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House of Representatives

The House met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. PEASE].

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC.

April 14, 1997.

I hereby designate the Honorable EDWARD A. PEASE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

We recognize, O gracious God, that we represent our best selves when we see our lives with the perspective of thanksgiving and praise. On this day we voice our gratitude for the freedoms we have to express our faith in differing and divergent ways, each person with the opportunity to believe, each with the opportunity to witness, each with the possibility to worship and pray as You have given us the wisdom so to do. Just as we hold to our own heritage of faith and our own words of belief, so we have been blessed in this Nation by the liberty to believe as we believe, to worship as we worship, and to pray as we pray. For these gifts we offer this prayer of thanksgiving. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from California [Mr. ROGAN] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. ROGAN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed without amendment a bill and a concurrent resolution of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 785. An act to designate the J. Phil Campbell, Senior, Natural Resource Conservation Center.

H. Con. Res. 11. Concurrent resolution permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust.

The message also announced that the Senate had passed a joint resolution and a concurrent resolution of the following titles:

S.J. Res. 11. Joint resolution commemorating "Juneteenth Independence Day," June 19, 1865, the day on which slavery finally came to an end in the United States.

S. Con. Res. 20. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding the status of the investigation of the bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires in 1992.

EXTENDING ORDER OF THE HOUSE OF FEBRUARY 12, 1997, THROUGH APRIL 16, 1997

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the order of the House of February 12, 1997, be extended through April 16, 1997.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF EMERGENCY MEETING OF COMMITTEE ON RULES TODAY

(Mr. SOLOMON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, this evening at 5 p.m. the Rules Committee will be meeting on other matters, but I would announce that there will be an emergency rules meeting of the Rules Committee for the purposes of establishing a Suspension Calendar for Wednesday and Thursday and I would like to inform the body.

JUSTICE IN RESOLVING THE GINGRICH ETHICS VIOLATION

(Mr. ROGAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, as a former prosecutor and judge, I devoted my life to ensuring that great injustices did not occur; and my concern, Mr. Speaker, is that we are a body about to see a potential injustice done with respect to final resolution against the Speaker of the House in reimbursing the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct.

There has been a great deal of disinformation spread about his particular case. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there was no finding of any violation of tax law. The Committee on Standards of Official Conduct filed a 22-page report and found there was no evidence of any willful or criminal conduct on behalf of the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. GINGRICH]. There was no violation of law found by this bipartisan committee. And yet, despite that, Mr. Speaker, there is this great urge now to come up with a preordained result as to how the Speaker ought to pay that.

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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Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge Mr. GINGRICH to consider his options and give them equal consideration as he decides how to reimburse this House and not be cowed or intimidated by any lynch mob out to obtain a result disproportionate to the transgression that the House found.

AMERICA'S PATENT SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from California [Mr. ROHRABACHER] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was the birthday of Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, is a revered Founding Father of our Nation, the man who stood more than any of our other Founding Fathers for liberty and independence, the author of the Declaration of Independence.

Thomas Jefferson, I might add, did not stand just for liberty and freedom and democracy, he also stood for technology. Many times, people have forgotten this aspect of Thomas Jefferson, but Thomas Jefferson's commitment, his dedication to the concept of America being a new kind of society where people would be free to grow and to expand and to live decent lives and to have opportunity that was unknown throughout the world at the time of Thomas Jefferson, his dedication has been imprinted onto American law in ways that most Americans do not even remember or reflect upon as we enjoy this freedom and this great standard of living that we have as Americans.

Thomas Jefferson was a technologist as well as a democrat, small-D democrat. Thomas Jefferson, when he retired from his political life, went home to invent gadgets and devices and machines around Monticello, which can be seen even today as visitors visit Monticello. So today it is fitting that we begin this week, the Thomas Jefferson week in the House of Representatives, recognizing that on Thursday of this week, there will be a vote on the floor of the House of Representatives, this body, that will make the difference as to whether America remains the technological leader of the world or whether we will gut our patent system and open up this country to the greatest theft of its genius and creativity that the world has ever seen.

