



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 160

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2014

No. 32

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 26, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN 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 7, 2014, 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, 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. Madam Speaker, I am on the floor again today to talk about Afghanistan—the absolute waste of life and money.

A lot of people don't realize this, but if you go back to 2001, the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, we have spent over \$1.5 trillion, which averages out to about 11.2 million tax dollars paid every hour by the American people.

In today's national paper, the USA Today—and other headlines—the head-

line is this: "Obama to Karzai: Time running out for security deal."

Madam Speaker, based on recent polls, this would be good news for the American people if we would not continue this relationship with Afghanistan. It is nothing but an absolute waste of the taxpayers' money, and the American people are sick and tired of it. A recent poll last week by Gallup showed that almost 50 percent of the American people believe that the war in Afghanistan was a mistake to start with.

I can honestly say this: If it was not a mistake to start with, it is a mistake now that we continue to support and spend money on a corrupt leader named Karzai.

Madam Speaker, as I listened to the Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel yesterday talk about financial pressure on our military and the budget that he will be supporting that Mr. Obama has proposed, I wonder why we in Congress are not allowed to debate on the floor of this House—and I am not talking about the Senate now—whether we believe that we should have a 10-year agreement with Afghanistan.

Again, we are talking about spending anywhere from \$3 billion to \$4 billion a month. It is borrowed money from the Chinese and Japanese, and we continue to raise the debt ceiling because we cannot pay our own bills. It is time for the Congress to speak out on behalf of the American people and say enough is enough.

To be clear, this agreement that President Karzai has adamantly refused to sign, as The Washington Post reported earlier this week, during a December visit to Kabul, Hagel suggested that the late-February NATO meeting—meaning this week—was a cutoff point for Afghan President Karzai to sign the bilateral strategic agreement that sets the terms for a post-2014 U.S. presence.

Madam Speaker, we cannot any longer police the world. We can hardly

afford to pay our own bills without going to foreign governments to borrow money.

Madam Speaker, it is time for Congress to reach out and to say that we listen to the American people. When we are talking about not even being able to take care of our veterans, and we are going to cut programs for children and senior citizens, and even our veterans are in jeopardy of getting the benefits that they have earned, it is time for the American people to put pressure on Congress to have this debate that many of us in both parties would like to have, quite frankly.

Madam Speaker, I have beside me a photograph of a young man named Eric Edmundson. Eric, in 2005, was in a Humvee that was hit by an IED that exploded. Eric has been in the national Wounded Warrior Project ads across this Nation.

Eric is like so many of the wounded. We just don't really think about them every day, but we should. Eric has a wonderful wife. His mom and dad were able to retire to New Bern, North Carolina, which is in my district, and help Eric have a quality of life.

Madam Speaker, I can honestly tell you that we have got so many veterans that we are going to need to take care of who earned the right for this government to take care of them that we are going to have a tsunami that is going to hit this Congress in a few years, and we are going to wonder how in the world can we give these wounded and their families what they have earned and deserve.

Madam Speaker, it is time for this Congress to put pressure on the leadership of the Republican Party and the Democratic Party to force a discussion and a debate on the future of our financial involvement in Afghanistan.

With that, Madam Speaker, I am going to ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the wounded, to bless

□ 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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H1941

the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. And I ask God to please bless the House and the Senate, that we will do what is right in the eyes of God for God's people, and to please bless the President of the United States, that he also would do what is right in the eyes of God for America.

END HUNGER NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. LUMMIS). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, there are close to 50 million people who are hungry in the United States of America. We are the richest country in the history of the world, and we have close to 50 million people who are food insecure or are hungry; 17 million of these people are kids.

We in Congress are not doing nearly enough to address this issue. In fact, this Congress has made things worse for many struggling families all across this country.

Last November there was an \$11 billion cut that went into effect with regard to the SNAP program. That is the name of the program that was formerly known as food stamps, an \$11 billion cut that impacted every single beneficiary on this program. Everybody got a cut. Food prices didn't go down, but they got a cut.

Then we just recently passed a farm bill in this Congress that made sure that those well-off special interests were protected and the rich got richer. But we paid for those subsidies by cutting SNAP by another \$8.6 billion. It is shameful.

Madam Speaker, these cuts are real, and the people they impact are real. Sometimes I wonder whether those who voted for these cuts have any appreciation of what it is like to be poor in America, whether they have ever been to a food bank or a soup kitchen or ever talked to anybody who is on SNAP. It is hard. It is difficult to be poor in America.

