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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DOLD).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 16, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ROBERT J. DOLD to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day. We pause in Your presence and ask guidance for the men and women of the people's House.

Enable them, O God, to act on what they believe to be right and true and just, and to do so in ways that show respect for those with whom they disagree. In this, may they grow to be models and good examples in a time when so many in our world are unable to engage gracefully with those with whom they are at odds.

May the Members realize that Your congregation is wider and broader than ever we could measure or determine. Help them, and help us all, O Lord, to put away any judgments that belong to You and do what we can to live together in peace.

As we approach this next recess, bless our great Nation, and keep it faithful to its ideals, its hopes, and its promise of freedom in our world.

Bless us this day and every day, and may all that is done within the people's House 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

CHRISTMAS IN ATHENS, TEXAS

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in the piney woods of east Texas, the small town of Athens in Henderson County is getting ready for the holidays. A group of local volunteers with Keep Athens Beautiful has placed a nativity scene on the far corner of the courthouse square. It has been there for the last 10 years with no complaints from residents.

But a group of out-of-towners, not from Athens, not even from Texas, but from a thousand miles away in Wisconsin, have self-righteously objected to the nativity scene. The antireligious hate group demands baby Jesus be evicted from the courthouse lawn.

The county judge politely said no local citizen has complained about the scene, and he really doesn't care what somebody from Wisconsin thinks. He even invited other religious groups to use the courthouse square, but no one has asked to do so.

The county officials don't appear to be succumbing to the intimidation tactics of the bigoted group that wants to censor religion. County commissioner Joe Hall made it clear: "We will remove the nativity scene when hell freezes over. It's not going anywhere."

And that's just the way it is.

EXTEND UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION AND PAYROLL TAX CUT

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, Congress should not be waiting until the 11th hour to act on behalf of the American people. And yet here we are with the Federal emergency unemployment compensation program and the payroll tax cut scheduled to end in just a couple of weeks, which will cause tremendous harm to the American people.

This holiday, thousands of Rhode Islanders are wondering whether they will be able to afford to stay in their homes, afford to go grocery shopping, and whether they will be able to afford their heating and electricity bills. Americans are being left with real uncertainty because of the failure of this body to act responsibly.

It's a shame that extending emergency unemployment compensation and the payroll tax cut have become the latest victims of partisan politics. But it's not too late to act to provide families with a measure of assurance that they will be able to meet their basic necessities in the weeks to come.

I've heard from many of my constituents about the devastating impact that

□ 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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ending unemployment benefits or a tax increase will have. Let's get it done.

THANK YOU IRAQ VETERANS

(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, in 2003 the United States military and its allies began operations to remove Saddam Hussein from power, who was a ruthless dictator and a threat to stability in the Middle East, undermining world peace. Yesterday, the United States military successfully concluded its military involvement in Iraq. We have victory in Iraq for the people of Iraq to build upon.

As a proud father of two sons who served in Iraq, I want to offer a heartfelt thank-you to every American servicemember who served in the country and their families. I want to thank and assure the family members of the servicemembers who lost their lives—exemplified by Major Trane McCloud—and those who are wounded warriors, fighting for freedom, that their sacrifice and their military families will always be cherished.

Secretary Leon Panetta in Baghdad said: "Iraq has made remarkable progress over the last 9 years." Army General Lloyd J. Austin, III, Commander of U.S. Forces in Iraq, praised servicemembers and families for meeting our national objectives and giving Iraq hope for a prosperous future.

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

NATION BUILDING

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we marked the end of the war in Iraq. I join with all of my colleagues in expressing our gratitude to those Americans who served when their country called. We owe it to our returning veterans to do everything we can to make sure that the economy they are returning to is strong and prosperous.

The United States spent \$62 billion nation building in Iraq. The end of the war will generate enough savings to put a downpayment on nation building we need to do right here in America. An aggressive investment in infrastructure, rebuilding our roads, bridges, rails, and water systems can generate the economic activity we need to reduce unemployment. A \$1.2 trillion investment will create 27 million jobs over 5 years. This growth will both reduce the debt and deficit.

