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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 9, 2012.

I hereby appoint the Honorable SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO 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 thank You once again that we, Your creatures, can come before You and ask guidance for the men and women of this assembly.

Send Your spirit of wisdom as they enter into a long weekend for constituent visits. May their ears and hearts be open to listen to the hopes and needs of those whom they represent.

Please keep all the Members of this Congress and all who work for the people's House in good health, that they might faithfully fulfill the great responsibility given them by the people of this great Nation.

Bless us this day and every day. May all that is done here 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 her approval thereof.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. LANKFORD 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.

CALLING ON CONFERENCE COMMITTEE TO ACT ON TAX RATE

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

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam Speaker, with less than 3 weeks to go before the payroll Social Security tax extension expires, it is time for the conference committee to make up their mind on the way forward and to bring their proposal to the full House and Senate. Long secret negotiations are unjustified.

The House passed a full-year extension of the payroll tax deduction, major reforms to the unemployment insurance, and a 2-year extension to the Medicare doc fix 8 weeks ago. Since that time, nothing has been done in the daylight to resolve this issue. Our delay will cause companies all over the country to work overtime this month to revise their payroll formula. We should help the people who create the jobs around the country, not give them even more consternation.

Chad Richison, the CEO of Paycom, wrote a terrific op-ed in The Hill this week. He doesn't care which tax rate we set, but he's truly frustrated when we delay our decisions and then dump all the last-minute work on them and thousands of other companies around the country.

If we expect American companies to pay their taxes on time, we should get the tax rate done on time.

STOCK ACT

(Ms. HOCHUL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. HOCHUL. Madam Speaker, just a minute ago we heard our chaplain beseech us to be open to the hearts and minds of the people we represent. That is exactly why, today, we need to pass the STOCK Act to stop insider trading on congressional knowledge. This has waited too long, Madam Speaker.

My colleague from upstate New York, LOUISE SLAUGHTER, has led the charge for this for 6 years. It is now time for us to take action—and not a watered-down version. We need to stop the insidious practice of insider trading, giving Members of this body an unfair advantage over Americans who sent us here to represent them. This practice must stop.

I'm calling on all of my colleagues and calling on the leadership to give us a bill we can support, put an end to this insidious practice, and let us begin the long process of restoring the faith of the American people in this institution.

CONGRATULATING GLENBROOK SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

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

□ 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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Mr. DOLD. Madam Speaker, this school year marks the 50th anniversary for Glenbrook South High School in Glenview, Illinois. I want to congratulate Glenbrook South on this impressive achievement.

Over the past five decades, over 27,000 students have graduated and are now proud alums. Glenbrook South has a rich tradition of preparing students to be future leaders, including two of my team members here in Washington, D.C.

Glenbrook South has received many accolades over the years, and that is due in large part to the dynamic teachers, the families who support the school, and the talented students who work hard to excel in academics, sports, music, debate, and more.

I have had the privilege of visiting with the students at Glenbrook South and talking with them about how their government works. I am deeply impressed with the students' insights and their desire to get involved and make the world a better place.

Congratulations to Glenbrook South High School on your achievement. I know there will be many more to come.

And that's just the way it is.

STOCK ACT

(Ms. CASTOR of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to urge our colleagues to support the STOCK Act when it comes up later today.

The STOCK Act is the Stop Trading on Congressional Knowledge Act. It essentially bans Members of Congress from using their position and information that is not available to the general public for their own personal gain, such as purchasing stocks based upon information we learn from a briefing here on Capitol Hill.

Public office is a public trust, and rules that apply to our neighbors and Americans all across the country should equally apply to Members of Congress.

I'd like to congratulate my colleagues, Congresswoman LOUISE SLAUGHTER from New York and Congressman TIM WALZ from Minnesota, who have worked on this legislation year in and year out.

Colleagues, we should all vote in favor of the STOCK Act.

BUDGET AND ACCOUNTING TRANSPARENCY ACT

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

Mr. CRAWFORD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the House for passing the Budget and Accounting Transparency Act earlier this week. This much-needed reform will increase transparency and accuracy in budgeting for Federal credit programs like

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. In addition, this reform will require fair value accounting for Federal programs that make direct loans or loan guarantees.

Earlier this year with the Solyndra debacle, we found out that when Washington makes a bet the American taxpayer is often left with the bill. The Federal Government should consider fair value and market risk before betting on companies like Solyndra.

Since the financial crisis began, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have become the financial responsibility of the Federal Government. However, the Office of Management and Budget has not accounted for the Fannie and Freddie burden. This bill will fix that mistake.

If we're going to get out of this financial mess, we have to be honest about how much we're really spending. This is a commonsense reform that will help lawmakers be better stewards of our hardworking constituents' tax dollars.

EXTEND PAYROLL TAX CUT

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

Mr. TONKO. Madam Speaker, I rise today because I believe this Congress needs to stop playing blame games and start working together to reignite the American Dream by helping our Nation's small businesses and entrepreneurs and empowering a thriving middle class.

Small businesses are the pulse of the American enterprise and the creators of jobs and economic growth up and down Main Streets across the United States of America. Entrepreneurs are the dreamers, movers, shakers, and builders that help take ideas and inventions and turn them into the manufacturing jobs of the future.

And a thriving middle class, well, that's the underpinning of support to make reigniting the American Dream even possible. A strong middle class leads to a strong America. The best functioning democracies around the world share one thing in common—a thriving middle class.

So, Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to enact policies and legislation that achieve these ends: to reignite the American Dream by building up our small businesses, encouraging our entrepreneurs, and empowering our middle class. We can start by extending the payroll tax cut for the remainder of the year without delay and without games.

I look forward to continuing to work toward these ends throughout the year.

□ 0910

AN ASSAULT ON THE FIRST AMENDMENT

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, those who say that conservative opposition

to the Obama administration's rules on forcing religious groups to provide birth control coverage in their insurance plans is an assault on women are wrong and shortsighted. That rule is an assault on all Americans and on the First Amendment of the Constitution.

It reminds me of a famous quote attributed to Pastor Martin Niemöller:

First they came for the Communists, and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a Communist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a Jew.

Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak out because I was a Protestant.

Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak out for me.

Madam Speaker, we have to speak out on this issue. It is an assault on the First Amendment. It's an assault on the rights of all Americans.

IT'S TIME TO GET TO WORK

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, Members, when the U.S. economy is showing signs of progress, our House majority's threatening to take 2 percent of the gross national product out of our economy, killing the gains we've made, and doing it on the backs of the people who need help the most, the middle class and the unemployed.

Even though we were able to extend the payroll tax cut, unemployment insurance, and also the Medicare physician payments for just 2 months, millions of Americans dodged an average of \$1,500 from a GOP tax hike. Now it's time to get to work and pass a year-long extension of these three important programs.

We cannot afford to take more risks with the incomes of 160 million Americans the way the House majority did at the end of 2011.

SUPPORT THE STOCK ACT

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the STOCK Act, Stop Trading on Congressional Knowledge Act, which strengthens current House rules banning Members of Congress from profiting financially from their position. It is absolutely unacceptable for those in any branch of government—the legislative, the judiciary, or the executive branch—to profit from nonpublic information.

Insider trading is not only unethical; it is illegal no matter who you are. But if it takes a stronger, tougher bill to set the record straight, then so be it. The American people elected us in good faith to lead, and we must do everything in our power to protect that trust.