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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. LAMALFA).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 18, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DOUG LAMALFA 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.

ACCESS TO INPATIENT REHABILITATION THERAPY ACT

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, coordinated medical rehabilitation provided in an inpatient rehabilitation setting is crucial to Medicare beneficiaries with injuries, disease, disabilities, or chronic conditions.

Unfortunately, beginning in 2010, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services began placing limitations on

what types of therapy a beneficiary could receive, despite the professional judgment of a treating physician. This ties a physician's hands, and it limits recreational therapy from being prescribed, despite it being medically necessary in many cases.

These services are often prescribed to assist an individual in transitioning from the rehabilitation hospital to the home, helping patients recover their functions and decreasing the chances of costly readmissions. CMS, the Medicare agency, should not have put in place barriers for physicians and their patients when determining the best course of action for recovery.

This is why I introduced the bipartisan Access to Inpatient Rehabilitation Therapy Act of 2014 with my colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD).

I encourage my colleagues to lend their support to this commonsense bipartisan measure, H.R. 4755. It has zero cost, yet will empower doctors and patients to gain access to the most appropriate mix of therapeutic rehabilitation services.

AMERICA'S DECAYING INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, America faces many challenges at home and abroad. We are watching deterioration in the Middle East. We are watching the problems dealing with climate change and global warming. Many of the problems seem beyond our control.

They are hard and complex. Some are political fodder, where the two parties are in a pitched battle and one denies fundamental science. This is what concerns our constituents: Why can't we get along and get something done?

Well, there are many issues that are not so hard, not so complex, not so controversial. One of the areas that has historically been a subject of people coming together in this Chamber and getting something done deals with our infrastructure.

America, sadly, is falling apart. Our infrastructure used to be the finest in the world, from rail passenger transportation, highways, sewer, and water. Now, it is slowly, steadily failing and has been rated 14th in the latest global rankings from the experts that analyze infrastructure, and it is falling further.

Our investment, as a percentage of our gross domestic product, is less than 2 percent—1.7 percent, the lowest it has been in 20 years. It is costing American families now.

Mr. Speaker, AAA estimates that the average car owner loses almost \$1 a day from damage to their cars from inadequate roads. The American Society for Civil Engineers has projected that if we don't undertake the necessary repairs between now and 2020, that cost per family is going to be over a \$3,000-per-year impact on each and every American family.

At the same time, it is understood that investment in infrastructure pays huge returns. For a \$1.3 billion investment in road and sewer and transit, we create almost 30,000 jobs. The S&P latest report indicated that a \$1.3 billion investment will produce \$2 billion in economic benefit that spreads throughout the economy, and it will reduce the American budget deficit \$200 million.

This is also an area where actually the public is ahead of us. Politicians here on Capitol Hill have not addressed long-term road funding for 21 years. That was the last time the gas tax was increased; yet the American public understands and supports—according to a AAA poll from last week, two-thirds of Americans support user fees to support our infrastructure.

□ 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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Sixty-six percent say that a user fee is the right approach and should be utilized. Fifty-two percent say they would be willing to pay more.

It is time for Congress to stop this dancing around on the issue of adequately funding American infrastructure. We have a transportation bill that is expiring September 30.

We couldn't do a full-fledged reauthorization last time; we could only extend it for 27 months because Congress wouldn't face the funding challenge, and even that inadequate money is going to run out before September 30.

The Federal Department of Transportation is going to have to start withholding payments later this summer, which means State and local governments are having to begin to cut back now. So instead of an investment that would grow the economy and improve the quality of life in our communities, we are seeing further deterioration.

Luckily, there is starting to be some movement here. If Congress will move with a small amount of money to keep the system afloat through after the election, avoid the summer shutdown, hopefully, we can come together after all of the Tea Party primaries are over and the elections are done.

When we are dealing with important cleanup legislation in the lameduck session, this should be at the top of the list. America wants it. America needs it.

It will improve our economy. It will strengthen job opportunities for people from coast to coast, and it will make our communities more livable and our families safer, healthier, and more economically secure.

CRISIS IN IRAQ

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

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, Congresswoman ANNA ESHOO and I are sending the following letter, and we urge Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle to sign this letter to President Obama:

Dear Mr. President:

Many Americans have been deeply troubled by the unfolding crisis in Iraq. The rapid fall of multiple Iraqi cities to the terrorist Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ISIS, brings the militant group notably closer to its declared aim of establishing a caliphate that spans the northern sections of Syria and Iraq.

