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House of Representatives

The House met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

July 8, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVE WOMACK 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.

As the Members of this assembly return from days away celebrating our Nation's birth, grant them safe journey. May they return ready to assume a difficult work which must be done.

We pray for the needs of the Nation and world and all of creation. Bless those who seek to honor You and serve each other and all Americans in this House through their public service. May the words and deeds of this place reflect an earnest desire for justice, and may men and women in government build on the tradition of equity and truth that represents the noblest heritage of our people.

May Your blessing, O God, be with us this day and every day to come, and may all we do be done 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 New York (Mr. ISRAEL) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. ISRAEL 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.

AMERICAN ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, it's time to get serious about American energy independence.

Removing barriers to safe offshore energy production is a necessary component of a serious American energy strategy. Our country has been blessed with an abundance of resources; and if we utilize those resources responsibly rather than ignore them, we can reduce dependence on foreign oil by creating 1 million new jobs.

During the same week an Obama global warming adviser stated that a "war on coal is exactly what's needed." Republicans worked to lower energy prices, to move our country away from dependence on foreign oil, and to create jobs. This stands in stark contrast to President Obama's energy priorities. Under his Environmental Protection Agency, 17 North Carolina coal units are being shut down; gas prices remain high; and the shovel-ready Keystone XL pipeline remains stalled.

Jobless Americans and working families deserve better. The President would do well to follow the all-of-the-above energy strategy we led with in the House.

THE RESILIENCE OF OUR FAITHS

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

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, with so many challenges in the world today—student loan rates, turmoil in Egypt and in Syria, and jobs at home—I think it's important for us to remind ourselves of the resilience of our faiths.

Recently, in New York, I joined Monsignor Brendan Riordan and the congregation of the St. Aloysius Church in Great Neck to celebrate their centennial jubilee.

St. Aloysius was established in 1876. In 1913, ground was broken for the beautiful church that stands today. It stands today with 1,200 families, worshipping in English, in Spanish, and in Korean, with food banks and immigration counseling and human services and interfaith partnerships.

I am privileged to represent St. Aloysius Church in Great Neck, Mr. Speaker, and I am especially privileged to talk about it on the floor of this Congress today.

OBAMACARE EMPLOYER MANDATE

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, ObamaCare's long-term care insurance program has been abandoned and repealed. Its preexisting conditions insurance program has been shut down. Its small business exchanges have been delayed—and on and on with this train wreck.

Last week, the President chose to blatantly ignore his own law by putting off the employer mandate until 2015. There is no waiver procedure in the bill. I guess Senator REID didn't think it important when he was crafting the bill behind closed doors.

□ 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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Businesses across the country are confused about ObamaCare, and this does nothing to clear up that confusion. It just puts it off to a more politically convenient time—beyond the 2014 midterm elections. The mandate has already reduced working hours for many Americans and has discouraged the creation of full-time jobs. Businesses have already spent billions in getting ready to comply. ObamaCare is already a failure—harming businesses, workers, and American health care.

The President has chosen to break his own law by his actions. Let's stop the extralegal waivers. Give every American a waiver by repealing the law completely.

ELIMINATING VERIFICATION

(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, last week, the administration once again adjusted the Affordable Care Act in an effort to try to save this takeover of the Nation's health care.

On Friday, the latest change was announced: The new health care exchanges will not verify an individual's income for the year as was originally planned.

By eliminating the verification requirement, how will the government determine who gets health care subsidies? They're going to use the honor system—because no one would lie about something like that.

This will open the exchanges to a staggering amount of potential fraud. It is also clearly a political move. The administration has made it clear that they want as many people as possible to sign up for the exchanges so they can reap the public relations benefits of talking about the popularity of said exchanges.

All of this comes at a time when the Federal health programs are already stricken with fraud, and now the administration wants to introduce a new program. This new program is based on self-attestation. Whatever happened to "trust, but verify"?

