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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. WEST).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 1, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ALLEN B. WEST 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.

BUDGET GRIDLOCK

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

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the budget gridlock that's ripping Washington apart. Like every American who cares about the future of our great country, I'm upset by the rampant partisan fighting. But I also know that the responsibility is not equally shared. For proof, look no further than the collapse of the deficit supercommittee.

Washington Republicans' refusal to ask the wealthiest people and the big-

gest corporations to contribute their fair share caused the supercommittee's failure and is putting our country at risk. Middle class families are struggling, but the world's biggest corporations make huge profits and exploit tax loopholes to send jobs overseas. And the rich keep getting richer but are contributing less.

This inequality is unacceptable, and it hurts America's economy. For instance, the after-tax income of the top 1 percent rose 281 percent from 1979 to 2007, but their total average Federal tax rate fell by nearly 8 points. Unfortunately, Washington Republicans have made clear that they will not fix the injustices in our Tax Code.

In fact, 238 Members of the House and 41 Senators, almost all of them Republicans, have signed the infamous Americans for Tax Reform pledge. This pledge commits its signers to oppose any plan, no matter how responsible, that would ask the wealthiest people to contribute their fair share. Whether motivated by extremist ideology or commitments to greedy special interests, the facts are clear: Republicans who signed this pledge cannot take the steps our country needs to get our budget in order.

Republicans came to power on a mission to rein in the budget deficit, a goal that we all support. But instead of supporting balanced policies, Washington Republicans forced the Congress to pass a dangerous budget agreement. And thanks to them, our hands are tied. If Washington Republicans keep refusing to compromise, massive cuts will kick in that will harm the middle class.

Washington Republicans won't negotiate and won't come up with a fair budget plan. Instead of helping the middle class, Republicans are standing up for the megarich.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the plan put forward by Republicans on the deficit

supercommittee shifts even more of the tax burden from the rich to the middle class. Their plan would change the tax tables in a way that benefits the wealthiest households more than the rest of us, which is what the chart next to me shows. As your income grows, so do your benefits. The wealthiest households will get more and more benefit, and their proposal dramatically weakens a variety of tax policies that help the middle class. I can't support a plan like that, and the American people can't either.

Democrats and Republicans should be working together on fair solutions, but the Republicans' unwillingness to compromise is making this goal impossible. We can find solutions that will reduce the debt and keep taxes low for small businesses and middle class families, but only if the Republicans stop protecting tax breaks for the superrich.

When I took my oath of office, I pledged to protect and defend the Constitution, and I am committed to helping the middle class getting our economy back on track.

Democrats have demonstrated a willingness to talk about difficult subjects like entitlement reform, but Republicans refuse to negotiate. So I ask my Republican colleagues, especially those who have signed the ATR pledge, a simple question: Where do your loyalties lie? With the superrich and the special interests or with the hard-working Americans?

LARRY MUNSON

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

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. He turned Georgia football games into larger-than-life experiences. He awakened excitement and pinpointed fear in the depths of Dawg fans' souls and shouted out those emotions on radios statewide. His voice will go down in history

□ 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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as the soundtrack of some of the most famous play calls, highlight reels, and moments for UGA that will simply never be forgotten.

Whether it was his describing the “sugar” falling out of the sky, or begging the Dawgs to hunker down one more last time, Larry Munson had an unmatched ability to find words for feelings that just could not be spoken. To call him an iconic play-by-play announcer for the University of Georgia football team would be a vast understatement. He was a classic city treasure, an Athens legend. And for 42 years, Larry Munson breathed life into the Sanford Stadium and made the Dawgs dance.

He was different from all other sportscasters. Larry Munson was very authentic. He always told it like it was, even when he had given up on a red and black win. He didn't care about political correctness, and he wasn't afraid to scream about stepping on Tennessee's face with a hobnailed boot or breaking his chair—his metal, steel chair with a five-inch cushion—when Georgia beat Florida in 1980 and then went on to win the national championship. He loved Georgia football, and Georgia football loved Larry Munson just right back.

His memory will live on forever in the body of the Bulldog Nation, in the hearts of all Dawg fans, and will live on between the hedges every game day.

On behalf of the United States Congress, here's to you, Larry, one of the best Dawgs that Georgia has ever known. And we'll never forget. We'll miss you greatly, Larry.

Go Dawgs.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, before we adjourn for the year, there are a number of important items that we must address. The most pressing is the expiration of unemployment benefits at the end of December.

Should Congress fail to act, millions of Americans who rely on emergency unemployment compensation will begin to see their payments disappear starting in January. 2.1 million of our fellow Americans will have lost their benefits by the middle of February, and over 6 million by the end of 2012. However, we have the power to prevent that from happening by extending those benefits.

