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House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ISRAEL).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 29, 2008.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVE ISRAEL to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, 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 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

HONORING THE LIFE OF GWEN BRITT

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, today, along with my colleagues from the Maryland delegation, I want to take this opportunity to honor the life and legacy of a beloved figure from our State who passed into God's hands on January 12, State Senator Gwen Britt.

Gwen lived a full, wonderful life. She was a wife, a mother, a grandmother, legislator, a civil rights leader and a friend. But she also was an inspiration, a woman of deep faith and conviction, with an unshakable commitment to

achieving justice, equality and fairness in our Nation.

The former Gwendolyn Greene grew up in northeast Washington at a time when our Nation was failing to live up to its promise of equal opportunity. She knew the racial divisions that existed in this segregated city, in our schools, in our stores, even in our parks.

And so in 1960, as an 18-year-old student activist of Howard University, Gwen and members of the District of Columbia's non-violent action group decided to take a stand. She walked into the Montgomery County park, then segregated, and tried to climb aboard a horse on a merry-go-round; something that all of us today would think is normal for any American, particularly any young American.

Yet as the Washington Post reported, the students' actions, as innocent and as unprovocative as they seem today, sparked 5 days of protests, and Gwen and other activists were arrested for trespassing, spat upon and harassed by counter-demonstrators.

This experience left Gwen undeterred. In fact, it fortified her already strong character, as well as her determination to do what she knew in her mind and in her heart was right.

Gwen took to heart Dr. King's words, "Make a career of humanity, and you will make a greater person of yourself, a greater Nation of your country and a finer world to live in." So said Martin Luther King, Jr.

Gwen Britt took that to heart. So she did make our Nation a finer place in which to live. That experience in Glen Echo Park was only the beginning of Gwen's civil rights work.

She left Howard University to join the Freedom Riders who challenged Jim Crow laws in the South and in our transportation system. And in 1961, she spent 40 days in a Mississippi jail for sitting in a whites-only train station.

JOHN LEWIS was one of Gwen Britt's friends. JOHN LEWIS, a hero, a Member

of this body. More people know about JOHN LEWIS because of his extraordinary leadership, but Gwen Britt was there by his side on Freedom Rides.

It is a testament to Gwen Britt's humility and quiet confidence that she never advertised her proud and very important civil rights work.

As Maryland State Delegate Victor Ramirez of Prince George's County recently said, "She talked about the civil rights movement if you brought it up, but she was one of those people who spoke softly but carried a big stick."

Since her passing, words of tribute have poured forth. Governor Martin O'Malley noted, "She was a leader long before her years in the Senate." How true that is. Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown called her a "principled, active and fair-minded voice for equality."

And Prince George's County executive Jack Johnson said she was "one of the most honest people you ever met." And on The Washington Post's Web site, people who knew Gwen posted words of sympathy and tribute.

For example, Katey Boerner, the executive director of the Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture, has said some, almost 50 years after the demonstration that occurred to open up Glen Echo's amusements to people of all colors, "We plan to include her story of bravery and shepherding change in our upcoming civil rights exhibition here at the park. We can now treasure her memory for the amazing story that was her life and the impact that she had on so many through her leadership."

Not surprisingly, Gwen Britt also made an important impact in the State Senate after she was elected in 2002. She rose to the position of deputy majority leader in 2007 and became an unwavering voice for those who have felt the cold chill of exclusion.

□ 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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Carl Snowden, the director of civil rights in the State Attorney General's Office in Maryland, said this, "She saw other groups that have historically been locked out of the system: women, Latinos, gays. And she felt all of those left out had to have a place at the table."

Gwen Britt was a woman of extraordinary character and courage, and all those she touched during her 66 years on this earth, her beloved family; her sons, who spoke so eloquently at her funeral; her husband, who himself was a Freedom Rider, who himself was a great warrior and advocate for justice in the civil rights movement.

The State of Maryland and our Nation have been enriched by her actions and her leadership, as a young person, as a State Senator, as a neighbor, as a friend.

Mr. Speaker, today I want to extend my condolences to Gwen's husband of 46 years, Travis; her two sons, Travis, Jr., and John; and all of her family and many friends.

We will miss her dearly, although we are comforted that her life and legacy will endure and that she now is at rest in God's hands.

Gwen will live as so many before, in the hearts and minds of those she impressed, of those she motivated, of those she enriched. We will miss Senator Gwen Britt, but our State, our community and our Nation have been made better by her life.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PATRICIA A. CORBETT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. SCHMIDT) is recognized during morning-hour debate for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, this morning when I woke up and read the clips from Cincinnati's *The Enquirer*, the headline said, "Cincinnati Philanthropist Dies." It should have read, "Cincinnati's Best Friend Dies." We have lost a great friend of the arts, Patricia Corbett.

