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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. COLLINS of New York).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 9, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CHRIS COLLINS 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 11:50 a.m.

AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be on the floor again talking about the failed policy in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, most people in my district know that I've signed over 11,000 letters. They're condolence letters to families who've lost loved ones in Afghanistan and Iraq because of the unnecessary war we fought in Iraq. In the last 2 weeks, we were home for the July 4 break. There were two week-

ends. I've signed 16 letters to families in this Nation who have lost loved ones in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, it's almost like we in Congress don't know we're still at war; yet there are young men and women dying in Afghanistan and being wounded every day. The American people do not understand why we continue to fund this failed policy in Afghanistan. Each and every day the failures become clearer and clearer to the American people, but not to Congress.

Most recently, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction John Sopko warned that the Pentagon is moving ahead with plans to spend \$771 million on aircraft, including 30 Russian helicopters for an Afghan military team. This purchase comes despite the fact that only seven of 47 Afghan Air Force pilots are qualified to fly the helicopters. As reported by CNN, an audit by Mr. Sopko explained that the reason so few pilots are able to fly the aircraft is that "it's difficult to find literate recruits who don't have links to insurgents or criminals."

Mr. Speaker, that should wake up the Congress, if nothing else.

Unfortunately, this is only one of many examples of American money being wasted in Afghanistan. I've written multiple letters requesting a hearing to allow Mr. Sopko to testify before the House Armed Services Committee regarding this and other findings that he has made in Afghanistan and the abuse of American funds, but to my knowledge a hearing has not been scheduled. I will continue to push the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, which I serve on.

Mr. Speaker, what is so sad, truthfully, is for the American taxpayer, that their Representatives in Washington will continue to spend money in Afghanistan with very little accountability. The American people are tired of this war in Afghanistan, and they're tired of seeing young men and women coming back in flag-draped coffins.

While this administration is in the final stages of negotiating a bilateral security agreement with Afghanistan, Congress has had no debate on this strategic agreement. I realize that the President is not required to come before Congress for approval, but it is that we in Congress should have the concern that we would bring up the issue itself and debate it and vote up or down whether we should stay in Afghanistan for 10 more years.

Mr. Speaker, before closing, I want to remind that in these 16 letters that I signed in the last 2 weeks, some of these letters were addressed to children, whether it be two, three, four children, to say that I'm sorry that your father, your brother, your sister, or your mother has been killed in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I ask God to please bless the men and women in uniform, to bless the families of our men and women in uniform, in His loving arms to hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I ask God to bless the House and Senate, that we will do what is right in the eyes of God. I will ask God to bless the President and give him the courage to do what is right for the American people.

And three times I will say, with the greatest respect, God, please, God, please, God, please, continue to bless America.

GUN VIOLENCE IN CHICAGO

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, entire neighborhoods in my city of Chicago are being torn apart by violence.

Last week, from Wednesday evening through Sunday evening, more than 70 people were shot in Chicago, 11 of whom died. Last year, over 500 people

□ 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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were murdered in my city. Of these murders, 80 percent were gang related, and nearly 90 percent were at the hands of a gun. The numbers speak for themselves. The city of Chicago is facing an epidemic of violence and the reasons behind it are clear.

There are many ideas to solve this problem. One—rounding up 18,000 members of the Gangster Disciples—is simply not legally or financially feasible. What is feasible and a significant way to stop gun violence in my city is to stop the flow of illegal guns into Chicago.

One reason the violence is at record levels is because gang members have such easy access to illegal guns. It's time for the Federal Government to step in and do something about it.

Despite the city's tough gun laws, Chicago cops are recovering illegal guns at nine times the rate of their counterparts in New York City. That's nearly three times the number of weapons in a city one-third the size. These outrageous numbers call for nothing short of a Federal response. We need a renewed effort at the Federal level to prosecute gun traffickers who put illegal weapons in the hands of gang members. We need to give our law enforcement the tools they need to put these guys away.

Last year, Chicago ranked last among Federal jurisdictions and Federal gun prosecutions. This is simply unacceptable. Gun traffickers should know that if you traffic illegal weapons in the city of Chicago, you will be spending a long time in a Federal penitentiary. We can no longer let these criminals be charged with mere paperwork violations.

