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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,

June 14, 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.

WORKING WITH AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Today we are starting the most important debate of 2012 in Congress, the reauthorization of the farm bill.

Now, it is true that we are just talking about the ag appropriations bill, and much of the reform agenda will be difficult or ruled out of order due to the restrictive approach of the rules, although in the past some of my Re-

publican leadership friends have had no compunction about legislating on appropriations bills. But here we will be protecting large agribusiness instead of American farmers, ranchers, consumers, and the environment.

This debate matters. Each point that is made on the floor or in the media, each vote that is accumulated against the status quo and towards change and fairness is another step towards reforming the one area that almost every independent analyst agrees is right for reform.

From the far right to the far left, people agree it is time. American agricultural policy is frozen in time through the past collection of farm bills. It misallocates scarce dollars, it spends too much on the richest farming interests who really don't need it, and doesn't provide enough support for the majority of farmers and ranchers who do. It does not place a priority on the nutrition of our children, and it unleashes an assault on the environment.

There must be a better way. There is a better way. Cutting back on unnecessary expenditures for the wealthy and the undeserving would make it possible to give a little more to the farmers and ranchers, the majority of whom don't get anything under the current farm bill.

Now, most farmers and ranchers don't just want money. They would much rather have assistance to make them more competitive. There is far more that can be done by providing for important research to strengthen the production of food. More can be done to market American agricultural products at home and abroad, to establish farmer's markets. More can be done to protect farmers and their crops from disease and pests. And we can do so in a way that is consistent with our environmental values and our budgetary constraints.

Farmers and ranchers as a group are some of the most outstanding stewards

of the land and the environment we have in America. But we are looking now at a farm bill that is going to dramatically cut back the money to help them with environmental compliance, even requiring breaking some existing contracts.

But complying with environmental regulations and changing policies is going to take some effort and in some cases is going to cost money. Why aren't we protecting the environmental programs and providing technical assistance to help these agricultural interests do what they want to do, which will not only improve water quality, wildlife habitat and air quality, but will put money in their pockets, supporting small and medium-sized operations?

Then there is the issue of nutrition. By skewing the production to artificially prop up and make profitable sugar, massive subsidies for corn, putting big money behind it, instead of improving the nutrition for our schools, for example, we are literally subsidizing a diet through our tax dollars that is making our kids sick. Instead, we should be helping them both be well-fed and healthy, not just well-fed with empty calories, but with fruits and vegetables that will strengthen their bodies and the prospect for long-term health. But the people who grow food, like fruits and vegetables, are discriminated against under existing American farm policies.

Help farmers and ranchers grow food, protect the environment, and strengthen the economy. It is a simple formula. It is hard to imagine a more pro-American agenda and one that Americans from all across the political spectrum agree with. It is time to listen to them, to work for them, and make it happen.

□ 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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CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION ENSURES A COMPETITIVE AND SUCCESSFUL WORKFORCE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I serve as cochairman of the Congressional Career and Technical Education Caucus with my friend and colleague JIM LANGEVIN of Rhode Island. The Career and Technical Education Caucus is a group of Members seeking to broaden awareness here on Capitol Hill of the importance of career and technical education.

I take the floor today to offer yet another example of the critical role that career and technical education plays in helping individuals remain competitive in a constantly changing workforce environment.

On June 7, 2011, history was made at the Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology. Two young ladies, Anna Krishak and Tricia Reich, graduated from their automotive technology program at the highest level possible offered by CPI. These non-traditional students in the automotive technology program earned their diploma along with State, national, and world certifications in their field of study.

The most amazing part about their accomplishments was their path to success. Anna had only one year in the automotive technology program. She quickly earned the respect of her instructor, met the qualifications of CPI's school-to-work cooperative education program, and became employed at a local car dealership just shortly after the school year began. Despite absences due to a medical condition, Tricia completed all of her assignments and exceeded almost all other classmates. Tricia became eligible for CPI's cooperative education program and also later was employed at a local car dealership.

In the process, both young ladies received college credit that can be transferred to many colleges and universities in the United States. In addition, both Anna and Tricia completed evening certification courses geared towards enhancing their education, which ensured a successful career path. Despite tough economic times, Tricia and Anna have found a way to make ends meet. They have broadened their horizons and found their own competitive advantage in the marketplace, despite an ever-changing economy.

