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No. 197

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 20, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVE WOMACK 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:

Dear God, we give You thanks for giving us another day. Bless the Members of the people's House as they depart the Nation's capital to return to their homes. May they find rest and renewal during their time with family and friends.

Bless our Nation as the year comes to a close. Help us to look to the future with hope and committed to a renewed effort to work together as citizens of a united America.

Help us all to be truly grateful for the blessings of this past year. May this holy season of hope for so many people prove to be a healing balm for our Nation.

Bless, also, as this session comes to a close, the absent Member of this assembly, GABBY GIFFORDS. Speed her recovery. May she be always reminded of our prayers and best wishes for her. Thank You for the remarkable progress she has already made.

And as always, we pray that all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(a) of House Resolution 493, the Journal of the last day's proceedings is approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. CARTER 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.

THE WORST CASUALTY OF WAR

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, just about sunrise in the desert of the sun and the valley of the gun, the last American troops left Iraq. It was this past Sunday, December 18, 2011. It has been 8 years, 7 months, and 24 days since the war began. The Americans are coming home by Christmas. Mission accomplished.

4,474 Americans gave their lives, and thousands of others were wounded. The last American casualty was Army Specialist David Emanuel Hickman from North Carolina, killed on November 14. These Americans died in a land they had never been for a people they had never known.

The Americans have liberated Iraq from a dictatorship. To apply Ben

Franklin's statement on the founding of America: We have given the Iraqis a free country; let's see if they can keep it or not.

The choice and responsibility for Iraq is now with Iraq, but we here in America shall remember those who served and returned, those who served and did not return, and those who served and returned with the wounds of war. As one wounded trooper said yesterday: "The worst casualty of war is to be forgotten."

And that's just the way it is.

CONGRATULATING SAINT XAVIER UNIVERSITY COUGARS ON WINNING THE NAIA NATIONAL FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

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

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Saint Xavier University Cougars on winning the NAIA National Football Championship on Saturday.

It was another thrilling game and a fitting way for Saint Xavier to bring home its first national championship in any sport to the school. From the freshmen to the seniors, from the top-ranked offense to the defense and the special teams, everyone played a part in the victory and the Cougars' amazing season.

This is the first time since 1913 that a college football team from Chicago has won a national championship, and the Cougars did it with a lot of home-grown talent. Chicago, Lemont, Joliet, Tinley Park, Oak Lawn, Palos Heights, Park Ridge, Rockford, Frankfort—these and many other towns are well represented on this historic team.

The players, Coach Mike Feminis and his staff, Saint Xavier, the city of Chicago, and the State of Illinois should all be proud. Congratulations to the

☐ 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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Cougars, the NAIA national football champions.

WE NEED 1-YEAR EXTENSION

(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, yesterday, Peter Isberg, president of the National Payroll Reporting Consortium, Inc., expressed concern over the Senate-proposed payroll tax plan which offers only a 2-month extension instead of the yearlong extension passed last week by the House. In a letter written to several Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, Isberg stated that, "insufficient lead time could create substantial problems, confusion, and costs affecting a significant percentage of U.S. employers and employees."

House Republicans are willing to work for a yearlong extension now instead of passing a 2-month fix that will confuse American taxpayers, medical providers, and small business owners. It is necessary for both Houses of Congress to work together to extend the payroll tax cut for a full year. At a time of continued record unemployment, we should be working to help small businesses create jobs.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism. We are grateful for our servicemembers, military families, and veterans who were successful in Iraq.

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

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

Mr. CLARKE of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, student loan debt is too high and I'm asking this Congress—I'm demanding that this Congress—cut it down.

Student loan debt will soon approach \$1 trillion; and as our graduates are struggling to pay off this debt, this debt is robbing them of their future, and it's costing this country jobs. That's why I will soon introduce this bill to responsibly reduce student loan debt, to make repayment simpler and fairer, and to give our graduates a chance that they deserve—a chance to enjoy the American Dream.

