

decision by the Speaker of this House to just offer the opportunity to put that bill on this floor so that we as Members of Congress can vote on this legislation.

Should it pass, should it fail, that is the objective as to why we are elected to this House—so that we can debate, so that we can deliberate, so that we can help make decisions that move this country forward.

All we are asking is that we have the opportunity to vote on the floor of the United States Congress on a bill, an issue, that will unleash this economy, and that is something that I think every American wants to see happen.

We have millions of Americans who are out of work. Some have been out of work for years. This comprehensive immigration reform will unleash this economy and create more jobs for American citizens more than anything that this Congress can do today.

I think it is incumbent upon every American to urge your congressional Member to vote on comprehensive immigration reform. Should they choose to vote “no” or choose to vote “yes,” that is the prerogative of that elected official. Unfortunately, the Speaker of this House will not give us that opportunity.

Once again, Americans, the best thing that we can do as a country is to get our economy back on track and allow hardworking Americans the opportunity to go back to work, to have the dignity of bringing home a paycheck for them and their families.

Comprehensive immigration reform is that answer. The economists have said so. But, unfortunately, some politicians refuse to face reality and refuse to supercharge the American economy. We are just one vote away, one opportunity away, from doing that.

□ 1115

WHAT WE KNOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) for 2½ minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, last week, the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences released a new report titled “What We Know.”

The report states unequivocally that climate change is a scientific fact, that human activity is linked to climate change, and that, if we do not act soon, the problem will get far worse and more expensive for us to deal with.

This is not a super-PAC or a political association tied to a candidate or to a group of scientists. This is a group of scientists representing the leading experts in their fields, and they are speaking to us in one unified voice.

In Georgia, agriculture is our State’s number one industry; and yet, as damaging and unpredictable as the weather patterns are making life difficult for our farmers, Republicans in our State suggest that the science is not well settled.

Madam Speaker, I hope that they get a chance to read this latest evidence. The science is settled. The only debate that remains is whether or not we will take action before it is too late.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 25, 2014.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, U.S. Capitol, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on March 25, 2014 at 5:54 p.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4275.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o’clock and 16 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Jonathan Weaver, Greater Mt. Nebo AME Church, Bowie, Maryland, offered the following prayer:

To You, O Lord, the God of the universe and the author and finisher of life, we come today expressing our thanks for all that You have done for us, not just within the last few moments, but over the sweep of our lives, the triumphs as well as the turmoil.

We pray that as the Members of Congress deliberate today, grant them even greater wisdom so that their actions will honor You in what they do to serve the people they represent.

Help all of us to continue to look beyond ourselves and our personal interests and to seek ways to make life better for those around us, both near and far.

I pray that even with and through our differences, that You will unite us as a people, so that our Nation will continue to prosper and honor You.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. 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.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker’s approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker’s approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from California (Ms. HAHN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. HAHN 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.

WELCOMING REVEREND JONATHAN WEAVER

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor this morning to express the gratitude of the House for this morning’s opening prayer by one of Maryland’s most dynamic and inspirational faith leaders, my dear friend, Pastor Jonathan Leslie Weaver.

Pastor Weaver likes to share with visitors to his church this verse from Psalms 68: “Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits.”

For the past 25 years, Mr. Speaker, Reverend Weaver has been sharing the benefits of his care and his wisdom with his flock at Greater Mt. Nebo African Methodist Episcopal Church in Bowie, Maryland.

Pastor Weaver has overseen its growth from 100 members in 1988 to more than 1,600 today. It now has more than 50 ministries serving the church and our wider community.

Under the pastor’s leadership, the church is engaged in numerous charitable works, including reentry programs, community-based violence prevention, and antihunger projects.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, Pastor Weaver has been at the center of an economic empowerment effort which has advantaged literally tens of thousands of people in our area and now has five chapters throughout our country.

I thank Pastor Weaver, along with his wife, Pamela, for their many years

of service. They are a blessing to our community.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side.

BACKLOG AT THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

(Mr. BOEHNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, I know that the House shares my deep concern over the backlog of benefit claims at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

It is nothing short of a black eye for our government. This country has made promises that it is our duty to keep, and the House has acted to tackle this problem.

Even so, reform won't get very far if it is carried out by managers who have proven that they are not up to the job. So we recently introduced H.R. 4031, the VA Management Accountability Act. This measure gives the VA Secretary the authority to fire and demote officials who aren't performing.

