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No. 165

House of Representatives

The House met at noon 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 20, 2012.

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: Loving and gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day. We ask today that You bless the Members of the people's House to be the best and most faithful servants of the people they serve.

On this day, Congress honors the life of Senator Daniel Inouye, who lies in state in the rotunda. He was the first to serve his State in this assembly. He served his country for decades as a true patriot, soldier, legislator, statesman, and gentleman—always thousands of miles from his own home.

Endow the Members of this assembly with a measure of the courage, integrity, and loyalty of such an exemplar of public service.

And may all that is done this day in 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 gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. JENKINS 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.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 20, 2012.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 20, 2012 at 10:02 a.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3477.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3870.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3912.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 5738.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 5837.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 5954.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4057.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 6029.

That the Senate passed S. 3630.

That the Senate passed S. 3662.

That the Senate passed S. 2318.

That the Senate passed S. 3202.
That the Senate passed S. 3698.
Appointments:
United States-China Economic Security Review Commission.
With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

ESTATE TAX

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

Ms. JENKINS. Growing up on a Kansas dairy farm, I know the estate tax is a threat to family farms. This tax makes bailing hay and shoveling manure sound like a get-rich-quick scheme, when most family farms make an average of \$45,000 a year. Raising the estate tax to 55 percent and dropping the exemption to \$1 million might be feasible for a hedge fund manager, but it will jeopardize the future of farmers and their families, forcing many to sell their farms they worked to build for generations.

Many farmers are "land rich" but "cash poor." The average land value for 65,000 Kansas farms is \$900,000. Throw in a \$300,000 combine, a \$250,000 tractor, and Kansas farmers are suddenly millionaires according to estate tax math. But this isn't wealth they can use to pay taxes. It's in assets.

Farmers provide us with a safe and dependable food supply. We cannot allow the estate tax to put them out of business.

□ 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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NO JUSTIFICATION TO CUT SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Will seniors be pushed off the fiscal cliff?

Social Security did not cause the deficit, but the White House's plan to lower Social Security cost-of-living benefits could eventually reduce seniors' annual benefits by hundreds of dollars. The gimmick is called the chained Consumer Price Index. The chained CPI works this way:

As the cost of living goes up, seniors inevitably turn to cheaper alternatives. For example, if seniors eat steak, but then can't afford its higher price, they can switch to something cheaper—like cat food. The cost of living calculation would chain to the cheaper item—cat food. So the less you pay for food, the less benefits you get.

The chained CPI benefit cut will chain aging seniors to a poverty of choices, a lower standard of living with cheaper products. The chained CPI formula doesn't take into account seniors' rising health care costs. If it did, benefits would go up.

There is no justification to cut Social Security benefits. "No" to throwing seniors off the fiscal cliff. "No" to a cat food Christmas.

DEMANDING THE TRUTH

(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. Mr. Speaker, just over 100 days ago, four Americans were murdered in cold blood during coordinated terrorist attacks on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya. These attacks were premeditated acts of war on America and the American way of life, committed by terrorists with ties to al Qaeda.

This week, the Obama administration released a report as to exactly what happened surrounding these terrorist attacks. This report confirmed what we already knew: there was no protest outside the consulate on September 11. It also cites systemic failures in Embassy security, putting in danger the lives of every person at the compound in Benghazi.

This report is an important step towards stopping another attack on America and American initiatives overseas. But one thing remains clear: serious mistakes were made by senior officials here in Washington. Those mistakes cost American lives. There must be accountability.

REMEMBERING SENATOR DANIEL INOUE

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Senator Inouye lies in state this morning. But as a young lieutenant platoon leader on a battlefield in Italy, even after being shot in the stomach by German machine-gun fire, he refused medical treatment and still managed to find the courage to destroy two machine-gun posts. Nearly losing consciousness from blood loss, he heroically charged a third machine-gun nest before having his right arm severed by a German grenade. Somehow, even after those grave injuries, Daniel Inouye still found a way to toss a grenade that destroyed the third bunker.

What an American. What a man who loved this country and stood for the values of diversity. He loved the independence of the Congress, and he fought for it in the strength of our democracy and the values of America. His words were this:

I represented the people of Hawaii and this Nation honestly and to the best of my ability. I think I did okay.

To the Senator and your family, you did more than okay. To the Asian American community in Houston, Texas, and all of Texas, I want you to note this hero spoke volumes for what America is all about, that no matter where we've come from, we can stand equally under the sun.

He thought of that and his beloved Hawaii as his final words, not only in representing Hawaii—"aloha"—but to America.

Senator, we love you, and good-bye. What a great champion, a great warrior for peace, and one who represented all of us so well.

□ 1210

SUCCESS WITH THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

(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, today, the House will vote on the National Defense Authorization Act for 2013. Congratulations to House Armed Services Committee Chairman BUCK McKEON and committee staff director Bob Simmons for their leadership with this legislation promoting peace through strength.

Our brave men and women in uniform, their families, and our veterans have earned the support and care they deserve by dedicating their lives to keep American families safe. The passage of today's bill will provide for a 1.7 percent troop pay increase, controlled copay rate increases for TRICARE beneficiaries, and institute new procedures and regulations to combat and prosecute sexual assault within the military.

It is my hope that this legislation will pass the House overwhelmingly this evening, receive full support in the Senate, and promptly arrive on the President's desk for his signature. Our national security depends on it.

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

GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, the Great Lakes are our Nation's greatest natural resource. They are the source of 95 percent of our surface freshwater and are directly connected to 1.5 million jobs.

Though efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes have made great strides over the past several decades, many challenges remain. Invasive species, pollution, and habitat loss in the Great Lakes have a negative effect on recreation and tourism, as well as on the general economy.

I was pleased to sign a bipartisan letter along with other Members of the House to request at least \$300 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative in the President's fiscal year 2014 budget.

Mr. Speaker, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has been invaluable in efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes. I strongly encourage the President and my colleagues in Congress to ensure that it is fully funded going forward.

FISCAL CLIFF

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

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, today, this body will take up legislation that will cut spending, replace the dangerous defense sequester, and protect millions from the biggest tax hike our country has ever seen. This is a good first step. The costs are simply too high to go over the fiscal cliff.

Earlier this week, the CPA Caucus met with former Comptroller David Walker to discuss what we truly need for meaningful, long-term reform. Walker proposed six basic principles that I want to share with this body today:

1. Pro-Growth. Truly pro-growth policies will empower our small businesses rather than strangle them with taxes and regulations at every turn.

2. Socially equitable. We're in this together, and we cannot expect one income bracket to bear the burden of solving all of our problems.

3. Culturally acceptable. We need the support and backing of the American people to enact good solutions.

4. Mathematically possible. We cannot continue to ignore the bottom line. I'm a CPA. To me, it's obvious that we have to balance our books.

5. Politically feasible. Our solutions won't always be perfect, but they have to be proposals both sides can agree on.

6. Bipartisan support. We can agree to disagree on certain matters, but we must still work together.