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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BENTIVOLIO).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 25, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable KERRY BENTIVOLIO 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 3, 2013, 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 OBAMA'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Last Thursday, Speaker BOEHNER called President Obama "absolutely crazy" for moving forward with rules to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants that cause global warming.

What I think is absolutely crazy is the Republicans' constant denial of the overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change is real and human activity is largely responsible. I think

it's absolutely crazy that the Republicans voted more than 50 times in the last Congress to block action on climate change.

In March, I talked about a new peer-reviewed report from Oregon State and Harvard that looked at temperatures over the last 11,300 years; and they found that over the last 100 years, coinciding with the widespread use of fossil fuels and turbines, et cetera, that we have seen more temperature increase than over the previous 11,000 years; 100 years versus 11,000 years.

Last month I came to the floor again to talk about a new NOAA report. Oceans are warming, fish stocks, many commercial fish stocks are moving north. Other things, which aren't capable of moving, are deteriorating in stocks.

And then, on the west coast, we've had shellfish failures due to ocean acidification; and the shellfish, of course, are only an indication of what might happen to the rest of the food chain in the oceans.

No one denies the acidification is due to the CO₂ in the atmosphere. But the Do-Nothing Republican Congress just shrugs and says there's nothing to do.

But, unlike the Republicans, President Obama accepts the science; and in about 2 hours, the President will release a plan to combat climate change here at home and lay out steps for working with some of the world's largest polluters, including India and China, to reduce emissions abroad.

The details aren't all out yet, but the President's proposing to do something that I said we should do 5 years ago, that is, use the regulatory powers of the Clean Air Act to regulate new and existing power plants. That's responsible for almost 40 percent of our greenhouse gas emissions.

We can make a huge dent in our emissions by moving forward on responsible, flexible efficiency standards for coal and natural gas plants.

As the administration moves forward, it should take a close look at the climate plan outlined by the Natural Resources Defense Council. Their plan has two key elements: set State-specific emission rates to reflect the diversity of the Nation's electricity sector, and give power plant operators broad flexibility to meet those standards in the most cost-effective way through a range of existing technologies.

The standard for every State would be an overall emission rate average of all the fossil fuel plants, and individual plants could emit at a higher or lower rate. Each covered plant with an emission rate above the State standard could meet the target by retrofitting a more efficient boiler, installing carbon capture, or it could burn a mixture of coal and cleaner fuels such as gas and/or biomass.

The plan would allow for the owners of multiple power plants to average emissions rates of their plants and meet the required emission rate on average by running coal plants less often, increasing generation from cleaner sources, or integrating more renewable resources. Such an approach, that is both flexible and State-based, is exactly what makes the Clean Water Act one of our most successful environmental and public health statutes in history.

Mr. Speaker, it's time to listen to scientists. Get serious about climate change. The evidence is in. The President has a plan. The Supreme Court has given him the authority to regulate. The only question now is whether the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives will listen and act.

AMNESTY GROWS WELFARE ROLLS

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

□ 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. BROOKS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, America suffers from four consecutive trillion-dollar deficits and a \$17 trillion debt that risks a debilitating American insolvency and bankruptcy.

Financial responsibility is the key to minimizing America's risk of economic disaster wrought by crippling debt. Yet the Senate Gang of Eight amnesty bill is the height of financial irresponsibility. It makes illegal aliens a bigger financial burden on America, racks up higher deficits, and increases America's risk of insolvency and bankruptcy.

The Senate Gang of Eight bill immediately gives illegal aliens State and local welfare. That is in addition to the Federal welfare illegal aliens already lawfully and unlawfully get.

For example, watchdog group Judicial Watch reports that an assistant case manager in charge of food stamp applications stated:

Illegals would come by the van load and we were told to give them their stuff. Management knew very well they were illegal. It was so rampant that some employees would tell their illegal relatives to come and get food stamps.

Judicial Watch adds:

The promotion of the food stamp program, now known as SNAP, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, includes a Spanish-language flyer provided to the Mexican Embassy by the United States Department of Agriculture, with a statement advising Mexicans in the United States that they do not need to declare their immigration status in order to receive financial assistance.

Judicial Watch goes further:

The United States Department of Agriculture spent taxpayer money to run Spanish-language television ads encouraging illegal aliens to apply for government-financed food stamps. The Mexican Consul in Santa Ana, California, starred in United States Government-financed TV commercials and assured illegal aliens that receiving food stamps "won't affect your immigration status."

Judicial Watch concluded that:

Adding insult to injury, last spring, the United States Department of Agriculture Inspector General revealed that many food stamp recipients use their welfare benefit to buy drugs, weapons and other contraband from unscrupulous vendors, disclosing that the fraud has cost American taxpayers nearly \$200 million.

A comprehensive study by the Heritage Foundation found that "many unlawful immigrants have U.S.-born children. These children are currently eligible for the full range of government welfare and medical benefits."