The principle here is simple. When you are not getting the job done, you have got to go. At the VA, it has been quite the opposite. For all the incompetence we have seen and all the lives that have been lost, the evidence shows there has been no accountability. Only half-measures and little slaps on the wrist.

At any agency that has fallen down on the job this would be unacceptable. But to have it happen in the health care system for America's veterans? I think it is shameful.

The VA is failing our veterans and their families. It is time we hold these people accountable and get people in there who can fix this backlog once and for all.

I am going to applaud Chairman MILLER and the Veterans Affairs' Committee for their leadership. I am pleased this legislation has already picked up the support of several veterans' organizations. I would urge all of my colleagues to back this critical measure.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF RALPH WILSON

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the passing of Ralph Wilson. Wilson is best known in my western New York community as the founder and owner of the Buffalo Bills for a remarkable 55-year tenure. He was a savvy businessman and true lover of the game of football.

I remember Mr. Wilson calling me to his office to discuss his concerns about the new NFL collective bargaining agreement. He believed that agreement was stacked against smaller market teams like Buffalo, and I found him to have a better command of the details than anyone on the subject. He was passionate not only about his beloved Buffalo Bills, but about its place in our community as well.

Mr. Wilson's interest in our community did not stop at football. His foundation donated over \$11 million in the past two decades, including to the Roswell Park Cancer Institute, the community food banks, and the Hospice Foundation of Western New York.

Mr. Speaker, we are forever grateful for Mr. Wilson's dedication to western New York and to our Nation as a World War II veteran. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends during this difficult time.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE WEEK

(Mr. SMITH of Nebraska asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Agriculture Week. It is a time to celebrate the extraordinary diversity, abundance, and evolution of American agriculture.

In 1960, the average U.S. farmer fed 26 people; today, Mr. Speaker, the average U.S. farmer feeds 155 people by using less land, less water, less energy, and less fertilizer.

Thanks to agriculture research which has given rise to new technologies and techniques, America's producers are adopting practices which allow them to meet food, fiber, feed, and fuel demands and preserve our natural resources for generations to come. From high-tech irrigation tools to biotechnology, growers are producing a more stable, safe, quality, and affordable food supply.

As we recognize National Agriculture Week, we have much to celebrate but many challenges ahead. Knowing the forward-thinking nature of producers, combined with these exciting advances in agriculture, I am confident we will meet all of the demands of our growing world.

As cochair of the Modern Agriculture Caucus and the rural caucus, I am committed to ensuring Federal policy reflects sound science and strives to complement, not undermine, this innovation.

LET'S PASS COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

(Mr. HIMES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because today the Democrats will present a discharge petition to force a vote in this House on something that so many Americans know to be abso-

lutely essential, which is comprehensive immigration reform.

The Senate has weighed in with 78 "yes" votes. This is a Senate where you don't get 78 votes for just about anything—bipartisan support for comprehensive immigration reform.

The reason I rise today, Mr. Speaker, is because yesterday in Financial Services we had a very interesting hearing on why debt matters. We talked a lot about what we need to do to continue to put our country on a sustainable path and to help this recovery be stronger.

We had David Cote, CEO of Honeywell; Alice Rivlin of Brookings; Doug Holtz-Eakin of the American Action Forum; and Jared Bernstein from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. They agreed on one thing enthusiastically: that one of the most important steps we can take to spur growth in our economy, and to help our fiscal situation and balance our budget, would be to pass comprehensive immigration reform. The Senate has done so. It is time for this House to do the same and stand up for the economy and American families.

GOOD LUCK, DAYTON FLYERS

(Mr. TURNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, as a proud alumnus of the University of Dayton, I am here today to wish good luck to the Dayton Flyers.

The University of Dayton men's basketball team has advanced to the NCAA tournament's Sweet 16 for the first time in 30 years. The Dayton Flyers are the only team this season to have upset two top 25 teams in the second and third rounds of the NCAA tournament.

But the city of Dayton has a history of being underestimated. Orville and Wilbur Wright started working on their so-called "flying machine" in a Dayton garage. As we all know, these pioneers of aviation went on to complete the first manned flight, transforming the way we travel and engage in commerce.

It is fitting that the University of Dayton bears the Flyer name in honor of the Dayton tradition of succeeding despite all odds.

Congratulations to the Dayton Flyers and Coach Archie Miller. You have a vast fan base of students, faculty, and alumni throughout the country who will be cheering you on tomorrow night.

ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR WOMEN

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

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, far too many women face financial pressures simply due to outdated policies that hamper their opportunities for success.

I recently hosted an event in Los Angeles with Congresswoman ROYBAL-