These emergency benefits were put in place at the start of the recession in December of '07; and with so many Americans still out of work, now is certainly not the time to let them come to an end.

□ 1010

The number one challenge we must address in the Congress remains job

creation. Americans out of work have been doing their part to find jobs. Congress must do its part as well. Some Republicans have unfairly and incorrectly blamed those who have been laid off for their continued difficulty in finding jobs. However, there are over four people looking for every one job that is available. At the same time, there are nearly 7 million fewer jobs today than there were in 2007.

Instead of blaming the victims, we ought to work together, Democrats and Republicans, to find solutions. Congress has never allowed emergency unemployment benefits to lapse with our jobless rate anywhere close to where it is today. If it did, over 17,000 people in my State of Maryland would see their lifeline cut off by February. In Ohio, Speaker BOEHNER's State, 80,000 people are at risk.

Among African Americans, Latinos and other minorities, a disproportionate number have been affected by long-term unemployment and are especially vulnerable if these benefits were to end. Every State would see more Americans who are out of work slip into poverty. Local communities would be affected, too, with residual job losses. The Economic Policy Institute has estimated that allowing these benefits to expire would cost us another 500,000 jobs—a half a million.

I sincerely hope that Republicans will work with us to prevent so many Americans from being left out in the cold as they continue to seek jobs but can't find them. It's long past the time that they start working with us to pass a real jobs plan to get Americans back to work and grow our economy.

The President put a jobs bill on our desk in September. It is now December. We've yet to see that bill or any other jobs bill put on this House floor by the Republican leadership. Democrats have multiple jobs plans on the table—the President's American Jobs Act and the House Democrats' Make It in America plan. Both will help create jobs right away and invest in long-term economic competitiveness.

If Republicans continue to be unwilling to work with us on a plan to create jobs, I hope they will at least work with us to pass a measure that will prevent further losses as a result of expiring unemployment benefits. I strongly urge my Republican friends to help us stop the looming and entirely preventable disaster of millions having no support. It is the responsibility we have to our constituents and to those looking to us for leadership during this challenging time.

Let us not go home. Let us not celebrate Christmas or other holidays without ensuring the extension of unemployment benefits for those Americans who cannot find jobs, notwithstanding the fact they are looking for jobs. They're counting on us. Let's be sure that their reliance was well placed.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN: HIGH-LEVEL NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. It's always great to follow the highly respected minority whip, and he is highly respected.

I would say that there are a lot of pressing problems in this country. There is one I'll speak about today, and that's the high-level nuclear waste storage throughout this country. I would also say to my friend that part of the jobs bill has been passed. We passed the free trade agreement; we passed the veterans benefit portion; we passed the 3 percent withholding. So there has been movement in a bipartisan manner on some provisions in the bill.

So now, Mr. Speaker, let me segue to an issue for which I've come to the floor now six times, that of going throughout the country and highlighting where high-level nuclear waste is stored throughout this country.

Today, we'll travel to the State of Massachusetts, right on Cape Cod Bay where the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant sits. Again, it's right on Cape Cod Bay. At Pilgrim, there are over 2,918 spent-fuel assemblies on site. Yucca Mountain, which is the defined storage location, by law, in the 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act, currently has no nuclear waste on site. I like to keep highlighting the real distinct differences based upon the years of talking about this issue and highlighting some of the arguments against Yucca, comparing it to where we have nuclear waste today.

So let's, again, continue to look at the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant. The waste is stored aboveground in pools, very similar to Fukushima-Diachi in Japan. At Yucca the waste will be stored 1,000 feet underground—above the ground in pools, 1,000 feet underground. I think Yucca is a better location. At Pilgrim the waste is 20 feet from the water table. At Yucca it would be 1,000 feet above the water table. I think that's a better, safer and more secure location. You can see the Pilgrim plant is right on Cape Cod Bay, right next to the water. Yucca Mountain is situated 100 miles from, really, the nearest body of water, which would be the Colorado River.

Now, for those who have been following my time in coming to the floor, this is my sixth time. I started at Hanford, a DOE facility in Washington State, and compared it to Yucca Mountain. I then went to Zion. I've got my friend from Chicago right here. Zion is right on Lake Michigan, which is a decommissioned nuclear power plant that still has waste stored on site; but Wisconsin has two nuclear power plants right on Lake Michigan.

Then I went to Savannah, Georgia, to talk about the nuclear waste there. Of course, it has the Savannah River; so it's right next to the Savannah River. Then I went out to California to look at San Onofre, the nuclear power plant