We have deferred infrastructure investments in America for too long. We get a D grade from the Society of Civil Engineers. The Chamber of Commerce predicts \$362 billion in lost growth over the next 5 years will occur unless we repair our infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, we need to do everything we can to ensure that our returning veterans have an opportunity to work and to rebuild this Nation right here at home.

CONGRATULATING BOY SCOUT TROOP 121

(Mr. McCLINTOCK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, Boy Scout Troop 121 of Granite Bay, California, will conduct its 200th Eagle Scout Court of Honor and induct its 212th and 213th Eagle Scouts.

During its 43 years of existence, Troop 121 has produced an entire generation of young men who have gone on to become upstanding family men, respected businessmen, and leaders of our community. And that's what I particularly want to salute today: the work of the Boy Scouts of America, as exemplified by Troop 121.

The hiking and camping and outdoor activities might make Boy Scouting appealing and enjoyable, but what makes it admirable and elevated is not that it produces good campers, but that it produces good citizens. It inculcates timeless values and virtues that forge solid citizens who contribute far beyond their numbers to the strength and stability of our society.

Troop 121 has done this for 43 years, and it is my pleasure and honor to commend them on their good work.

□ 0910

RECOGNIZING THE HARDWORKING STAFF OF GEORGIA'S 12TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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

Mr. BARROW. Mr. Speaker, we all know that many senior citizens in our country have trouble getting the Social Security and Medicare benefits they've paid for throughout their working life, and many veterans have trouble receiving the benefits they've earned through their service and sacrifice in protecting our country. However, because of the hard work of my district staff, folks in my district recovered over \$3.5 million in benefits that they were entitled to but were not getting from the Federal Government in just the last year alone.

This shines a light on a big problem with our Federal Government. Our constituents shouldn't have to appeal to their Congressman to get the benefits they're entitled to. We need to work together to make the Social Security Administration and the Department of Veterans Affairs work better so that none of our constituents will have to get their Congressman to help them get their benefits.

Until we get to that point, I'm proud that I have a talented and hardworking

staff who may report to me but who work for the people of Georgia's 12th District.

ENHANCED OIL RECOVERY

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

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to highlight a newer technology called enhanced oil recovery. When an oil well runs dry, half as much oil remains underground, unable to be extracted using traditional means. This is where enhanced oil recovery comes in. EOR, as it's called, pumps CO₂ into the ground, and oil which is trapped can be extracted safely and cost effectively.

Now, enhanced oil recovery is not hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. It is a process that displaces oil and allows it to be extracted. The Department of Energy states that enhanced oil recovery can yield as much as 80 billion barrels of oil, decreasing our needs to import by as much as one-third. And for those seeking to reduce atmospheric CO₂, enhanced oil recovery provides the sequestration of carbon capture and sequestration.

As importantly, enhanced oil recovery employs thousands of Americans while generating royalty payments to local, State, and Federal governments. Enhanced oil recovery creates jobs, increases energy security, and potentially benefits our environment, and is a technology to be supported as much as we can.

CHINESE CURRENCY MANIPULATION

(Mr. CRITZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CRITZ. Mr. Speaker, over the past several weeks, we have heard a lot of rhetoric about how this House has passed so many jobs bills that are sitting in the Senate waiting for action. But I want to talk about one bill that actually passed the Senate, and it is waiting in the House for action, and that is going after countries that manipulate their currency, of which China is the largest violator.

The bill has been sitting in committee since February with no Republican action. A discharge petition has sat at this desk for the last 5 months with no Republican action. It remains just 30 signatures shy of forcing action on Chinese currency manipulation, which estimates show could create 1.5 million jobs in this country.

So I want to urge the citizens of this country to call their Republican Congressmen to urge this Republican House that as they open their presents over this holiday season and they open those boxes and find those little tags that say "made in China," call your Republican Congressman, call this Republican House, and say thank you, thank you for putting party before