The study notes that:

In 2010, the average unlawful immigrant household received around \$24,721 in government benefits and services, while paying some \$10,334 in taxes. This generated an average annual fiscal deficit, benefits received minus taxes paid, of around \$14,387 per household.

The Heritage Foundation confirms that the Senate Gang of 8 amnesty bill will:

After 13 years, unlawful immigrants would become eligible for means-tested welfare and ObamaCare. At that point, or shortly thereafter, former unlawful immigrant households

would likely begin to receive government benefits at the same rate as lawful immigrant households of the same education level. As a result, government spending and fiscal deficits would increase dramatically.

The Senate Gang of 8 amnesty bill is reckless with the truth and misleads the American people. Not only will illegal immigration increase American taxpayer burdens through welfare, ObamaCare, and other pay-outs, but illegal immigration is already costing the United States taxpayers more than \$14,000 a year per illegal alien household.

□ 1210

All told, per the Federation of Americans for Immigration Reform, illegal aliens already cost American taxpayers roughly \$100 billion per year in net tax losses.

The Senate Gang of 8 amnesty bill does not properly manage welfare, does not give border security, mismanages tax dollars, thereby hammering already stressed and overtaxed American families and taxpayers while aggravating America's already bad financial situation, thus increasing America's risk of a debilitating insolvency and bankruptcy.

Mr. Speaker, the Senate Gang of 8 bill must be defeated at all costs. America's future depends on it.

STUDENT LOAN INTEREST RATES

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, in 5 days, unless Congress acts, the Stafford student loan program, which helps 7.5 million students pay for college, is set to see its interest rates increase from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent. Again, this is at a time when student loan debt now exceeds \$1 trillion. It's the highest form of consumer debt in the economy. It exceeds credit card debt and car loan debt. And yet, despite the fact that, again, students and families are facing this mounting, crushing burden, unless we move in a very short period of time, we are going to add to that burden by allowing the interest rates to go from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent.

Six years ago, this Congress acted to pass the College Cost Reduction Act, which cut that rate from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent. It was a 5-year bill tied to the Higher Education Reauthorization Act. Last year, with minutes to spare, we extended that lower rate for 1 additional year. Again, here we are today, 5 days away from this rate doubling.

I've introduced legislation, H.R. 1595, the Student Loan Protection Act, and 196 Members of the House signed a discharge petition demanding that the Speaker of the House bring this bill up for debate and passage, which will protect that lower rate for an additional 2 years. We need that time so that we can pass a new Higher Education Authorization Act, which will deal with the broad range of issues that surround how we pay for college and access to higher education, which includes the

Stafford student loan program, the workhorse for families to pay for college. It deals with Pell Grants and Perkins loans. It also deals with the obstructions and hurdles that people face when they want to refinance student loan debt after they have left college. Again, that's a big part of that \$1 trillion debt burden that's out there in society.

We need a broad, long-range plan to pay for higher education because the stakes are huge. We know that the U.S. economy needs critical skills in our workforce if we are going to continue and grow and prosper. The baby boomers are now hitting retirement age at increasing numbers, and in a whole range of critical occupations, from medicine to science to engineering, we need to refill the ranks. And higher education is the avenue that we can continue to succeed as a country and as a nation. Our competitors know this. They are investing in higher education at a much higher rate than we are in the U.S. We must act to make sure that, again, we don't go backwards on July 1.

The House passed a bill on May 23. The Republican majority pushed a bill through which they claim solves the problem. It changes the fixed rate loan program to an adjustable rate tied to 10-year Treasury notes, which is roughly now at about 2.6 percent. It adds an additional 2.5 percent to that. They claimed when they passed that bill that that solves the problem. Unfortunately, the Congressional Budget Office drilled down deeper and analyzed what the real net impact would be on students. The problem with that variable rate program is that for a freshman entering this fall, like my daughter, who doesn't use the Stafford loan program, if some of her fellow students sign up for the Stafford loan program, under the Republican bill they really don't know what the rate is because it will reset over the 4 years that freshman is in college. Looking at where Treasury notes are projected over the next 4 years, the Congressional Budget Office has told us that, in fact, for that graduating student, 4 years from now the interest rate on the loan that they will graduate with will be over 7 percent.

So, in other words, as CBO told us, if we allow the Republican bill to go forward, it's actually worse than doing nothing and allowing the rates to double to 6.8 percent. President Obama has proposed a different version, which would, again, use the cheap cost of money today with an inflation add-on. But that plan that the President put forward locks in the rate for the student who takes that loan out next year. So, in other words, that freshman who signs up for a Stafford student loan that will go to school with my daughter next year, their rate will not reset from one year to the next. They will have at least the protection of a fixed rate based on the calculation using the Treasury note baseline. It is