Despite what I believe is this indifference and, in some cases, contempt for poor people that we have seen in this Chamber, I do want to acknowledge that outside of this Congress and outside of government there are many, many people who understand that we all should care about our brothers and sisters who are struggling and who are doing amazing things.

Last week, during our break, I visited with some people who I think are doing things that I found to be inspirational. Visiting these soup kitchens and shelters gave me some new inspiration and new hope that maybe what they are doing will be contagious and that those of us in this Congress will step up to the plate and take on the issue of hunger and poverty in this country.

I visited a soup kitchen in Amherst, Massachusetts, called Not Bread Alone.

I met with the supervisor, Hannah Eliott, and an incredible group of volunteers, which included a chef and people from all walks of life, who prepared nutritious meals for those who are struggling.

I talked to the people who came in to have one of these nutritious meals. These people are our neighbors. These people have worked to make this country great. Some of them are veterans. They have fallen on hard times and can't afford to eat. And thank God for a place like Not Bread Alone, where they can come in and be able to be in a warm place and get a decent meal and feel like people care about them.

At UMass Amherst, I met a student named Jacob Liverman. I met him and a group of young students who launched this effort called the Food Recovery Network. What they do is work with the kitchen at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst so that the leftovers of the food that is prepared on a given day don't get thrown away.

They take those leftovers and follow all those procedures that you have to follow to make sure that everything is within the health codes. They take this food and deliver it to an emergency shelter called Craig's Doors, which is also in Amherst. I met Kevin Noonan, the executive director there, who is a wonderful man, along with all the volunteers there.

I had the privilege of being able to serve meals to the people that came through the shelter on a cold, wintry night. It is eye-opening when you talk to these people and learn about their backgrounds and learn about how they have fallen on hard times.

I am grateful that there are places like Craig's Doors. I am grateful that there are young students like the ones I met at the University of Massachusetts Amherst campus who have taken the initiative to step up to the plate and to help try to feed people who are hungry. I am grateful for places like Not Bread Alone that do such an incredible job in terms of providing food for people.

I went to Greenfield Community College and sat down with the president, Bob Pura, and his faculty and members of their kitchen. Because there is a need, they actually have a food bank on their campus. There are people going to school who do not have enough to eat. This school provides them the support and the help that they need. They also have a permaculture garden. They are growing food not only for that soup kitchen and for their food bank, but for their students as well, because they are putting an emphasis on nutrition.

I will close, Madam Speaker, by saying these are inspirational activities that are going on. We need to learn by them, and we need to do much better. Nobody in America should go hungry.

VENEZUELA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, today I rise for those who cannot speak freely in Venezuela. Widespread demonstrations have broken out throughout Venezuela to protest an oppressive regime that seeks to silence the people and deny their fundamental freedoms of expression and the right to assembly.

After years under Chavez and now Maduro, those brave men and women are expressing themselves in a united, clear voice that what they want is what should be rightfully theirs: respect for human rights and a true democracy in Venezuela. In response, as you can see here, Maduro and his thugs treat them like criminals.

Over the past weeks, Madam Speaker, 14 people have been killed by Maduro's forces; over 100 have been unjustly detained. But because Maduro controls the major media outlets, he has silenced many of those who attempt to draw attention to the plight of the Venezuelan people and instead cast the blame on the United States for all of the country's ills. The nerve of him.

Blaming the United States for his own domestic problems seems to be the modus operandi for Maduro, but the Venezuelan people are smarter than that. They recognize that this is just another scheme of Maduro's.

The regime tried to silence its people by blocking images on Twitter, as Venezuelans turn to social media to show the world the ugly reality that they are going through.

As the violence in Venezuela continues to escalate, responsible nations in the hemisphere and throughout the world have a moral obligation to stand with the people of Venezuela against the forces of fear and oppression. We must be the voice for those suffering under this repression. At the same time, we must condemn the violent actions of the Maduro regime against people who are yearning for liberty, justice, democracy, respect, and for human rights.

This fight for democracy and human rights isn't the struggle of Venezuelans only. It is the struggle of all who seek to advance the cause of human dignity and freedom.

How we respond matters. Madam Speaker, it is a test of our commitment to the ideals of freedom and democracy for everyone, not just for a few.

□ 1015

It is also a test of our resolve. Other oppressive leaders in the region are watching us to see if we back up our lofty words with action, so we must not equivocate. We must not waver.

We must stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves, and we must be the voice for those who are