



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 157

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JULY 13, 2011

No. 104

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. ELLMERS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 13, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RENEE L. ELLMERS 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.

STOP PLAYING POLITICAL GAMES WITH SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, 3 months ago, 276 experts on Social Security, the Federal budget or the economy wrote to President Obama "to correct a commonly held misconception that Social Security somehow contributes to the Federal Government's deficit."

Despite the fact that Social Security has a \$2.6 trillion surplus and can pay 100 percent of its benefits through 2037

without any cuts or tax increases, President Obama declared yesterday that Social Security checks may not go out after August 2, presumably unless there is a deal on the Federal deficit, which has nothing to do with Social Security.

According to today's Washington Post, 15 years ago, Congress passed laws which stated Social Security did not count against the debt limit and gave Treasury clear authority to use Social Security trust funds to pay benefits and administration expenses in the event a debt ceiling is reached.

A fake Social Security crisis will do nothing to solve a real debt crisis, will undermine the public's faith in government, and will create unnecessary anxiety among our elderly. Stop playing political games with Social Security.

THE WILL TO GET AMERICAN JOBS MOVING AGAIN

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

Mr. DENHAM. Madam Speaker, with the June national unemployment rate at 9.2 percent and with consistent double-digit unemployment in my district, we must get Americans back to work. June marks 29 consecutive months in which we've had unemployment at or above 8 percent, averaging 9.5 percent during that time. Unemployment hasn't been above 8 percent for that length of time since the Great Depression.

We've got to start utilizing the policies that will get Americans back to work. We need to make sure that we are reducing the regulations and are having the economic policies that get Americans willing to take the risk: the risk to go out and borrow money to start a business, willing to take the risk to not only hire employees but to actually make sure that they're willing to have that long-term employment,

making sure that they've got the promise to those employees that they're going to be able to continue on those jobs. We've got to give Americans the opportunity to take that great risk in our economy.

We also need to unleash the strength of our Nation by utilizing our natural resources. The greatest opportunity we have as a Nation to get Americans back to work is by utilizing our own natural resources. In my area, where we've got double-digit unemployment, we've got a water shortage that causes our agriculture to leave land fallow, leaving thousands unemployed. By getting the water flowing again, we will not only get agriculture moving again but the local economies as well.

The mountain areas with timber, if we don't use the natural resources that we have in our forests, if we don't manage our timber harvesting plans, not only will we see the lack of employment opportunities, but we'll see devastation and we'll see fires, because the forests will manage themselves if we don't manage the forests for them.

We need to make sure that we're looking across the Nation at our oil reserves. Between our oil, our natural gas, our oil shale reserves, we have the largest resources in the world. We've just got to be willing to tap into them. We need to shorten the time on permits. We need to reduce the regulations so we can actually go in and get the oil so that we're not dependent on other nations.

These aren't Republican jobs. These aren't Democrat jobs. These are American jobs for which we've got to be willing to go out and stand strong on cutting the regulation, on getting the right economic policies, on getting the permits moving again so that we can actually utilize our natural gas, utilize our oil, utilize our oil shale so that we're not relying on other nations, utilize our timber harvesting plans so that we don't see the devastation when

□ 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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H4949

the fire hits us, and utilize our water so that we can actually get agriculture moving again.

Ladies and gentlemen, we've got a job to do here in Congress. We've got to get American jobs moving again. That's going to be by utilizing our natural resources and by getting Americans willing to take the risk on our economy: willing to invest, willing to borrow money to start a new business, and willing to go out there and promise new employees, not only that they'll have a job, but a long-term job.

We have the power to do that here in Congress.

We need to have the will.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DON RICARDO ALEGRIA

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

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a towering figure in Puerto Rican history and culture. Puerto Rico and the world lost a pioneering and leading scholar last week with the passing of Don Ricardo Alegria.

Don Ricardo Alegria devoted his long life to the affirmation of Puerto Rican national identity and culture. His study of the history and culture of the Taino Indians of Puerto Rico was groundbreaking work. By helping Puerto Ricans understand our Taino, African and other heritage, as well as many other important aspects of Puerto Rican history and culture, Don Ricardo helped us all to understand better who we are, where we come from and what being Puerto Rican truly means.

But Don Ricardo Alegria was not only a scholar whose work was essential to the Puerto Ricans' understanding of our history; he was a determined and proud man who refused to let our culture be forgotten or destroyed. He was a founder and the executive director of the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture and of many other important research, cultural and educational institutions. In this role, he was a warrior, defending our cultural heritage.

