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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. YODER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

March 2, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable KEVIN YODER 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.

THE "MORAL THREAT" IN AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. In a speech this past weekend to our religious broadcasters, the Speaker of the House called the Federal debt "a moral threat" to our Nation. It's an interesting choice of words from the leader of the House majority, who has been a cheerleader for the Nation's most morally objectionable policy of all—the disastrous, despicable war in Afghanistan.

For some reason, their moral sensibilities are not offended by a military conflict that has cost us hundreds of billions of dollars and 1,500 of our bravest, bravest people without advancing national security objectives or truly diminishing the terrorist threat at the same time.

So how are my colleagues on the other side of the aisle resolving their moral dilemma? By asking corporate special interests to give up handouts and tax breaks? By asking the wealthiest Americans to give back more to the Nation that has given them so much opportunity?

Nope. By their moral calculations, the answer is to demand sacrifice from the very Americans who are bearing the brunt of this recession—from the people and communities who depend upon public investment. Their moral compass tells them to cut vital programs to the bone or eliminate them altogether: food safety, family planning, health research, public housing, transportation infrastructure, college aid, and on and on.

There was an article in my home newspaper over the weekend about how local health clinics could be devastated by these cuts. California alone stands to lose nearly \$13 million in homeland security grants needed to train and equip first responders. The Republican budget cuts also, according to one study, would destroy 700,000 jobs—but that's not keeping the Speaker up at night. He sees Americans out of work, and instead of saying this is a moral threat, he says, "So be it."

In what moral universe, I ask you, Mr. Speaker, does it make sense to destroy jobs at home but send more Americans to die in a senseless war abroad?

Programs like COPS and Head Start, which the majority wants slashed, save lives. The war in Afghanistan, which isn't even on the table in this budget debate, has ended nearly 1,500 Amer-

ican lives. Our surviving servicemen and -women are coming home with devastating physical and psychological wounds. Yet the majority party, so enthusiastic in its support for Afghanistan spending, wants to eliminate a homeless veterans initiative.

That's their version of morality: Send young Americans halfway around the world to be chewed up and traumatized. Then pull the plug on the support they need when they get home. That's what they call supporting the troops.

The majority could kill the proverbial two birds with one stone if they wanted. They could just about solve their debt crisis by bringing our troops home and ending the moral stain on our Nation—that is the Afghanistan war.

Somehow, I'm not holding my breath. Until the Speaker and my Republican colleagues are prepared to show moral courage on Afghanistan, I refuse to take their moral outrage about the deficit seriously.

DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, in October of 1890, four women, linked by their common lineage to heroes in the American Revolution, joined 18 others to organize the Daughters of the American Revolution. These founders began a campaign to serve the country through the preservation of American history. Since its founding, the Daughters of the American Revolution has expanded to nearly 3,000 chapters and over 850,000 members around the world.

In the middle of an era ripe with inequality for women, this organization flourished on a strong foundation of pride for the men and women who

□ 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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fought to gain American independence. Theirs is a rich history, filled with patriotism, self-sacrifice, and a dedication to education. For decades, the Daughters of the American Revolution has sponsored scholarships and supported schools for the underprivileged. Their support has aided construction and the preservation of dozens of now historic locations around the country. Their scholarships have provided thousands with the opportunity to attend institutes of higher education. Their outreach programs recognize and encourage service to their country and to their communities; and on March 15, the John Houston chapter of the National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution will observe its 100th anniversary in the city of Thomaston, Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor today to celebrate, with the Houston chapter, 100 years of service to the great State of Georgia.

For a group devoted to the promotion of American history, it is with great pleasure that I am able to honor the years of education, historic preservation, patriotism, and service that the Daughters of the American Revolution has selflessly given to this great country.

They trace their heritage back to the very men and women who fought for American independence from British tyranny. Each member must prove blood relation to a Revolution Patriot, and throughout the years, a vast collection of family histories has been compiled and preserved for our children and our grandchildren to appreciate. With the motto "God, home, and country," this nonprofit and nonpolitically aligned organization has positively impacted hundreds of thousands of lives.

I am very proud to represent several National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution chapters in the Third Congressional District of Georgia. I know Thomaston, Georgia, is especially grateful for the Houston chapter's presence in their community, and so am I.

HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS IN PUERTO RICO: FIRST AMENDMENT UNDER SIEGE

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

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, I spoke about a serious problem in Puerto Rico. The problem is the systematic effort by the ruling party to deny the right of the people to speak freely, to criticize their government openly, and to make their voices heard.

I talked about student protests that have been met with resistance by the Puerto Rico police. I talked about closed meetings of the legislature and about the efforts to silence and destroy the local bar association.