This story serves as a reminder for my fellow Members, a reminder that career and technical education programs exist in every congressional district. This also reminds us of how career and technical education can be utilized to assure a competitive and successful workforce.

On behalf of the Career and Technical Education Caucus, I want to congratulate these outstanding young ladies for their achievements.

DRAWING DOWN AMERICAN TROOPS FROM AFGHANISTAN

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, it is now mid-June and we are just weeks away from the July date the President promised for a drawdown of American troops from Afghanistan. But so far, so far, there appears to be little movement towards the kind of redeployment that the moment actually calls for and that the American people are insisting on.

□ 1010

In fact, Mr. Speaker, Defense Secretary Gates, on his way out the door, endorsed a "modest" drawdown, even though the President has promised something significant. This is not a moment that calls for modesty. This is a moment for boldness and true leadership. This is a moment to break out of the war default posture—the posture that we've been in for going on 10 years now.

The longer this war goes on, the bloodier it becomes. We were told last year that fatalities would be unusually high in 2010 as the surge troops begin penetrating the Taliban strongholds. But it turns out there's no sign that casualties are tapering off, and we're on pace for an equally deadly 2011. We lost more troops in March, April, and May of this year than we did during the same months of 2010.

And let's not forget—because I don't think it's talked about nearly enough—that it's not just uniformed members of the U.S. military being put in harm's way by this conflict. The United Nations said over the weekend that there were more civilian casualties in May than in any single other month of this war. Needless to say, killing innocent people is certainly not the way to win the hearts and minds of another country.

The American people's patience is wearing thin, Mr. Speaker; and there are many Members of this body—a fair number in the Republican majority—who cannot support this Afghanistan policy either. I for one am tired of being told that the strategy is working and it just needs more time to succeed. How many military families will lose a father or a mother or a son or a daughter in the time it takes for this strategy to go nowhere? How many troops will be physically and psychologically damaged beyond repair?

Mr. Speaker, I think nearly a decade—longer than any war in American history—is more than enough time to admit that the strategy does not work. We don't need simply a token drawdown. We need a fundamental change in policy and a complete reorientation of our thinking about national security. We need to finally end this war and bring our troops home.

WATAUGA HIGH SCHOOL PROSTART PROGRAM IS EXAMPLE OF INNOVATION DONE RIGHT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Today, I want to highlight a remarkable group of North Carolina students from Watauga High School in my district. These students recently competed and won third place in the National ProStart Invitational in Overland Park, Kansas, after winning first place in the Carolinas' ProStart competition earlier this year. They are to be congratulated for this fantastic achievement, and I commend everyone from the parents and students to the teachers and mentors involved in this innovative educational program.

ProStart is a nationwide, 2-year program for high school students that seeks to develop the next generation of restaurant and foodservice industry leaders. Students participating in the program learn everything from culinary techniques to management skills via a hands-on curriculum and real-world educational opportunities. By building practical professional skills, these students are investing in their future careers even while enrolled in high school.

What's particularly impressive about this program is how it combines traditional high school programs with instruction from seasoned professionals in the foodservice and hospitality fields. This program is a wonderful model for how private sector companies can work with schools and students to offer tailor-made educational solutions that set students on the road to successful careers. In fact, in North Carolina alone, the ProStart program has educated more than 700 students in 15 schools, with another 13 North Carolina schools set to join in the next year. Again, congratulations to everyone involved in Watauga High School's ProStart program for excelling in this national program and making your community proud.

Mr. Speaker, one of the joys of serving in Congress is the opportunity to be at celebrations such as the one I attended last week during our district work period. The enthusiasm in the room at their celebration was infectious. A special congratulations goes to the four winning students: Emily Haas, Michael Haynes, Justin Byrum, and Eli Bradford. Of course, these accomplishments were facilitated by the support and hard work of Watauga High School ProStart teacher Lee Ann Williams and ProStart mentors Troy and Sandy Byrum of Troy's Restaurant in Boone, as well as David Gronewoller, a Golden Corral executive and owner, who sponsored the ProStart team. Paul M. Stone, Alyssa Barkley, and Susan Seay, who run the Statewide ProStart program, also deserve congratulations for supporting this successful program.