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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. WEBSTER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 1, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DANIEL WEBSTER 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 5, 2011, 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 each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

GREAT THINGS HAPPENING IN CHATTANOOGA

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

Mr. FLEISCHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to take this moment to bring your attention to some exciting developments from my hometown of Chattanooga, Tennessee. For those of you who haven't heard, Chattanooga has undergone incredible transformation over the past several years; and, now, the story of our progress is making news across the globe.

A few decades ago, Chattanooga's economy was dwindling. Legacy companies were closing. Local manufacturers were folding in the face of global competition. We were even said to have the dirtiest air in America.

Today, Chattanooga is a place that has attracted more than \$4 billion in new investment during the recent recession. It is a place that has the fastest residential Internet service in the United States, and Chattanooga is a place that one national publication called the region with "the greatest economic growth potential" in America.

In August, the buzz about Chattanooga brought an economic and social development think tank to our city for a firsthand look. The group—called the Intelligent Community Forum—studies 21st-century growth within the global community. It looks at cities that are leveraging 21st-century infrastructure to create jobs and foster innovation. After spending a few days in Chattanooga, the Intelligent Community Forum confirmed something we have known for a long while: big things are happening in our community.

What the Intelligent Community Forum saw during its trip to Chattanooga, and has learned about us since, recently led them to name our community as one of the seven smartest cities in the world. We are now running for the number one spot.

The awards for top designation go to cities that are using information and communications technology to move every sector of their community ahead. These cities are leaders, and to be counted among them means you are growing in ways the rest of the world is not.

The Intelligent Community Forum is saying Chattanooga is a place to watch. What they see in our community is what I want to talk to you about today.

The same Chattanooga that once lagged behind the rest of the Nation is moving ahead. We're receiving praise from all sides for generating growth in an adverse economy and for maintaining an outstanding quality of life in the process. Chattanooga now offers the fastest residential Internet service in the United States and is one of only a handful of cities in the world that runs at 1,000 megabits per second. And the Electric Power Board, our city's local electric utility, has installed a fiber-optic network that uses smart meters to process real-time information and adjust transmissions according to the needs of individual homes. All 170,000 homes in EPB's service area benefit from this technology.

But Chattanooga's strides in broadband and digital inclusion are just part of the picture. Chattanooga was one of the first cities to come out of the recession, thanks in part to a strong business community. Coordinated efforts between nonprofit organizations are driving small-company formation. The Chattanooga-area chamber of commerce runs one of America's largest business incubators, with 60 companies employing more than 500 people under one roof.

These are just a few examples of the way Chattanooga is setting itself apart from the rest of the world. Every leap we make ahead underscores the forces that are fueling our progress: vision and collaboration. These are exactly the qualities the Intelligent Community Forum looks at in a number one city.

I would like to congratulate Chattanooga for the recognition it is earning, and I hope you will join me in supporting our quest to become the Most Intelligent Community for 2011. Great things are happening in Chattanooga right now; and, Mr. Speaker, a lot more are expected to come.

□ 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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HONORING PEACE CORPS ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps and the nearly quarter million people who have served in the Peace Corps in the name of peace.

Fifty years ago, John F. Kennedy signed the executive order creating the Peace Corps, and the significance of this executive order reverberated around the world. At that moment in our history, America was in the throes of a Cold War, and the international community viewed our great Nation with increasing cynicism.

Amidst this global tension, the Peace Corps showed the world the enduring values of peace, commitment to national service, and an optimism that had been eclipsed in the Cold War and World War II.

Under the masterful direction of Sargent Shriver, the Peace Corps' ranks swelled to 15,000 volunteers in 44 developing countries within the first 5 years of existence.

I was one of those early recruits. Right after college, I found myself in Peace Corps training and ended up in a poor barrio in Medellin, Colombia. I saw the grinding cycles of poverty that left so many men, women, and children without hope. I committed then to work to end the culture of poverty. It is in no small part because of that experience in the Peace Corps that I am standing here today in the well of the United States Congress.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. FARR. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DREIER. I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to join in congratulating my friend for his extraordinary service in the Peace Corps. He not only served at that time, but he continues to share that experience with us today; and as we focus on countries that are dealing with difficulty all around the world, the expansion of the Peace Corps is something that has been very important and recognizing the 50th anniversary is something that I am happy to join my colleague in doing.

Mr. FARR. Thank you, Mr. DREIER, and I appreciate your support as well.

Over the past 50 years, through war and conflict, the Peace Corps has shown the world the hopeful, uplifting side of America that reflects our fundamental ideas of peace, service and grass-roots development. That great legacy continues today. At this moment, 8,655 volunteers are serving in 76 developing countries around the world.