HUMAN RIGHTS FAILURES OF THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

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

Mr. WOLF. When President Obama was awarded the Nobel Prize for his commitment to human rights, the decision was based on a misplaced hope rather than actual record. In fact, the Obama administration has been silent or inept in country after country when it comes to advocating for the oppressed, the marginalized, and the vulnerable.

On Obama's watch, more than 118 Tibetans have set themselves aflame, and yet human rights was barely men-

tioned at the recent U.S.-China summit. On Obama's watch, genocide persists in Darfur, and thousands are starving in the Nuba Mountains, and yet the Sudan special envoy position has been vacant for nearly 4 months. On Obama's watch, Christians, including Egypt's ancient Coptic Christian community, have experienced escalating persecution throughout the Middle East, and yet religious freedom is relegated to the back burner in our dealings with Islamist governments.

In the days ahead, I will highlight this administration's abject failure to champion human rights and religious freedom around the world.

PRESIDENT PLAYING POLITICS WITH HEALTH CARE

(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, the President is playing politics with the American people's health care.

According to an editorial published in *The Wall Street Journal*:

The White House seems to regard laws as mere suggestions, including the laws it helped to write. On the heels of last week's 1-year suspension of the Affordable Care Act's employer mandate to offer insurance to workers, the administration is now waiving a new batch of its own ObamaCare prescriptions. These disclosures arrived inside a 606-page catchall final rule that the Health and Human Services Department published on Friday, July 5—a classic Friday news dump, with extra credit for the holiday weekend. HHS now says it will no longer attempt to verify individual eligibility for insurance subsidies and instead will rely on self-reporting, with minimal efforts to verify if the information consumers provide is accurate.

House Republicans have warned for years of the failure of ObamaCare—that it is too unworkable, too overreaching, and too destructive for American families. House Republicans have voted 37 times to repeal or to defund ObamaCare. The American people deserve a health care system based on the doctor-patient relationship, not on one mandated by a government.

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

EFFECTS OF SEQUESTRATION

(Mr. GALLEG0 asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GALLEG0. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak out against the effects of sequestration on the Department of Defense employees and their families.

Starting this week, 650,000-or-so Department of Defense employees across the country will go a day a week without pay for 11 weeks. I am appalled that the previous Congress would authorize such a measure. Here is what

these furloughs mean for Texas families and our State as a whole:

Approximately 45,000 Department of Defense civilian employees in Texas will be furloughed. The cuts will specifically hurt families in the 23rd Congressional District who work at Joint Base San Antonio, Fort Bliss in El Paso, and Laughlin Air Force Base in Del Rio. Today, in fact, the El Paso Times reported that furloughs will affect 11,000 civilian employees at Fort Bliss and at Beaumont Army Medical Center.

One day a week for 11 weeks, that results in \$3,300 in lost wages per employee; and it means that, on average, most of these workers will effectively receive a 20 percent salary cut each pay period for the rest of the fiscal year. Do the math, and that's nearly \$149 million lost in Texas.

Mr. Speaker, with every passing day, thousands of jobs are at risk. We have to put politics aside and work through the issue of sequestration.

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION BACKLOG

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

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, last week, our Nation celebrated 237 years of independence.

It is the dedication and sacrifice of the members of our armed services that allows us to celebrate this each year. Yet it is troubling that our servicemembers are struggling to utilize the job retraining and placement programs that they deserve.

After returning home, a veteran seeking health and education benefits runs into over 600 forms that he or she must fill out from over 18 Federal agencies. This is not only burdensome for them, but it has created an enormous backlog at the Department of Veterans Affairs. As of March, the agency had roughly 70 percent of its claims pending over 125 days.

House Republicans have passed several bills this year to improve veterans' work programs and to decrease the VA backlog through funding for technological improvements like digital scanning and paperless claims processing. This is a start, but we need to do more.

Our troops put their lives on the line for our country. We must do whatever we can to help veterans obtain the benefits they have so honorably earned.

COMMUNICATION FROM DISTRICT DIRECTOR, THE HONORABLE DAVID SCOTT, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from Chandra Harris, District Director, the Honorable DAVID SCOTT, Member of Congress: