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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. POE of Texas).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 17, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TED POE 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.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DR. ETHEL HARRIS HALL

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

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Ethel Harris Hall, who passed away last Saturday at the age of 83. Dr. Ethel Hall was one of Alabama's premier educators and one of our Nation's strongest advocates for children. She was the first African American to serve on the Alabama State Board of Education, and she was the first African American and the longest-serving vice chairman of the board of education.

She served as the State board of education's vice president for 10 years and presided over meetings in the absence of the Governor. Dr. Ethel Hall retired 10 months ago after serving on the Alabama State Board of Education for 24 years.

Dr. Ethel Hall was born to Harry and Fannie Mae Harris on February 23, 1928. The Harris family lived in Morgan County, Alabama, and due to the limited educational opportunities in their area, they sent their daughter to live with her grandparents in Jefferson County so she could attend school in north Birmingham.

She attended Parker High School in Birmingham until she moved back home with her parents to attend Council Training School, a laboratory high school of Alabama A&M. She graduated valedictorian of her high school class and then attended Alabama A&M University, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree cum laude in 1948.

Dr. Ethel Hall went on to obtain master's degrees from the University of Chicago and Atlanta University. She taught in the Hale County, Jefferson County, and Birmingham city school systems, and later became the first African American faculty member of the University of Montevallo. Dr. Ethel Hall continued to further her education by attending the University of Alabama where she earned a Doctorate of Social Work in 1979. She later taught in the School of Social Work at the University of Alabama.

After decades of teaching, Dr. Ethel Hall entered politics, and she was elected the first African American member of the Alabama State Board of Education on January 19, 1987. She went on to serve six terms before becoming vice chair in 1994. Dr. Ethel Hall served on the State board of education for 24 years and was named vice president emerita.

Dr. Hall served on the State board of education during many of its tumultuous

battles over issues such as funding levels in schools, teacher testing, accountability standards for schools, and academic standards for students. In making these tough decisions, she also remained principled, putting Alabama's children first.

Dr. Ethel Hall wrote about her long career in education in a recently published autobiography, "My Journey: A Memoir of the first African American to Preside Over the Alabama Board of Education."

I rise today to remember Dr. Ethel Hall on the floor of the United States Congress as a trailblazing Alabamian, a gifted teacher, and a strong advocate for the education of our Nation's children.

Dr. Hall was a mentor to so many educators throughout the State of Alabama and this Nation, including my own mother, Mrs. Nancy Gardner Sewell. Through her numerous mentoring relationships, Dr. Hall encouraged teachers to use their talents to positively affect the lives of the students they taught. Not only did she lead by example; she also trained and mentored the next generation of educational leaders.

Indeed, my generation owes pioneers like Dr. Hall a debt of gratitude. Dr. Ethel Hall sowed the seeds for the opportunities that now flourish for so many. I know that I stand on the shoulders of many great giants like Dr. Ethel Hall.

On election night, November 2, 2010, several trailblazing Alabama women made the trip to Selma, Alabama, to be there when I was elected. I will never forget that Dr. Ethel Hall was one of them. Her presence meant so much to me, more than she will ever know. It was her light that guided the path that led me to become Alabama's first African American Congresswoman.

Dr. Ethel Hall was the epitome of a servant leader. She led by example and was motivated by a driving passion

□ 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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that all children deserve a quality education.

Dr. Hall was preceded in death by her husband of 55 years, Mr. Alfred Hall. She is survived by two children, Donna and Alfred, and a host of family and friends who will miss her dearly.

Today, I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in celebrating the life and legacy of this extraordinary Alabamian. Let Dr. Hall's life stand as a testament to the courage and strength of one individual's ability to shape the lives of so many. We should be renewed by her love of learning and recommit ourselves to providing the resources that our Nation's greatest advocate—its children—need. I ask that we all pay tribute and homage to Dr. Ethel Hall.

HONORING FORMER CONGRESSMAN MEL HANCOCK

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

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, there once was a man named Mel, and when he stepped to this microphone, he'd give 'em Mel.

I rise today to recognize a former Member of this body and a friend and mentor, Congressman Mel Hancock. He would sign all of his letters or emails, whatever he'd sign, with the same thing: "Yours for better but less government." That's what Mel believed.

When Senator Jim Talent first came to this body, he asked Mel to help him vote. He said: Mel, can you show me how to use the voting machine here?

Mel said: Sure, Jim, come over here. You see, if you want to vote "no," you push the red button. And if you have a conflict, you can't vote on an issue, you push the yellow button for "P" for "present." And he turned and walked off.

Senator Talent said: Hey, Mel, what's the green button?

Mel turned around and said: I don't know, never used it.

Mel died peacefully in his home in his sleep on November 6 in Springfield, Missouri. Mel was a champion of limited government. Mel knew that our Founding Fathers understood the corrupting influence of power on the human character, which is why they championed personal freedom, the idea that a government by the people and for the people should preserve liberty for future generations. Like our Founders, Mel was a wise man, a good man, who worked tirelessly to defend people's liberty. Mel was a true Ozarkian.

He was born in Cape Fair, Missouri, in 1936. He graduated from college and enlisted in the Air Force in 1951 where he would serve in active duty until 1953. Following active duty, Mel stayed in the Air Force Reserves until 1965 where he attained the rank of first lieutenant.

After military service, Mel went into business, co-founding a security system

equipment leasing company. However, Mel's dedication to his country did not end with his military service. As a businessman and a voter, Mel was upset with the way things were being done in the State of Missouri and Washington, DC. In 1977, Mel founded the Taxpayer Survival Association—I can still see the bumper sticker today with a lifesaver on it, like you'd throw off of a boat or a ship—a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing a constitutional amendment to limit taxes. He was a one-man show. He would go around Missouri getting signatures. You might see him up in Kansas City standing in a parking lot in front of a mall in a rainstorm getting people to sign his tax-and-spending amendment petition to put on the ballot.

Through his hard work, the "Hancock amendment" was added to the Missouri Constitution in 1980. Mel used its passage to continue his advocacy for responsible government and for the rights of individuals to be free from overburdensome government.

Mel's convictions took him to Congress in 1988 where he represented southwest Missouri for 8 years. I always called Mel the reluctant Congressman. He didn't want to be a Congressman; he didn't want to come to Washington, DC, but he was just pulled in that direction by people who said: Mel, you've got to go. You've got to do it.

□ 1010

I am honored to now occupy that same Congressional seat, Missouri 7.

During his time in Congress, from 1988 to 1996, Mel worked at the House Ways and Means Committee to advance the cause of liberty. He also championed a balanced budget amendment, his signature issue, and I'm proud to say we're going to vote on a balanced budget amendment this week.

Mel retired from Congress in 1996. He didn't retire because he couldn't win another election, but because he had promised the people of southwest Missouri that he would not serve more than four terms in office. With Mel, a promise made was a promise kept, something that Washington would do well to learn today. And I am honored to now occupy that same congressional seat, Missouri 7.

Now, over 30 years since the passage of the Hancock amendment, our current budget problems reveal just how right Mel was. We would not have a \$15 trillion debt or massive runaway government spending if we had a Hancock amendment on a national level.

Mel was much beloved by his many neighbors, friends, and family in Missouri's Seventh District and was one of my mentors. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Sug, whom Mel always referred to as the Boss, his sons, Lee and Kim, and his daughter, Lu Ann, and their families.

Mel will be missed, but the legacy that he has created and the ideas that

he championed will continue. His legacy will forever be a part of Missouri through the Hancock amendment and his service to his constituents. Mel meant the world to me, and I will continue to champion the ideas that he dedicated his life fighting for.

CREATE JOBS AND REDUCE THE DEFICIT THROUGH LARGE-SCALE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, we are approaching the deadline for the supercommittee to propose a debt reduction plan. Most economists are in agreement on what we need to do: in the long term, reduce the debt by at least \$4 trillion over 10 years through a mix of added revenue and reduced spending. And in the short term, make immediate investments to create jobs and to reduce unemployment.

I encourage the supercommittee not to ignore the second of those priorities because now is the perfect time to create jobs by making large-scale investments in American infrastructure. Since World War II, every economic contraction was followed by a period of economic expansion; but although economists tell us the recession has ended, we have had no economic expansion. Unemployment remains at 9 percent, and economic growth is projected to be moderate at best. The reason our economy is taking so long to recover is because this recession was more severe than any since the Great Depression, something that seemingly few in government, finance, or academia realized at the time.

Because of the historic severity of this recession, American households, local and State governments—even European governments—find themselves in debt like never before. Consequently, consumer demand is and will be depressed while households and governments reduce spending. And when demand falls, businesses don't hire. It is that simple.

Some believe this period of decreased demand will last 5 to 7 years. A policy of fiscal austerity will make matters only worse. We only have to look back at the United States in 1937, Japan in the 1990s, and Europe last year and this year to understand that when consumers are not spending, the worst thing a government can do is stop spending itself.

The New America Foundation report makes the case that investing \$1.2 trillion over the next 5 years in rebuilding our infrastructure will create 22 million jobs—22 million jobs over a 5-year period. That is more than the 22 million jobs that were created under President Clinton. And the job creation of the 1990s raised so much revenue that our Federal budget reached record surplus. Times were so good that we were debating, at that time, the implications of repaying the entirety of the