CONGRATULATING ROBERT GRIF-FIN III ON WINNING THE HEISMAN TROPHY

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

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, last week, I dropped a resolution commending Robert Griffin III for winning the 2011 Heisman Trophy.

Robert Griffin, a student of Baylor University, is one of the outstanding Americans in this country, an amazing young man who graduated from high school at Copperas Cove, Texas, in my district.

He graduated in 2008, went off to Baylor University to play football and to go to school. He graduated from Baylor University in 2010. I think that alone is pretty fantastic. He went on to be the quarterback of the Baylor football team, leading them to the best season that they've had in generations. They are ranked number 12 in the Bowl Championship Series.

This is a young man whose mother and father are sergeants in the Army. He was born overseas while they were serving. He now is the Heisman Trophy winner, has been named the outstanding player in the country, and he is not only outstanding as a student but he is outstanding as a player and as a human being.

He chose Baylor University because he wanted to go to a good Christian school. This young man won the Davey O'Brien Award. He is the kind of role model that we want our children to aspire to be. He is hardworking, with a good work ethic. He believes in his fellow players. He cares, he leads, and he wins. This young man should be commended. Within 2 years from now, he will have a master's degree and a law degree in addition to his bachelor's degree, and he still has one more year of eligibility. I would say this is the kind of kid we all wish our kid could grow up to be.

I want to commend his parents, the people of Copperas Cove, and the State of Texas for producing this fine young football player. We call him RG3.

□ 0910

TODAY IS AN OUTRAGE

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, it is outrageous that the House Republicans will not allow the Senate bill to come up today that would extend the payroll tax cut, that would provide unemployment benefits for so many million Americans that are out of work, and also allow seniors to have their Medicaid reimbursement paid to their doctors so the doctors will accept Medicare.

I cannot believe that, at the end of the year now, is this the Christmas present? Is this the New Year's gift that we're going to give to the American people, that their taxes are going to be raised, that they're not going to be able to have unemployment insurance if they're unemployed?

And what does this mean for the economy, Mr. Speaker? Do the House Republicans want to send a message to the President right now when the economy is actually starting to improve slightly? This could easily send us back

and make the economy go back into a tailspin. Do they dislike the President so much that they would risk the economy for that?

I cannot believe that we're not going to have an opportunity today to vote on the Senate bill and to make sure that these things are extended, particularly the payroll tax cut, because that is very important for the economy. It's very important for small businesses. It is an outrage, Mr. Speaker.

MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. It's amazing, Mr. Speaker. Those that now claim that we're opposed to increasing the sales tax holiday for 1 year actually voted against it just a few weeks ago, but we're here today to make sure that taxes on 160 million Americans don't go up on January 1. We're here to stop politics as usual in Washington. President Obama called for a 1-year extension of the payroll tax holiday, and we're here to do exactly that.

Job creators need economic certainty to create jobs, and to do that, we must extend the payroll tax holiday for 1 year. Kicking the can down the road only introduces more uncertainty into our economy. Payroll experts say that this is going to hurt small businesses.

Enough of these Washington gimmicks. The House already voted to extend the payroll tax holiday for a full year for all hardworking Americans, but the Senate Democrats opposed our bipartisan bill.

Senate Democrats have a clear choice to make: continue the game of Washington politics as usual or join with House Republicans to stop a tax increase on 160 million Americans. I urge them to make the right choice.

ANYTHING LESS THAN CERTAINTY IS UNACCEPTABLE

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning in support of a long-term extension for an important middle class tax cut for American families that are struggling in these difficult economic times to make ends meet.

We've been elected by the people to do their work and provide the conditions for the private sector to get this economy back on track and put Americans back to work. This work includes stable, predictable policy from Washington, and that includes tax policy. A 2-month extension does not provide any certainty to families or to small business job creators.

The House and President Obama agree that a 12-month extension of the payroll tax cut must be enacted. Therefore, I ask that Leader REID and the