I welcome the nomination of Zachary Fardon as Chicago's new Federal prosecutor and urge him to prosecute more of these cases in Federal court. But to try more gun traffickers in Federal court, we need to give law enforcement the tools and funding they need to do so. That means finally passing a Federal law making gun trafficking illegal, with stiffer penalties for those who violate the law; that means increasing funding for Federal COPS grants to put more police on our streets instead of ignoring municipalities across the country that have been forced to cut their public safety budgets in these difficult economic times; and that means finally giving law enforcement the proper tools to go after corrupt gun dealers.

One percent of gun dealers are responsible for half the guns used in crimes in this country; yet current law foolishly limits things like inventory inspections. If law-abiding dealers reported inventories, the ATF would be much more effective in identifying lost and stolen weapons and combating corrupt gun dealers. That's why I introduced the TRACE Act this Congress, which would allow the ATF to require dealers to perform inventory checks and to report lost and stolen guns.

Mr. Speaker, people are being gunned down in my city every day. And while

we continue to spend billions of dollars on nuclear weapons, tanks, and wars overseas, we're ignoring the gang war that is happening here at home. It's time for the Federal Government to step up to the challenge by stopping gun violence where it starts.

DOD CIVILIAN FURLOUGHS

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

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday over 14,000 civilian Department of Defense employees at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in my community were furloughed as a result of sequestration. For 11 days, over the next few months, these hardworking members of my community will see their pay cut by 20 percent.

I voted against this mess. I knew the effects of sequestration on our national security and our community and its citizens would be significant and for many devastating. These vital members of our national security structure have essentially been told they are expendable. Morale at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and DOD facilities around the United States is suffering because of this.

I've spoken to not just these civilian employees, but to car dealers, restaurant owners, small businesses, all of who feel the pain and frustration because of inaction here in Washington. It doesn't have to be this way. The House has passed an act to avert sequestration. The Senate has failed to pass a single bill to avert sequestration. The President, who promised the American people that this would not happen, has done nothing. Meanwhile, families and businesses, not only in Ohio but across the country, are suffering. It's time for the President to keep his promise that he made during his election campaign and to work to set aside sequestration.

Mr. Speaker, I voted against sequestration. The House has passed legislation to halt it, and it's time that the Senate and the President come to the table and work to find a way to avert these furloughs and their devastating impact on the lives and businesses of hardworking Americans and its impact upon our national security.

PERSONALIZE YOUR CARE ACT

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleagues a very simple question: Can this Congress approve legislation that is supported by over 85 percent of the American public that is truly bipartisan legislation, with distinguished Republican cosponsors, and will not cost anything and, in fact, could even save billions of dollars? Can we give the American public something they not only want, but they need and to which they're entitled?

I would hope so. I would hope that Congress could act on the Personalize Your Care Act, H.R. 1173, which I've introduced along with Dr. ROE, Mr. REED, Mr. HANNA, Dr. McDERMOTT, and Dr. BERA.

I would make part of the Record survey research by the Regence Foundation and the National Journal that shows overwhelming public support for this type of protection for families. Ninety-six percent of Americans surveyed said it was important that these health and end-of-life issues be a top priority for our health care system; 97 percent agree that it's important that patients and their families be educated about palliative care and end-of-life option treatments available, along with curative treatment; and 86 percent agree that these discussions about palliative care and end-of-life treatment should be fully covered by health insurance.

Americans agree that people need to know what faces them in difficult situations approaching end of life or when people are temporarily unable to make medical decisions for themselves. But Medicare, which will pay tens of thousands of dollars for a full hip replacement for a 93-year-old woman with terminal cancer, will not authorize a couple hundred dollars for her and her family to have medical consultation about her personal choices and circumstances for the future. Our legislation will change that.

There have been fascinating studies about how doctors die differently from the rest of us because they know what works and what doesn't. Doctors, it turns out, tend to consume health care much differently and often less in their final year of life. It's not that they don't understand. It's not that they don't have access to health care. They can afford it. They just know their situation better than the rest of us, they know what works, they know what they want, and usually that means comfort and quality of life and more control.

Our legislation will be a small, but important, step to make sure that every American is treated like a doctor in their last year of life: knowing their choices, knowing their prospects, being able to identify what they want, and make sure that their wishes are known and respected.

I don't think there are any of us on the floor of the House who has not felt some frustration. Can't we get something done? Here's an opportunity that doesn't depend upon what your view of ObamaCare is. Whether it's implemented, delayed, or repealed doesn't matter.

□ 1015

This is legislation that doesn't need to cost anything. It actually will end up saving money, but money is not the point.

Can we act together to do something for the public, show that we're not paralyzed, that we can work together, that