□ 1010

I am proud to say that 25 of those volunteers are from my district. Among them is Gabe LaHue, who was the valedictorian at Aptos High

School. He then went on to study plant sciences at Cornell. Just 4 months after graduating summa cum laude from college, Gabe entered into the Peace Corps in Paraguay to serve in an agricultural role there. Right now, Gabe is working shoulder to shoulder with community members in eastern Paraguay on rural agricultural development. Like many Peace Corps volunteers, Gabe's service ripples out far beyond one single project. He also helped to start a composting initiative, teaches English, and is working to set a library up and get it running.

There are others, like Ashley Burke from Marina, who is teaching English at an orphanage in Rwanda; and there is James Staples from Pacific, who is working on sustainable rural tourism in Guatemala.

Gabe, Ashley, and James are powerful ambassadors who have committed 2 years of their lives to serving America's best values abroad. The American taxpayers reap a huge return on their investment in this remarkable program. To date, more than 20 countries have requested Peace Corps volunteers, and other countries want an increase in the number of volunteers allocated to them.

The Peace Corps is able to build this goodwill on a shoestring budget. Dollar for dollar, Peace Corps volunteers are one of our most effective ambassadors of international development and diplomacy. In fact, the Peace Corps amounts to, roughly, 1 percent of our total Federal budget. For the cost of sending one soldier to Afghanistan, the Peace Corps can send 13 volunteers to developing countries to serve U.S. interests in the name of peace. In the midst of our tight budget climate, the Peace Corps is one of the most low-cost, high-return tools in our foreign policy toolbox.

In honor of the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps, I am proud to join my fellow returned Peace Corps volunteers, who are TOM PETRI, MIKE HONDA and JOHN GARAMENDI—all Members of Congress—to introduce a bipartisan bill to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia to recognize the founding of the Peace Corps, which will be at no expense to the U.S. taxpayer.

This bill, which passed the House by voice vote last Congress, commemorates the creation of a unique form of public service that promotes peace through people-to-people diplomacy and cross-cultural understanding, and it doesn't cost the taxpayers a single penny. I urge my congressional colleagues to honor America's commitment to peace by supporting the swift passage of this timely legislation.

So today, as we mark a significant milestone in America's history, I urge each of you to join me in honoring your constituents who have served in and who are supporting the Peace Corps funding so that we can usher in the next generation of Americans who want to serve this country in the name of peace.

SECURE ACT INTRODUCTION

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

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, currently, U.S. families spend about \$1 billion per day on imported oil. We import about 1.6 billion barrels from politically unstable nations with a corresponding instability in prices, which influences our dollars, our economy, and sometimes our soldiers having to look at defending these areas.

We are currently losing 220,000 barrels per day in domestic production because of the administration's moratorium on Gulf of Mexico oil rigs. This also means the government is losing almost \$1.4 billion in revenue that we so sorely need. Keep in mind that each one cent increase in the price of gasoline costs American families \$1 billion per year. That's money that is not going into our economy. Because 60 percent of our oil comes from foreign countries, it is money that is going into other economies.

Now, while this moratorium is taking place, at least 12 rigs have already departed from the gulf, some not to return, as they move these rigs to operate in other countries, which can cost \$1 million a day. Four more are considering leaving. That's 6,000 jobs in jeopardy. Currently, more than 30 drilling rigs in the Gulf of Mexico are idle; and even though the administration is now allowing just one of those rigs to move forward with exploration, all other exploration is still off limits with something of a permitorium, as they're looking at their permits all over again.

That is why yesterday I introduced the Safe Exploration Coming from Underwater Reserves of Energy Act, or the SECURE Act. This bill allows all of those Gulf of Mexico drilling permits to move safely forward, those which have already been approved by regulators. Keep in mind, all of these have been reviewed thoroughly. It takes a lot of time to do that, and they all follow strict regulations. There are no shortcuts on safety, and there is no bypassing environmental regulations. Quite frankly, I trust our environmental regulations to protect the environment more so than those of other countries.

What we have from the lost production of the domestic oil industry means we are increasingly dependent on those unstable foreign regimes to meet our needs, which puts our economy at risk should another spike in oil prices occur like the one we have now. Add to this and punctuate this with the recent unrest in Libya, Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, and whatever country may come next, which helps point out a lot of our vulnerability: the vulnerability of what happens if the Suez Canal is closed down even for a short period of time; the vulnerability that comes if Libyan oil production declines; the vulnerability that comes with Iran and its use of oil revenue to put pressure on other nations to support their efforts to develop