



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 164

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2018

No. 6

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 10, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ADRIAN SMITH to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 8, 2018, 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. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

TAX BILL RAMIFICATIONS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, one of the phrases one often hears is, "I hate to say I told you so." And it is delivered with a feigned sincerity, but usually people actually like to say, "I told you so."

I must confess that I have some of those feelings myself, as repeatedly during the few hours the Ways and Means Committee met, rushing

through the massive tax cut, the largest transfer of wealth in our Nation's history, which will be paid for on the backs of our children and grandchildren with increased debt and benefiting people who in the main don't need it—I said at the time that each week after this bill passed, if it did, we would have a series of embarrassing stories about mistakes and oversight and special interest provisions that were stuck into it.

Well, actually, the fact is that that was somewhat understated because we are seeing, literally, every day people understand what was tucked in the bill: mistakes, oversight, and special interest provisions.

For example, there is a provision in the bill that was, we were told, designed to help small craft brewers. That is important to me and the people I represent, and there is broad support for minor provisions that would be able to help them by reducing their tax liability. But the provision that ended up in the final bill has massive opportunities to benefit large producers—a little bit for small craft brewers, but for large, international distillers, an opportunity to reconfigure how they do business to take advantage of multiple opportunities for that tax break.

There was an article yesterday talking about how the tax rate for American companies that manufacture overseas, the tax on that activity will be half as much as if they were manufacturing in the United States, providing an incentive to offshore jobs at a time when most of us would like to make sure that it is, here at home, at least, a level playing field, not to disadvantage people manufacturing here at home.

And, of course, there is another story in today's Wall Street Journal, "Tax Law's Effect Fuels Farm Outcry," because there was a provision inserted in the bill that would give farmers a more lucrative deduction when they sell ag-

ricultural products directly to farm cooperatives. There is a story about one gentleman in there who felt that this could put him out of business. It is going to sting large agribusinesses like Cargill and Archer Daniels Midland. The new provision could reshape parts of the agriculture economy and sharply reduce many farmers' taxes as well as scrambling these individual businesses.

John Power, a North Dakota accountant who was the accountant for the small grain operator who is going to be hammered, said: "It is kind of hard to imagine they intended to make farming tax free. Fixing it becomes difficult because they don't think it's something that can be fixed with regulation."

There are a variety of these provisions that are a result of not following what we call "regular order," without having hearings on the provision, of allowing lobbyists and staff to be able to draft the bill on the fly without having members of the committee—not just Democrats, but Republicans—fully know what was in it. That is legislative malpractice. It is one of the reasons why, despite giving over \$3 trillion of tax cuts, the bill remains unpopular.

Americans are nervous about increasing our national debt over \$2 trillion, and they know that the benefits for average citizens are going to go away in a few years and some are actually going to see tax increases, but the benefits for the top 1 percent and the largest corporations are permanent.

People know that it is not fair, that it is unnecessary, and that it is going to have more and more problems here, not just in States like mine where citizens are no longer going to be able to fully deduct their State and local taxes, property taxes, resulting in significant inequity, in scrambling property values, not just in Oregon, but it is across the country where people are going to be facing these problems.

□ 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.

H85