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House of Representatives

The House met at 12 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DENHAM).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 5, 2012.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JEFF DENHAM 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 17, 2012, 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.

PRESIDENT PUTIN

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to extend congratulations to Vladimir Putin for his election to become President of Russia. We saw the reports yesterday. There were nearly 100,000 Web cams that followed the voting stations all across Russia, and even though there have been reports from the Organization For Security and Cooperation in Europe of voting violations, we are where we are. Vladimir Putin is going to be the next President of Russia.

I believe that, in light of that fact, it's important for President Putin to recognize that, contrary to what he said in his acceptance speech last night, we do not want to destroy Russia. I believe that it is very important that we take every step that we can to encourage a strong, vibrant, growing, independent, democratic Russia. I'm not going to, as President Putin said last night, dictate from the West what he should do, but I do think that those of us, like the United States of America, a country that has had a 223-year history of democracy, could provide a little bit of advice to a country that is just now beginning to enter its third decade of democracy and obviously has had more than a few challenges.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that if we look at some of the recommendations, the economists last week pointed to some very positive steps that could allow President Putin to, rather than repressing the opposition that he faces, embrace it. Now, what could he do?

First, he could announce that this 6-year term will be his last term, that he will not run again as President of Russia.

Second, it would be very important in light of all of the controversy that took place following last December's parliamentary elections for him to call new parliamentary elections so we could have a greater degree of transparency and accountability.

Third, as we look at the prospect of provincial elections, what are tantamount to governorships, having those elections being free and fair would be a very positive thing.

Additionally, I was very glad to hear the news this morning from current President Dmitry Medvedev about the prospect of releasing my friend who sat with me on numerous occasions here in the Capitol, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who was the head of Yukos Oil, one of the great energy companies in the world, and was a great philanthropist

in the country, and was guilty of one thing and one thing only, that being opposing Vladimir Putin. The prospect of his release would be a very welcome sign.

I also think, Mr. Speaker, that as we look at the prospect of the appointment of a new prime minister, there are names that have been thrown out there. Alexei Kudrin, who formerly served as finance minister, would be someone who would be very welcome in light of the fact that he has actually engaged the protesters.

So, Mr. Speaker, I throw these proposals out simply because I believe that we need to have a strong, vibrant, growing Russia. We need to recognize that those countries that are formerly part of the Soviet Union should also have an opportunity to be strong, vibrant, democratic, and independent without facing repression.

I do also believe, Mr. Speaker, that as we look at the debate that we're going to face here, that bringing Russia into a rules-based trading system by seeing them join the World Trade Organization would be a very positive thing as we pursue our shared goals.

So, again, as we look forward to the important relationship between Russia and the United States of America, I wish President-elect Putin hearty congratulations.

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 9 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

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

□ 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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PRAYER

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

Dear Lord, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

At the beginning of a new workweek, we use this moment to be reminded of Your presence and to tap the resources needed by the Members of this people's House to do their work as well as it can be done.

May they be led by Your Spirit in the decisions they make. May they possess Your power as they steady themselves amid the pressures of persistent problems. May their faith in You deliver them from tensions that tear the House apart and from worries that might wear them out.

All this day and through the week, may they do their best to find solutions to pressing issues facing our Nation. Please hasten the day when justice and love shall dwell in the hearts of all peoples and rule the affairs of the nations of Earth.

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.

EXCITEMENT ABOUT SMALL MODULAR REACTORS AT THE SAVANNAH RIVER SITE

(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 Department of Energy announced its decision to bring small modular nuclear reactor technology to the Savannah River Site in Aiken and Barnwell, South Carolina. SRS plays a vital role not only in the Aiken-Barnwell community, but also on a national level, as it enables the United States to honor its international nuclear nonproliferation commitments.

At a time when gas prices are at an all-time high and American families are increasingly facing tough choices, commonsense measures such as using existing government facilities and

technical expertise for developing SMRs are welcome.

I would like to congratulate Dwayne Wilson at the Savannah River Nuclear Solutions and Dr. Terry Michalske at the Savannah River National Laboratory. I'm also very proud of Dr. Dave Moody's efforts in creating such a fitting environment to host this technological advancement at no new cost to the taxpayer. Congratulations to Chief Engineer Gordon Simmons and Dr. Benjamin Cross for their article on Ameresco Biomass and small modular reactors in this month's *The Military Engineer* magazine.

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

ADVERTISERS PLAY A ROLE IN POLITICS

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, last night, I rested very well on my Sleep Number bed knowing that the company had pulled its ads from Rush Limbaugh's show.

In light of Limbaugh's recent misogynistic attack on Georgetown student Sandra Fluke's fight to obtain affordable, legal birth control for women, I have been drawn to the important part that advertisers play in politics.

The use of airwaves to spread hatred of women is wrong. Those advertisers who support broadcasters who do so are nothing less than accessories to the crime. Advertisers' money keeps these vitriolic and hateful shows and hosts on the air.

Talk radio has gone too far, and it's long past time that advertisers take the initiative and recognize that shows they support often spread lies and hateful speech. I commend those advertisers who pulled their ads from this show, and I await those who follow. Companies like Sleep Number will keep my business, and my next order of flowers will come from ProFlowers.

But this isn't just about Mr. Limbaugh's recent, as he called it, "insulting word choices" as his substandard apology stated; it's about every advertiser who chooses to endorse the spread of hateful words and misinformation on America's airwaves.

INTERCONNECTED: THE INDIVIDUAL MANDATE AND INSURANCE REFORMS

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, health care continues to be an important topic in this country. A lot of people ask me, What keeps you awake at night? I'll tell you.

Right now, the Supreme Court is going to hear this law. They could find

the individual mandate is unconstitutional, and I hope they do. But what if they leave the rest of the law intact? Then we will have a real problem, and this House needs to be prepared to deal with that problem and lead on this issue.

In recent filings by the administration, it's apparent that they even acknowledge the difficulties inherent in throwing out the individual mandate but keeping things like guarantee issue and community rating; and, in fact, they asked that these two codependent policies be severed under the law.

States' attempts in the past to constitute guarantee issue and community rating have resulted in insurance costs becoming inexorably higher, the number of people who purchase insurance irrevocably lower, and, as a consequence, the entire system is at risk of completely imploding.

Mr. Speaker, we need to be prepared for this. The Supreme Court is going to hear the case next month. They'll rule by the end of June, and this House needs to be ready to lead.

COMMENDING PRESIDENT OBAMA'S PROPOSALS REGARDING HIGHER EDUCATION

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

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, President Obama stated recently that "no issue will have a bigger impact on the future performance of our economy than education." I commend President Obama for backing up this statement with key proposals that will make higher education more affordable for college students throughout our great Nation.

President Obama's proposal would increase Federal investment in the Perkins loan program from \$1 billion to \$8 billion, while rewarding colleges and universities that lower tuition costs and provide value to especially low-income students. President Obama also wants to increase the Pell Grant program for millions of college students.

President Obama has also proposed a "Pay As You Earn" plan to allow students to put a cap on their monthly payments and allow debt forgiveness balances after 20 years of payments.

Like the GI education bill that helped provide college education for millions of our veterans after World War II, these programs are critical to giving our young generation of college students a greater chance to complete their college education. As a Vietnam veteran, even I would not have completed my education if it had not been for the GI Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I commend President Obama for his leadership and initiative to provide good quality education for all our young generation of Americans.