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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. FARENTHOLD).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 15, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BLAKE FARENTHOLD 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.

VOLUNTARY TAXES ARE SELDOM PAID

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, the Internal Revenue Code allows individuals who feel they aren't taxed enough to make voluntary contributions to the U.S. Treasury. Unsurprisingly, this provision is seldom used. My Democrat colleagues should have considered this fact when drafting ObamaCare.

The public is beginning to take note of what Republicans have been point-

ing out for years: young people who sign up for ObamaCare are taking on what amounts to a voluntary, stealth tax in order to subsidize older enrollees. As the initial numbers come in, it is clear that this voluntary tax on youth will fare no better than the optional taxes already in law.

Mr. Speaker, ObamaCare will crumble—and should crumble—not because of bad Web site design or because Republicans don't like it, but because it is a flawed law built on a foundation of unsound policy presumptions.

EQUAL RIGHTS

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, next week, we will commemorate the life and accomplishments of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A revolutionary civil rights leader, Dr. King's movement combated the systematic discrimination against African Americans, but Dr. King fought hard not only for equal rights for African Americans. He fought equally hard for equality for all in this great Nation.

So it is altogether fitting and appropriate that we honor him and his extraordinary life, but it is equally appropriate to honor him by ending what is still legal discrimination in this country—discrimination against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community—because denying civil rights to someone based on a person's orientation is equally inherently wrong.

We are all Americans, regardless of whom we love. Why does someone's orientation affect his or her legal status in this country? Every day that we continue allowing discrimination against the LGBT community is another day that justice is delayed.

I am reminded that when Lincoln spoke at Gettysburg, he said that four

score and 7 years ago we formed a Nation based on the notion that all were created equal, and they were in a war to determine whether a Nation so conceived could long endure. But I think what we can take from that is the realization that we have to ask ourselves every so often, did we really mean it back then when we said that all were created equal?

This is one of those times when we have to ask ourselves, is everyone in this country equal?

Mr. Speaker, we can end workplace discrimination against gay men and women today. The Employment Non-discrimination Act has 200 bipartisan cosponsors, and identical legislation has passed already in the Senate. Yes, our colleagues in the other Chamber have already taken this small, but important, step.

When will this body step up and defend the rights of the LGBT community? When will the House majority join us in the fight against inequality? Dr. King said:

The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

Yes, the journey may be long, but I believe we can accomplish true equality for all in this country. I ask my colleagues to find the courage to stand on the right side of history. Mr. Speaker, bring ENDA to the floor and allow a vote on equality for all Americans.

CONGRESS SHOULDN'T SEND ANOTHER OMNIBUS

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

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because, like many of my 700,000 bosses back home, I am frustrated with a broken Washington.

Prior to joining this House just over 1 year ago, in my work in the private sector and in my personal life deadlines mattered. If a client needed to

□ 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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start a contract by January 1, that contract had to be negotiated and signed by that date. Every April 15, my western Pennsylvania bosses and I have to make sure that all of our tax forms are filed on time. And on the first day of school, my neighbors and I make sure our kids are ready to start the year. And every year on May 27, I better remember that that is the anniversary that the best girl in the world and I exchanged wedding rings.

Getting things done on time is important. It is a value we teach our children.

Mr. Speaker, there is an annual deadline that the House and Senate have failed to meet with embarrassing frequency. The United States of America operates on fiscal years that begin on October 1 and end on September 30. Congress and the President are responsible for enacting the annual appropriations bills before each new fiscal year starts. That is how it is supposed to work. Unfortunately, Congress, led by both parties, has only finished its work on all regular appropriations bills before this deadline four times since 1977. That is simply unacceptable.

Twenty-six years ago, the President of the United States delivered a State of the Union address from the podium just over my right shoulder. During that address, Ronald Reagan noted that the government had just completed another broken and inefficient appropriations season:

In 7 years of 91 appropriations bills scheduled to arrive on my desk by a certain date, only 10 made it on time. Last year, of the 13 appropriations bills due by October, none of them made it. Instead, we had four continuing resolutions lasting 41 days, then 36 days, and 2 days, and 3 days.

President Reagan then held up three stacks of paper totaling 45 pounds which authorized the spending of hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars and reminded the Congress that it had only 3 hours to review the documents. After recounting this dysfunctional history, President Reagan pleaded:

Congress shouldn't send another one of these.

Some may argue that the process is not important; it is the policy that matters. Mr. Speaker, process is important because it is inside the process that policy happens.

