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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. AUSTRIA).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 13, 2012.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVE AUSTRIA 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 11:50 a.m.

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. First, I join the American people and the Members of Congress in extending my deepest sympathy to the families of the four Americans killed yesterday in Libya. It was such a tragedy.

Mr. Speaker, there's another tragedy. It's called Afghanistan. Like most of my colleagues, last month, I was home. I've been here in Washington 3 days. Back home, as well as the last 3 days

here, more and more people are coming in concerned about budget cuts, worried about sequestration. We all are hearing it. Yet there's no debate about Afghanistan. It just keeps going on and on and on.

I'm pleased to say that next Thursday, a group of Democrats and Republicans have joined me for a press conference. The author of this book, called "Funding the Enemy," subtitled, "How U.S. Taxpayers Bankroll the Taliban," Douglas Wissing, is coming to Washington next Thursday, and we will hold a news conference at 10 o'clock. The reason for this is to continue to remind Congress the American people have been speaking out about pulling our troops out of Afghanistan sooner rather than later. I hope that this news conference with Mr. Wissing will continue to beat the drum of bringing our troops home in 2013, not 2014. That's the President's plan. That's the plan that most Republicans in leadership have agreed to. But that's the end of 2014. How many more young men and women have to give their life, their legs, their arms for a failed policy?

In this book, "Funding the Enemy," and also at the news conference, we will have the former Inspector General of Afghanistan, who is a marine general. General Fields will join Douglas Wissing and a group of Republicans and Democrats to talk about the failed policy and how many times we send millions and millions and millions of dollars to Afghanistan and it never gets to the villages it's supposed to help; how many times we send millions and millions of dollars to Afghanistan and it's not accounted for. Somebody has taken the money. It's America's money. It's the money that we could be using here to save programs and to save jobs. But, again, Congress is not talking about Afghanistan.

I will continue to come to the floor, Mr. Speaker, and talk about the waste of life, the waste of money, and how

it's unfair to the American taxpayer. And more importantly, it's unfair to the military families. Many of the marines in my district—and I'm sure in the United States Army—have been to Afghanistan three and four times. Truthfully, nothing has changed. If I could have been an adviser to the President, I would have said: Mr. Obama, you got bin Laden. You have dispersed al Qaeda. Let's bring our troops home. That has not happened—and it will not happen until 2014. I think 2014 will slip into 2015.

So it's my hope that after this election that those of us who I hope will come back here and let's take a new approach and look at Afghanistan. Whether it's Mr. Obama or Mr. Romney, let's try to prevail upon them as a Congress to start bringing the troops out in the spring of 2014. It's not fair to the families. It's not fair to broken bodies of those who return with lost legs.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, as I do many, many times, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform, to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform, to please hold in His arms the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. I ask God to bless my colleagues in the House and the Senate. And I will ask God three times, Mr. Speaker, please God, please God, please God, continue to bless America.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS IN THIS CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I would like to join my colleague in asking for the blessings on this Nation and to remind America that we gathered on Tuesday, together, in commemoration and recognition of 9/11. But America also needs us to do better. And I speak

□ 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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in the backdrop of a horrific tragedy that we are all reminded of in the loss of Americans in what continues to be an attack on our values. That's why it's important for us to shed all that partisanship leads to and the lack of bringing forth bills that would help all of America.

So I am here this morning to remind us of work yet undone, that we just had 61 bills that have been signed into law this year, the fewest in more than 60 years. In all of 2011, only 90 bills were signed into law. And so we know in the last session, the 111th Congress, 258 bills were signed into law. We have got to do better. And the most difficult thing that I rise and speak about is the lack of presenting on the floor of the House the President's jobs bill, the American Jobs Act, that would invest in small business, that would create an opportunity for those who have lost their unemployment to be extended, to create summer jobs and part-time jobs, to be able to ensure that there is job training, and to make sure that we say to America: we are your partner in job creation. Why haven't we been able to overcome those who would stand in the way on the other side of the aisle for putting forth the American Jobs Act? It is to help the American people.

We have not been able to tackle, if you will, postal reform. Those are jobs. Those are people who work to make America's commerce travel from place to place. I have spoken to small businesses, and they say the U.S. Postal Service is their lifeline for their small business. They can actually make a profit by using the U.S. Postal Service. Senior citizens who receive their Social Security checks, sometimes in the mail, many times we know online, but are connected to the post office. They're connected to the letter carriers. They're connected to the local post office in their neighborhood. How do I know? Because of the outpouring of concern for the closing of a post office on Mesa Road in the 18th Congressional District, my congressional district.