It is not an exaggeration to say that, without Don Ricardo's leadership and tenacity, the historic buildings and walls of Old San Juan, which are loved by Puerto Ricans and visited by tourists from around the world, may not be standing today. He led the fight to preserve Old San Juan and to make sure its historic significance was understood by all.

□ 1010

Ricardo Alegria was an example of what makes us all so proud to be Puerto Rican. He looked to a better future while treasuring our past. He embraced what makes Puerto Ricans unique, and he understood that we have our own identity; and we should never run away from it. We should celebrate it. And

without history and without question, he loved our people and our history. I offer Don Ricardo Alegria my humble thanks and gratitude for his commitment to Puerto Rico, his leadership for our people, and the way he elevated our history and our culture.

At this time of crisis for Puerto Rico, a time when many in power seem to have forgotten the traits that make us "us," make our island our island, and make our history our history, Don Ricardo was very supportive of my work in Congress. The inspiration of towering Puerto Rican figures like Don Ricardo motivate me to speak out on this floor and denounce attacks on the civil and human rights of Puerto Ricans. These attacks come from the same quarters Don Ricardo fought all his life. They come from those who seek to destroy the national culture and identity of the island of Puerto Rico. And they have not succeeded and will never succeed because there will always be Puerto Ricans like Don Ricardo standing defiantly, proudly, and courageously in their way.

This fact was driven home right here in Congress just yesterday, Madam Speaker, at a well-attended briefing conducted by the ACLU, the National Institute for Latino Policy, and the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund.

As part of their briefing, these organizations showed a video depicting the many scenes of violence by the police of Puerto Rico against unarmed and peaceful protestors. I have seen this video, and I am certain that many Members that see these images would be moved to indignation and action. That these scenes happen under the American flag and that these abuses are committed against American citizens is simply shameful. If any of my colleagues saw these images, I am sure they would feel the same indignation I felt when I saw them.

Madam Speaker, it is out of my deep concern for the people of Puerto Rico that I wish to inform my colleagues that I have sent a letter today to Attorney General Eric Holder. This letter requests the release of any and all documents and information regarding contacts by officials or representatives and lobbyists of the Government of Puerto Rico with the U.S. Department of Justice and their civil rights division into the very serious allegations of systematic police brutality in Puerto Rico, an investigation that is over 2 years old.

I have requested this information under the Freedom of Information Act because public reports allege that the Government of Puerto Rico is using its well-paid top Washington lobbyists and other resources to thwart the release of the Justice Department reports. The reports are based on lobbying disclosure forms that do not give much detail on exactly what the lobbyists are doing for the Government of Puerto Rico. Given the recent history of the ruling party of Puerto Rico trying to

act with impunity and in secrecy, these published reports have raised serious doubts in my mind.

So, Madam Speaker, I want to make it clear, while there may not be transparent and open government in Puerto Rico or a Freedom of Information Act there, as far as the Federal Government is concerned, the secrecy and the impunity of the regime in Puerto Rico ends here.

CONCEALED CARRY LAWS

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

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, last Friday something actually very great happened. Wisconsin became the 49th State in the Union to approve concealed carry. Well, that means that leaves my home State, Illinois, as the only State to oppose that constitutional right to concealed carry.

The action taken by Governor Scott Walker was a major step for Wisconsin, but the State of Illinois now remains the only State in the Nation to prohibit concealed carry and deny law-abiding citizens' rights to protect themselves or their family.

The Constitution of the United States and 44 States, common law, and laws of all 50 States recognize the right to use arms in self-defense. In 1895, the Supreme Court case, *Beard v. U.S.*, the Court approved the common law rule that a person "may repel force by force" in self-defense and concluded that, when attacked, a person is "entitled to stand his ground and meet any attack made upon him with a deadly weapon."

In 2008, the Supreme Court ruled in *District of Columbia v. Heller* that "the inherent right of self-defense has been central to the Second Amendment right," and that the amendment protects "the individual right to possess and carry weapons in case of confrontation."

Right-to-carry laws have proven to be effective. Since 1991 through 2009, 23 States have adopted the right to carry, and violent crime rates have declined 43 percent. This all comes on the heels of a five-fold increase in the number of shall-issue conceal carry States from 1986 to 2006. Along with this, since the 1980s when the conceal carry issue started, the number of conceal carry permit holders is estimated to have risen from 1 million to 6 million people. Of major note, murder has declined 49 percent. Also, the city with the highest gun homicide rate in the Nation, Washington, D.C., happens to also have the strictest gun control.

The lowest rate of gun homicide in the Nation is in Utah, which has some of the most liberal policies when it comes to conceal carry issues. According to the FBI, total violent crime and murder dropped more than 6 percent during the first half of 2011. Anti-gun advocates are in disbelief over this