A June 12 BBC article described ISIS in the following way: "The group has a reputation for brutality. Parts of Syria and Iraq that have previously fallen under its rule have witnessed summary execution, beheadings, and even crucifixions."

It is against this backdrop, Mr. President, that we write to you bearing in mind recent reports from Archbishop Bashar M. Warda of the Chaldean Diocese of Erbil. While his particular diocese is relatively calm at the moment, the picture that he painted, consistent with news report, of the situation in Mosul and the implications for Iraq's ancient Christian community and other religious minorities was bleak and sobering.

For years, we have witnessed a precipitous decline of Iraq's Christian community. Thousands have fled in the face of targeted violence. Many of those that remained relocated to Mosul and the Nineveh Plain. To people of faith, Nineveh is a familiar name: the site of a dramatic spiritual revival as told in the Biblical book of Jonah. These areas were one of the last remaining havens for this beleaguered community. In fact, Archbishop Warda indicated that this past Sunday, for the first time in 1,600 years, there was no Mass said in Mosul.

For the thousands who have already fled Mosul, they are facing not just displacement and imminent danger, but a growing humanitarian nightmare marked by lack of access to clean water, food, fuel, and electricity.

As such, Mr. President, we urge you and your administration to urgently and actively engage with the Iraqi central government and the Kurdistan Regional Government, KRG, to prioritize additional security support for these particularly vulnerable populations and expanded humanitarian assistance and emergency aid delivery to those affected communities.

Absent immediate action, we will most certainly witness the annihilation of an ancient faith community from the lands they have inhabited for centuries.

Mr. Speaker, we urge Members to sign this letter by the end of the day. More Biblical activity took place in Iraq than any other country of the world, other than Israel.

Abraham is from Iraq, from Ur, which is Nasiriyah. Esther, for such a time like this, is from Iraq. Jonah is from Nineveh—many people believe may very well be buried in Iraq. Ezekiel is buried in Iraq. Daniel, one of the great men of the Bible, is buried in Iraq.

So we urge all Members, this is something we can unite on. This is not a Republican or Democratic issue. This is an issue of saving this ancient community and urging the administration to urge the Kurds to protect them as they flee from this area.

I urge all Members, please call my office, call ANNA ESHOO's office, to sign this letter by the end of the day, in order to save the Christian community and other religious minorities in the Middle East.

CLIMATE CHANGE

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan proposed rule.

In the face of a Congress that is in denial about climate change, the administration is doing what it can to address a very real and very serious problem that is already manifesting itself in changing weather patterns, more frequent and hazardous wildfires, and devastating droughts.

This rule is a crucial step toward slowing climate change, developing domestic and affordable clean energy technologies, protecting public health, and reducing our dependence on foreign oil.

Some House Republicans have called the proposed regulations reckless and, others, unconstitutional. Some have even suggested adding a rider to the appropriations bill to block the rule's implementation.

As a member of that committee, I can tell you that this would be a huge mistake that would threaten to undo the hard-won compromises in the bill.

It is shocking to me the lengths to which the majority is willing to go to deny the scientific fact that our planet is warming and that human activity is the main cause.

Here are the facts: First, power plants, today, account for approximately one-third of all greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, making them the single largest source of carbon pollution.

The EPA plan will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from existing power plants by an estimated 30 percent from 2005 levels. That is 730 million tons of carbon pollution that will not be emitted into the atmosphere, warming the climate and causing sea levels to rise.

Second, the proposal will reduce smog and particulate pollution, including nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxides, by more than 25 percent by the year 2030.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, asthma prevalence has increased from 7.3 percent in 2001 to 8.4 percent in 2010. The proposed regulations are estimated to prevent up to 150,000 asthma attacks in children and 6,600 premature deaths by 2030.

□ 1015

Third, the vast majority of the American public supports these new rules. In fact, nearly 70 percent of Americans support Federal regulations to limit greenhouse gasses from existing power plants

These new rules won't be easy to implement and we will experience some difficulties along the way, but since when does America let a challenge prevent us from rolling up our sleeves and getting to work? This is a global problem and America must not act alone.

Just as we lead the world in many aspects, climate change is a critical issue where we must lead by example. I call on my colleagues to do the right thing. Stop denying the science and get to work. We can and we must act together to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, clean up our air and waters, and once again lead the way into the future.

I look forward to the EPA finalizing the proposed rule, and I hope it marks just the beginning of our efforts to address climate change before it is too late.

THE PAIN CAPABLE UNBORN CHILD PROTECTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.