Our Constitution gives Congress the power to tax and spend. Exercising this spending power requires due deliberation and should allow for individual Members, on both sides of the aisle, to challenge expenditures, including whether any particular expenditure is too much, too little, or should be made at all. Those challenges should come in the form of amendments that would be debated on this House floor. It is the process by which the people of this country have the opportunity to have a say in how their hard-earned tax dollars are spent.

More than 3 months into the fiscal year, we are now heading toward the vote on what is known as an omnibus.

This bill collapses all 12 regular appropriations bills into a single behemoth. We are at this point today because the House and Senate did not complete the regular appropriations process on time. Instead of voting 12 times on individual appropriations bills and hundreds of times on amendments to those bills, Members of this House will only vote once. Under this arrangement, important and necessary spending is held hostage to questionable and wasteful spending.

Last year, the House only passed four spending bills on time, and the Senate passed none. This must stop. Congress must get its work done on time.

Today, I am introducing the Congressional Pay for Performance Act of 2014. This simple bill would hold Congress accountable and force us to comply with deadlines, just like people in the real world do outside of Washington, D.C.

This is how it would work: each House of Congress must pass a budget resolution by April 15 or have its pay withheld. Then, each House of Congress must pass all 12 appropriations bills by July 31 or have its pay withheld. It would then have 2 months to reconcile the bills between the two Houses.

If Congress is not performing its core constitutional duties in a timely manner, it should not get paid until its work is done. Let this year's omnibus be the last one, for Congress shouldn't send another one of these to the President.

THE COSTLY PROBLEM OF HUNGER

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, we live in the richest country in the history of the world, and yet hunger is a problem in the United States of America—a very costly problem. A recent report published in the journal “Health Affairs” shows that poor people are getting sick because they are running out of food at the end of the month. Hunger increases the likelihood that people will get other ailments. Specifically, this analysis shows that poverty and exhausted food budgets may be a reason for increased health risk due to dangerously low blood sugar. We know that poor families prioritize which bills they pay and that food—grocery bills—often fall behind other responsibilities like rent and utilities.

I will include for the RECORD an article from The New York Times entitled “Study Ties Diabetic Crises to Dip in Food Budgets.”

Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the war on poverty. One of the programs that is key in this war on poverty—in our attempts to reduce and eliminate income inequality—is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Act, or SNAP—formerly known as food stamps. SNAP is a life-

line for 47 million Americans; 47 million of our fellow citizens rely on this program to help put food on the table for their families. But SNAP has become a major target in this Congress by those who believe it is simply a government handout.

SNAP is many things, but it is not a poorly run government handout. To the contrary, it is a program that is among the most efficient and effective, if not the most efficient and effective, of Federal programs. Despite this fact and despite the fact that millions of Americans turn to SNAP precisely because they saw their incomes drop or disappear because of the recession, SNAP was cut by \$11 billion on November 1, 2013. And on top of that, we are told that the farm bill that is still in negotiation would cut another \$8.5 billion to \$9 billion above that November 1 cut.

These cuts have real impacts. Some families who already saw a cut of \$30 a month on November 1 will see their SNAP benefit cut by another \$90 a month if the farm bill passes with these cuts. That is a cut of \$120 a month for a family of three in a State like California or Massachusetts or New York, for example.

According to a study conducted by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trust, a cut of \$2 billion a year in food stamps could trigger an increase in \$15 billion in medical costs for diabetes over the next decade. The insistence of many in this Congress—Republicans, and I'm sad to say some Democrats—that SNAP be cut, will have serious, long-term impacts on the health of poor people who are just trying to get by, and any cuts will cost us more. They will save us nothing.

Being poor is hard. It is expensive. We shouldn't be making the lives of those who struggle with poverty even harder by cutting safety net programs like SNAP. We should not be making poor people sicker because we want to cut Federal spending on SNAP while increasing spending for the Defense Department or giving corporate welfare in the form of crop insurance or other farm subsidies. Many of these excesses are contained in the farm bill that we may see in the next couple of weeks.

I oppose the SNAP cuts included in the farm bill. They are misguided, they are hurtful, and they are wrong. They will do real damage to real people who just want to earn a paycheck and provide for their families. I urge my colleagues to stand with me and oppose this farm bill if, in fact, it contains these \$8 billion to \$9 billion in cuts in SNAP. I would remind my colleagues that behind all these numbers and behind all the statistics and behind all the rhetoric, there are real people.

□ 1015

These cuts that have already been made actually hurt people. Let's not pile on. Antihunger advocates have warned that further cuts to SNAP will