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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 5, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MICHAEL K. SIMPSON 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 1:50 p.m.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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

Mr. DEFazio. Later today, something stunning is going to happen that will catch many Americans by surprise. The so-called Postmaster General is going to announce details that will lead to the end of the United States Postal Service and universal postal delivery in this country.

This is an incredible blow to our economy. You're talking about closing processing centers. Let me just be specific. In my area, they're talking about

closing the Eugene/Springfield processing center. It means if I mail a letter from Springfield to Eugene, 6, 7 miles away, it will be carried by truck to Portland, Oregon, and then sorted there and then trucked back down sometime that week.

They're saying they will no longer guarantee 1-day or 2-day delivery on first-class mail. They're going to move to a guarantee of sometime. If you mail it on Wednesday it will be a minimum of three days till—oops, wait—we don't have Saturday delivery anymore under this plan. So, actually, you mail a letter on Wednesday or a bill on Wednesday, it won't get there until the next Monday.

They will drive more people to use the services that have cut into their revenues. But some people don't have that option, and some things are essential to commerce in this country. There are many, many businesses that will be affected by these delays, and in addition to the delays of prescription drugs or Netflix, mailing DVDs, or, you know, people buying things on eBay, Amazon.com—these things will flood over to UPS and to FedEx and further undermine their revenues.

This guy, this so-called Postmaster General, should be fired because of a lack of any imagination or initiative in proposing the death knell for the great United States Postal Service. With 100,000 people laid off, oh, that's just what we need in America today. Let's lay off 100,000 people. Great idea.

And then he's going to close local post offices. Let's talk about little Tiller, Oregon, in my district, 16 miles on a winding road subject to heavy rain, subject to black ice and snow in the wintertime to the next town, a generally elderly population and generally not very affluent.

These sorts of closures, which will save minuscule amounts of money for the post office, are going to be death knell blows to small rural communities across America.

Now, weekly periodicals: Get today's news next week, sometime. Yep, that's right, 7 to 9 days for your weekly periodicals. That's going to do a great thing for the remaining periodical industry. That's really, really special and, again, driving people to look for alternatives that will further undermine their revenues.

I don't think there could be a more shortsighted proposal. Now, there's plenty of blame to go around because this Congress has failed to act. The Postal Service overpaid \$7 billion into a Federal retirement account, but the Republicans are refusing to give the money back to the post office.

They'd rather lay off 100,000 people. They think somehow the private sector will take this over. Tell me, who in the private sector is going to deliver a letter for 45 cents to a small rural community 40 miles from the nearest or 100 miles from the nearest sorting facility? That's not going to happen. These people will be deprived of any meaningful service.

There are other critical reforms that could be undertaken short of dismantling, killing the United States Postal Service. If these proposals go forward and if this Congress continues to fail to act, and this guy gets to continue to put in place his dyspeptic vision of a future for the Postal Service—and the White House continues to be totally silent, absent from this debate, as they are so many—we will no longer have a United States Postal Service in this country.

That would be an incredible blow to our economy, to our future, and to the prestige of the United States of America. I guess we'll become the first developed nation on Earth without a postal service, just like we're the only developed industrial nation on Earth without universal health care.

We're the best.

□ 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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RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day. At the beginning of a new day and another week, help us to discover the power of resting in You and receiving assurance and encouragement in Your amazing grace.

Send Your Spirit down upon the Members of the people's House who have been entrusted by their fellow Americans with the awesome privilege and responsibility of sustaining the great experiment of democratic self-government.

May they be reminded always of whom they are. May they be open to Your inspiration, that they might overcome the temptation to work through the issues of this day on their own strength and cleverness. Grant them wisdom, insight, and vision, that the work they do will be for the betterment of our Nation during a time of struggle for so many millions of Americans.

May they earn the trust and respect of those they represent, whether or not they had earned their vote, and make history that expands the great legacy of so many who have served in this Chamber before now, a legacy of noble service, sometimes political risk, but always great leadership.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

THE SENATE MUST TAKE ACTION

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last Friday the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics released its November jobs report citing the gruesome unemployment rate of 8.6 percent. This revelation marks the 34th straight month where the Nation's unemployment rate has remained at or above 8 percent. This is a tragedy for American families who do not have jobs or have given up looking for jobs.

House Republicans continue to remain focused on job creation, making the issue our number one priority. Since January, the House has submitted numerous bills, many with bipartisan support, to the Senate in hopes of passage, which will help put American families back to work. Just last week, the House passed three more commonsense bills, bringing the total number of job-creating bills awaiting action by the liberal Senate to 25.

I urge the Senate majority leader to bring any of the House jobs bills up for a vote and begin focusing on ways to promote job growth.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 3:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 3:30 p.m.

□ 1531

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON) at 3 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 1540. An act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2012 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 1540) "An Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2012 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe

military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. REED, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. NELSON (NE), Mr. WEBB, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. UDALL (CO), Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. MANCHIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BROWN (MA), Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. AYOTTE, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. VITTER, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

CALIFORNIA COASTAL NATIONAL MONUMENT CONSOLIDATION ACT

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 944) to eliminate an unused lighthouse reservation, provide management consistency by incorporating the rocks and small islands along the coast of Orange County, California, into the California Coastal National Monument managed by the Bureau of Land Management, and meet the original Congressional intent of preserving Orange County's rocks and small islands, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 944

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PRESERVATION OF ROCKS AND SMALL ISLANDS ALONG THE COAST OF ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.

(a) CALIFORNIA COASTAL NATIONAL MONUMENT.—The Act of February 18, 1931, entitled "An Act to reserve for public use rocks, pinnacles, reefs, and small islands along the sea-coast of Orange County, California" is amended by striking "temporarily reserved" and all that follows through "United States" and inserting "part of the California Coastal National Monument and shall be administered as such".

(b) REPEAL OF RESERVATION.—Section 31 of the Act of May 28, 1935, entitled "An Act to authorize the Secretary of Commerce to dispose of certain lighthouse reservations, and for other purposes" is hereby repealed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) and the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that