given out.

Mr. Speaker, ObamaCare has become such a boondoggle that the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office can't even score it anymore. My commonsense legislation would slow the bleeding this law is having on American taxpayers, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to move it forward.

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, some things do not change after a primary, even a primary result that no one, including the winning candidate, had predicted. The thing that does not change with the political winds in Washington is the calendar. There are only 10 legislative days before the July Fourth recess.

Another thing has not changed. The Republican Party and the Republican leadership have a difficult choice. They can choose to address the immigration issue head-on and get it resolved, and give the Republican nominee in 2016 a fighting chance in his or her run for the White House, or they can go back to the bunker, sharpen their anti-Obama knives, and never get to the White House in the next generation, possibly two.

As I have said on the floor before, if there is no serious immigration reform action headed toward a floor vote 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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H5251

the House by July Fourth, we will not see action at all, and it will be left up to the President to rescue the country from the worst aspects of our dysfunctional immigration system.

On the Democratic side, we all prefer a legislative solution where the House, like our counterparts in the Senate, pass bills signed by the President. But in the absence of anything resembling leadership from the legislature, the President will not just sit back and watch a bad situation get worse. He will act in accordance with existing law to protect all immigrants he can. I believe he can protect literally millions of them through executive action.

Immigration reform is not dead. It will just move to the White House for action if none comes from this House. So with 10 days left before July Fourth, where do we stand? The majority leader released his legislative schedule for the month of June, and reforming our immigration system is nowhere to be found. Immigration is the single most important issue to address for the Republican Party's ability to be competitive at the national level after this fall, and it is nowhere on the schedule before this fall.

So what lessons have we learned? Half-measures to legalize some immigrants here and allow legal immigration for some industries there doesn't seem to have much political traction with conservative voters in the South. Blocking sensible immigration reform and sending out mailers decrying "amnesty" at the last minute doesn't seem to have much traction with southern voters in conservative districts.

Articulating, however, a firm argument for why deporting 11 or 12 million people is not a realistic proposition, defending your position that legal immigration is preferable to illegal immigration, and making clear that the only way to actual border security is a combination of enforcement, legal immigration, and addressing the legal status for immigrants already living and working here seems to work pretty well with southern conservative voters.

That is what the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. GRAHAM, would tell us, or the gentlelady from North Carolina, or every poll that has been taken in recent memory. And we know that in every part of the country outside the most conservative districts, mainly in the South, supporting the end of illegal immigration and a broad and rigorous legalization combined with serious workplace and border enforcement is not only the policy that works, it is the only policy that is viable politically.

So every pundit on TV last night said it was time to man the barricades. They said immigration reform with a Republican stamp in a Republican Congress is dead because the American people want to be protected from the threatening world outside, and Republican Congressmen want to be protected from their threatening voters.

But it is still up to the Republican leadership how they plan to proceed.

Not a single Republican who opposes immigration reform needs to vote for it—not one. And we will still have a majority of the House voting to do what a majority of Americans want them to do; that is, address our broken immigration system.

Next week in Judiciary we will have a hearing on the crisis of unaccompanied minors fleeing Central America, and we will be pointing fingers at everyone but ourselves, and not, I would note, using the few remaining legislative days available to craft a sensible border and immigration strategy as our colleagues did in the Senate almost a full year ago.

Let us not accept the latest excuse for inaction on immigration, especially from those who want to take no action under any conditions. This Nation—built by and sustained by 400 years of immigration—needs a coherent system, and we need politicians brave enough to craft one.

CELEBRATING FLAG DAY AND THE ARMY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Flag Day, which will be celebrated on Saturday, June 14. This date is important to all Americans, as June 14, 1777, is the date the Continental Congress adopted a resolution officially designating a flag of the United States. That same date in 1775 is also recognized as the birthday of our Army.

On our flag, those 13 broad stripes and 50 bright stars are an important symbol of America that is recognized across the globe and, quite frankly, even on the Moon.

Our flag has many meanings. Our flag is raised by our athletes during the Olympics. Our flag is flown with pride and honor during ceremonies. Our flag is worn on the right arm of every soldier. And our flag is draped over the coffins of those who made the ultimate sacrifice for the country that it represents and that they served.

This Saturday, June 14, I encourage all to remember why we fly our flag and to also use the opportunity to remember the Army's birthday and the many soldiers who have defended the flag and what it has represented for the past 239 years.

GUN CONTROL

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was the 74th school shooting incident since the horrific day at Sandy Hook in December 2012 where 26 people, including 20 children, were slaughtered. Only this time, it was my district.

Reynolds High School, the second-largest in the State of Oregon, was the scene of the tragic murder of 14-year-old Emilio Hoffman, a junior high school varsity soccer player and volunteer soccer coach. He was gunned down; a teacher was wounded, and the shooter, apparently an ex-student, dead.

I was struck by, just a few days earlier, when *The Onion*, the satirical newspaper, had their response to this recent spate of shootings that has shaken us all.

The *Onion* headline read:

"No Way To Prevent This," Says Only Nation Where This Regularly Happens.

The article read:

In the days following a violent rampage in southern California in which a lone attacker killed seven individuals, including himself, and seriously injured over a dozen others, citizens living in the only country where this kind of mass killing routinely occurs reportedly concluded that there was no way to prevent the massacre from taking place. "This was a terrible tragedy, but sometimes these things just happen and there is nothing anyone can do to stop them," said North Carolina resident Samuel Wipper, echoing sentiments expressed by tens of millions of individuals who reside in a nation where over half the world's deadliest mass shootings have occurred in the past 50 years and whose citizens are 20 times more likely to die of gun violence than those of other developed countries. "It is a shame, but what can we do? There really isn't anything that was going to keep this guy from snapping and killing a lot of people if that is what he really wanted." At press time, residents of the only economically advanced nation in the world where roughly two mass shootings have occurred every month for the past 5 years were referring themselves and their situation as "hopeless."

Well, the fact is we can do something about gun violence. It is a public health crisis, and with any other disease or health product that produced such widespread death and destruction, we would mobilize. First, we need to take some simple, commonsense steps like universal background gun checks. We have them in my State of Oregon. Obviously, it doesn't keep every senseless act of gun violence from happening, but it is often proven effective to keep weapons out of the hands of the mentally unstable and criminal elements.

Universal background checks are supported by an overwhelming number of Americans—over 90 percent by some estimates—and a strong majority, over two-thirds, of gun owners want to make sure there are no loopholes in the background check laws.

Recent events have also demonstrated what you will find out by visiting any jail, emergency room, or simply walking the streets of our communities: too many Americans are facing a mental health crisis. I am looking forward to working with Representative TIM MURPHY on his H.R. 3717, Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act.

□ 1015

We have been discussing ways to advance some of the provisions in this