I was not the first to speak about it, and I could have said much more. This

report, entitled "Human Rights Crisis in Puerto Rico: First Amendment Under Siege" is searing.

□ 1010

It details the complaints of students, legislators, the press and the general public who were beaten, and pepper-sprayed by police; female students who were treated with gross disrespect; and the government's overreaction to demonstrations at the university and at the capitol over budget cuts and layoffs.

This next picture, this is the capitol in San Juan, Puerto Rico, surrounded by riot police as people attempted to gain entrance to the same assembly as this one here today, and this is how they were met by the police. This is how the police dealt with protesters.

The images of police tactics and behavior in these photos explain why our Department of Justice is investigating the Puerto Rican police for excessive force and unconstitutional searches as we speak today. How could you see these images and not speak out? I was hardly the first to speak out about these matters, and I probably won't be the last. Here it is, the Daily Sun in Puerto Rico, "Sticks versus speech."

As a Member of Congress, it is more than my right, it is my obligation to speak out when fundamental freedoms are attacked. And what was the response to my free speech defending the right of the Puerto Rican people to be heard? It was to challenge my right to be heard here in the halls of Congress. The Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico said in this very body that he is the only one authorized to speak about Puerto Rico at any time.

This week, the Puerto Rican Legislature debated a resolution of censure—yes, censure—condemning me for speaking out against these very abuses. A leading member of the ruling party even said, GUTIERREZ wasn't born in Puerto Rico, his kids weren't born in Puerto Rico. GUTIERREZ doesn't plan to die and be buried in Puerto Rico, so GUTIERREZ doesn't have the right to speak about Puerto Rico.

Well, let me tell you something, if you see injustice anywhere, it is not only your right but your duty to speak about it. We don't speak about injustice or apartheid or human rights abuses or the denial of rights of women in places around the world because we ourselves were born there. That would be silly. Where we see injustice we speak out because it is the right thing to do.

Ironically, by questioning my right to speak out on behalf of free speech, they have made my point crystal clear. By challenging my free speech, they have amplified the words of my 5-minute speech more than if I had spoken for 5 hours.

And it is their right, my critics have the right of free speech even as they deny the same right to others, but I want them to understand this: Your efforts to silence me—just as your efforts

to silence so many in Puerto Rico who disagree with your government—will fail, just as every effort to blockade progress only makes the march toward justice more powerful and swift.

I may not be Puerto Rican enough for some people, but I know this: Nowhere on Earth will you find a people harder to silence than Puerto Ricans. You won't locate my love for Puerto Rico on my birth certificate or on my driver's license or on my children's birth certificate or any other piece of paper. My love for Puerto Rico is right here in my heart, a heart that beats with our history and our language and our heroes, a place where, when I moved there as a teenager, people talked and argued and debated because we care deeply about our island and its future. That is still true today. That freedom is still beating in the hearts of university students, working men and women, labor leaders, lawyers and environmentalists, and every person who believes in free speech. You will not silence them, and you will not silence me.

Abraham Lincoln, a leader who valued freedom above all else, said, "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves." It's good advice, and I hope the leaders of Puerto Rico take it.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to enter the ACLU report titled "Human Rights Crisis in Puerto Rico: First Amendment Under Siege" into the RECORD, as well as a statement by the president of the Service Employees International Union and the essay, "Exposing the Shadows of Civil Rights in Puerto Rico" by the National Puerto Rican Coalition.

HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS IN PUERTO RICO; FIRST AMENDMENT UNDER SIEGE

(By the American Civil Liberties Union of Puerto Rico National Chapter)

While the world celebrates the democratic revolution in Egypt, major violations of basic human rights are occurring in our own backyard. Since Governor of Puerto Rico Luis Fortuño came into power two years ago, free speech has been under all out assault. The following events have taken place recently:

Thousands of public workers have been laid off and had their union contracts terminated, leading to tens of thousands of people peacefully protesting over the past year. One event turned out over 100,000 peaceful protestors and while in NYC hundreds marched on May Day, in Puerto Rico May Day turned out an estimated 30,000 citizens.

At a protest at the steps of the Capital Building over the closing of access to legislative sessions, access that is constitutionally mandated, protesters were beaten mercilessly, pepper sprayed and shot at by Puerto Rico Police. The same has occurred at other locations.

At most events young women are the first to be targeted for police violence. At the University of Puerto Rico, female students, many of whom were beaten, were also sexually harassed, groped and assaulted (touched) by police. Students have been mercilessly beaten, maced and shot at with rubber bullets. Citizens have accused, which images captured confirm, police of applying torture techniques on immobilized student protesters. In the past two years, there have