□ 1010

So I am interested in this Congress not being known by the do-nothing Congress, do-nothing Republican Congress. I want us to work together and be able to say that these items need to be put forward for the American people. What do we have to say, now looking toward sequestration? We realize that you cannot cut discretionary funding. We realize that 50 million Americans are suffering from food insecurity, and we have a \$13 to \$16 billion cut in the supplemental nutritional program. That simply cannot be. That cannot be the record of this Congress. No jobs, no postal reform, cutting food that people need, and, of course, starving down at our men and women in the United States military where resources that they need may be cut.

So I am asking that we may be reminded that there are those who have

written, Norm Ornstein and Thomas Mann, that in studying Washington politics in Congress for more than 4 years, this is their quote, they have never seen such a dysfunctional place. We can do better. We must do better.

Democrats are ready to work to pass the American jobs bill, to pass postal reform, to pass bills dealing with helping to improve the lives of Americans, to ensuring that no American goes to bed hungry, and that we welcome our troops home and provide for their families. That's the Congress that we should be known for. That's what America is all about.

I ask that God blesses this Nation, but this Congress recognize that we have to be busy until He comes. Let's get busy for the American people. Democrats are busy and want to work to succeed to do what is right for America.

VOICE OF TEXAS, JEFFREY FROM LEAGUE CITY, TEXAS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Texans have been sharing with me their stories and lives about their businesses that they have built without the help of an out-of-control government. The responses were a testament to the tenacity of the American people.

Jeffrey, from League City, Texas, wrote me this:

I am the son of a single mother. I grew up watching my mom work two and sometimes three jobs to support us. She never took one penny of government assistance.

When I was 8 years old, I lied about my age and took three paper routes that had morning/evening and Sunday delivery.

At the age of 11, I took a job as a short-order cook at a 24-hour diner working from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m., went to school, played sports, went home, grabbed a quick dinner, slept for a few hours, and went back to work.

I did my homework while standing over a grill in the kitchen.

In the summer months, I would squeeze in a second job working in a service station.

I went into the Marine Corps upon high school graduation at the age of 17. I spent 6½ years in the military.

Upon being honorably discharged, I entered the Houston Police Academy. I have been an officer in Houston, Texas, for the past 27½ years. I worked 17 years undercover in the narcotics division, the rest has been in patrol.

My wife is an educator. We have two sons, a 19-year-old Lance Corporal in the Marine Corps on his way to Afghanistan and a 7-year-old. We live day to day, paycheck to paycheck, and are on the verge of losing everything if our taxes go up along with the cost of living.

Meanwhile, I see folks on government (giveaway programs) with Smart phones, flat screen TVs and newer cars than I can afford, cable TV, and Internet, and living in nicer apartments than I could afford while I was trying to save 17 years for my first house.

Sir, my family and I have built this life. Don't tell me that government built this life for me. That is a lie.

Mr. Speaker, Jeffrey is not alone. Contrary to the misinformed views of

some, the American people are the backbone of this Nation, not government. Government is not the solution. It's the problem. Government encourages some Americans to live off the hard work of others. Government promotes a social philosophy that it will give away more free stuff to some while it takes and punishes people who work.

People, not government, take business risks. People work and make sacrifices in an effort to pursue the American Dream, and people, not government, suffer the loss if the business is not a success. But Big Government wants to take credit for what American workers have done.

Government doesn't make America, Mr. Speaker. People make America.

And that's just the way it is.

TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the Speaker.

About 27 miles away from here, secret negotiations are ongoing. A number of us have asked to be allowed to observe the negotiations because it will have a dramatic impact on the future of the United States of America and our economy, but no Member of Congress has been allowed into these negotiations. This is over something called the Trans-Pacific Partnership. It's essentially NAFTA for the whole Pacific Rim.

Now, imagine how well that's going to work. NAFTA, of course, has cost the U.S. hundreds of thousands of jobs in many industries.

Now, this is a new agreement, a new forum, the President has put his stamp on it, it is called a living agreement, meaning it's being negotiated among a small number of relatively small countries, but the U.S. is running the show. But later on, other countries, like Japan and China, can plug in.

We know very little about what's being negotiated because, again, the documents are all kept secret from Members of Congress. They have been shared, however, with 600 corporations who, at the click of a mouse, can access them through a secure site online. But yet no Member of Congress is allowed to see these documents, no one representing the American people.

Now, the problem is that we have had some leaks, and the analysis is if Japan is allowed to join, and the U.S. is trying to get Japan to join, we'll lose 90,000 automotive jobs immediately. This is yet another example of failed trade policy of the United States of America.

It is also rumored—again remember, no elected representative of the American people is allowed to view these documents which 600 U.S. corporations are allowed to review and annotate and make suggestions on—that it would have intellectual property restrictions that would far exceed those that were