Yes, on Thursday, there will be a vote that will make the difference in the standard of living of future generations of Americans and not only our economic well-being but the security of our country as well. What is fascinating is that most Americans have no idea that this issue is coming to a vote. In fact, half or more of the Members of Congress do not know the issue will be coming to a vote. Yet it will come to a vote, the skids have been greased, the legislation is coming forward, and it will be voted on on Thursday whether

or not the Members are fully aware of how their constituents believe. But what they will be aware of is the lobbyists for multinational corporations who are knocking on their door telling them how important it is to pass said legislation on America's patent system.

How fitting for Jefferson's week that we will be at a turning point because, if we vote the wrong way, if we permit the gutting of our patent system, America's technological lead will evaporate in the next 20 years; and Americans 20 years hence, the children of today, will never know what happened to their standard of living.

I call it Pearl Harbor in slow motion. What will happen is that foreigners who have long looked at America's technological genius with envious eyes will at last have the legal opportunity to steal American technology and to use it against us because we are changing the patent system that has protected Americans for over 200 years in a way that guts the protection of the little guy, the little guys like Thomas Edison, like Alexander Graham Bell, like the Wright Brothers.

The word has not gotten out because there is a blackout in the mainstream media that this bill will be coming forward. In fact, there was one article in the New York Times, and that is all I have seen among the networks and among the major newspapers of this country, one small article and no articles leading up to this great momentous decision that will be made.

Someone does not want the public to know the decision that will be made here on Thursday. The American people would be left totally in the dark if it was not for talk show radio hosts like Michael Reagan and others who have been spreading the word and warning the people, like modern-day Paul Reveres, telling the American people to wake up or they will lose their freedom.

We will be making this decision on Thursday. If the American people remain in the dark, a decision will be made that will harm their children. As I say, their children will think, did we not used to have the technological lead? Were we not always the leaders? Did we not put a man on the moon? Were we not the ones, why was it that our fathers and grandfathers could outcompete all these countries with cheap labor and now we cannot do it anymore?

They will never know. It will never be traced back to a vote here on the floor of the House of Representatives on the week that we celebrate Thomas Jefferson's birthday in the year 1997. They will not even think about it because patent law and many of the laws that protect our rights and have been responsible for this great land of liberty and opportunity that we enjoy today, many of those laws are taken for granted. Freedom, people have said, is like the air; you take it for granted until it is denied. The moment you are

denied the right to breathe air, you will realize that breathing air is the most important thing in your life because everything else disappears without it. But yet we take it for granted because it is abundant and all around us.

So, too, with America's freedom, so, too, with the legal protections that have permitted the people of the United States by and large, millions of us, tens of millions, hundreds of millions of us to live lives of dignity and opportunity, lives that are the dream of people throughout the planet and over the ages.

Yet that will be threatened because the legal basis that protected America's rights is being eroded, the legal basis is being eroded. It is being eroded bit by bit by people who have good motives. They say that we live in a world that is far different than the world of Thomas Jefferson, far different than the world of Teddy Roosevelt, far different than the world of Dwight Eisenhower and Ronald Reagan.

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They say now we live in a world where we have to accommodate the changes by creating a global economy. These individuals, who are very well-intended, believe that by creating a global economy that we can perfect the planet, or at least near perfect the planet.

I say to my fellow Americans today and my colleagues in the House of Representatives, "Lord, protect us from those who would perfect mankind." Because, in the end, they always threaten the rights and freedoms of the American people.

I do not care if they were Communists, I do not care if they were Fascists, I do not care who they are or what they are, if they will superimpose an ideal world upon the American people with no reflection on our constitutional rights, we will see a diminishing of our rights and we will see a decline in our standard of living.

Mr. Speaker, the vote that is coming up on Thursday will be a vote on H.R. 400, which has already passed committee, both the subcommittee and the committee. Yet the American people have no idea that this great gutting of our patent system is on the way to the floor and what repercussions it will have on the standard of living of the American people, of their children and their children's children.

I have a piece of legislation that will be granted the right to be offered as a substitute to H.R. 400. I call H.R. 400 the Steal American Technology Act. My bill, H.R. 811, and its companion bill, 812, will be offered as a substitute to H.R. 400.

The issues are clear and simple. However, the American people have been denied the right to hear those issues. They have been denied the right to a public debate by a media elite that has put a blanket over this issue.

Perhaps the media believes that patriotism and loyalty to one's country