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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. CARTER of Georgia).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 30, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable EARL L. CARTER 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 6, 2015, 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.

IT IS TIME TO STOP STALLING ON THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, on May 31, a looming deadline, the highway trust fund extension expires. I actually could have dusted off the speech I gave last summer, arguing against this ill-advised measure to slide it into this spring.

As I pointed out then, we will be right back in the same spot. We will be stuck. We won't have a long-term pro-

posal. We won't have a short-term proposal. We will look at another extension.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to stop the stalling. Everyone ought to make a commitment that this will be the last extension that we take before we give America what it needs, a robust 6-year reauthorization of the critical highway trust fund.

Please focus on making sure this does not slide beyond the end of this Federal fiscal year because Congress doesn't act absent some sort of deadline, and do instead what we do best: stall, study, and sidestep.

If we would actually start working now, the 5 months until the expiration of this Federal fiscal year, we can actually give the people legislation they deserve. It is not that hard; except if you never start, if you don't know how big the program is going to be, if you don't get down to business, it is difficult.

Now, I hear that the simplest approach, the most direct approach—raising the gas tax for the first time in 22 years—is somehow too hard, too difficult for Congress. It has been pronounced dead on arrival. It is off the table, according to our distinguished majority leader and the chair of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Why exactly is it off the table? Why is this too hard for Congress? If it was good enough for Dwight Eisenhower to start the Interstate Highway System, if it was good enough for Ronald Reagan to call Congress to come back during his Thanksgiving Day speech, November 29, 1982, to more than double the gas tax, if it is good enough for 19 States—including, this year, five Republican States—to raise the gas tax, why is it too hard for us? Maybe it is because we have never given the people who care deeply about this a chance to make their case.

The Republicans have been in charge for 52 months. We have not had a single hearing on Ways and Means on trans-

portation finance. What if we allowed the Chamber of Commerce, the AFL-CIO, the American Trucking Association, contractors, local governments, engineers, environmentalists, mayors to come in and make the case why they support raising the gas tax?

Maybe if Congress did its job, if it listened to the people, if it allowed the broadest coalition you have seen on Capitol Hill on any major idea to come in, take a couple days, work with Congress, explain the issues, dive into the details, actually show politicians that even the public supports it, maybe we could do our job, maybe we could have a 6-year reauthorization, maybe we could put hundreds of thousands of people to work at family-wage jobs all across America, making our families safer, healthier, and more economically secure.

Deadline, September 30—get down to work; have some hearings; do our job; produce the bill, and America will be better off.

SALUTING LAW ENFORCEMENT

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

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a matter that is, frankly, getting out of hand. It is more than a matter; it is a problem. This is a problem that has expanded beyond the borders of individual American cities and into the international spotlight. It is a problem that is no longer a localized issue, but a national one that is spiraling out of control.

This week, we watched in horror as Baltimore burned. We watched in disgust as lowlifes destroyed their own communities as local government helplessly stood by. We watched in anger that some could even think to justify this sort of behavior. I applaud President Obama for calling those responsible for the destruction who they really are, criminals and thugs.

☐ 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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