When we say the name Patricia Corbett in Cincinnati, we don't have to explain who she is. Her name appears on buildings: the University of Cincinnati Performing Arts building, the Northern Kentucky Arts Performing Center, Music Hall, Riverbend. And in a few short months, the Cincinnati public schools new Performing Arts Center will again bear her name.

But it is not just the buildings that she so actively got involved in and helped build. It's also what she did for the arts itself.

The opera, the symphony, the Pops, the ballet, the May Festival all owe a deep gratitude to the financial support that this woman gave. Her generosity to the arts went beyond the boundaries of Cincinnati.

In my own local town that I grew up in, Loveland, Ohio, we received a Patricia Corbett award, and now we have a

stage company that has a small portion of the arts for our local residents to benefit from.

There are so many people in the newspaper today that talked about what a figure she was. But the one that brought to my mind the most was a woman by the name of Martha Winfrey of Westwood who worked as an usher at Music Hall, and she conveyed the kind of kindness that Patricia Corbett had that we don't know about. At Christmas, she would hand envelopes to the ushers and say, "Just be quiet with these." She had the most prestigious box at Music Hall, Box 5, and when it got crowded, she'd say to Martha, "I don't need to sit here. Let somebody else sit here instead of me," and she'd stand out in the hall and listen to the performance.

She didn't like people to know how old she was. I'm going to be kind and not tell you, since my own mother never wanted anyone to know how old she was. But we were blessed for many years to have Patricia Corbett be our gracious benefactor.

It is said over \$65 million from the Corbetts were given to enrich the lives of the citizens of greater Cincinnati. I was one of those citizens that benefited not from just her generosity, but her kindness. I had the pleasure to meet her on several occasions. Her warm smile, her gentle hand will be a lasting memory.

A few weeks ago, we lost Joni Herschede, another friend of the arts. And now we've lost the Grande Dame. I only hope that they are in heaven enjoying the harps of the angels and that they will continue to smile down on us in Cincinnati.

THE TIME FOR EARMARK REFORM HAS ARRIVED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized during morning-hour debate for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because the American people are tired of spending-as-usual here in Washington, DC, especially when it comes to earmarking. Now, earmarking, for the uninitiated, is a process in Congress which has expanded greatly over the last 15 years under Republican control of Congress and, as we saw last year, under Democrat control of Congress. It is where Members of Congress oftentimes, for perfectly meritorious and honorable reasons, request specific projects for their districts. But the American people know that something has gone wrong with the Federal budget process system, and the time for earmark reform has arrived.

This past weekend I'm pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that House Republicans gathered in West Virginia and came together around a bipartisan challenge. We called on Speaker PELOSI and House Democrats to join us in a timeout on earmarking in Washington, DC.

House Republicans united behind a challenge for an earmark moratorium and the establishment of a new select committee that would engage in the kind of thoughtful analysis and hearings where we could truly change the way we spend the people's money.

When you are flying an airplane and the gauges start to tell you something is wrong with the engines, the first thing you do, Mr. Speaker, is put the airplane on the ground. Then you get under the hood and you figure out what is wrong.

Well, I have to tell you that the explosion of earmarks under Republican control in the past years and the inclusion of hundreds of unexamined earmarks in last year's omnibus bill, dropped in at the last minute under the color of darkness, are evidence that the gauge lights are going off.

We need to call a timeout, have a moratorium on earmark spending here in the Congress while we can come together, men and women, Republicans and Democrats, and figure out how we restore public confidence in the way we spend the people's money.

By challenging Speaker PELOSI and the House majority to join us in ending earmarks as usual in Washington, DC, House Republicans have thrown down the gauntlet of reform.

And I believe that while I still think our side should embrace an immediate moratorium on earmarks and lead by example, I applaud my colleagues for finding that common ground among Republicans wherein we can challenge, in a spirit of bipartisanship, our colleagues to join us.

Now, I still maintain nothing short of a full moratorium followed by public hearings and reform will be sufficient to restore public confidence in congressional appropriations.

But as those debates have gone on, it is amazing to me, Mr. Speaker, to look at the morning headlines here in Washington, DC. It shows you the difference between the Muncie Star Press and newspapers out here. Earmarks are page 1, the focus on the "President's sudden severity is drawing bipartisan criticism." Roll Call says, "Earmarks Still Roil GOP," and the Politico, not to be outdone, repeats the exact same headline: "Earmark Debate Roils GOP Ranks."

It is only in Washington, DC, where one party engages in a vigorous debate about how we restore public confidence in the Federal budget process that the focus then is on the debate of the party that wants to bring about change because the sound of silence from the Democrat majority is deafening.

Now, while Republicans are having a vigorous debate, and I'm still one of the people that believes that our party should even go farther, that we should embrace a 1-year moratorium, I have advocated that among my colleagues and will continue to. But nevertheless, it is remarkable to me that the Washington press corps is more interested in discussions among Republicans who