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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. JOLLY).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 21, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DAVID W. JOLLY 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.

CELEBRATING MEMORIAL DAY

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, next Monday is Memorial Day, one of the most solemn holidays in America. We remember those who gave their lives in ultimate sacrifice to our country, those who were wounded, those who are veterans, and those who are still serving our country in dangerous occupations around the world to defend our freedoms.

This is a day that should be solemnly celebrated, and it will be in many

places. It could be better solemnly celebrated if the United States Congress would exert a little more oversight and get a little more funding to the VA, so that we don't have veterans dying on waiting lists. We have got to get to the bottom of that scandal, and we have got to adequately fund that agency and give them permanent funding.

Beyond that, there is another group in America who have a very special Memorial Day celebration every year, and that is the United States oil industry. They are, of course, very patriotic. They don't pay much in taxes in the U.S. They have over \$100 billion stashed overseas because they don't want to pay U.S. taxes, even though they pay a higher rate many places overseas.

They are very patriotic, and so every year, they have a special celebration where they run up the price.

Now, the oil companies and their handmaidens on the Republican side of the aisle will say: It is all about shortage. All we need is to drill in sensitive areas offshore. All we need to do is build the XL pipeline, and your prices will come down.

Well, that is pretty amazing except, of course, it is a huge lie. Today, the United States of America will export more than 450,000 barrels of gasoline, while they are running the price up on Americans, saying: Hey, don't you know there is a shortage?

Funny thing, I haven't seen any little red flags or yellow flags like they used to have at gas stations saying they have got no gas. No, they have got gas, but they have got it at an exorbitant price, so this is the annual celebration.

Now, ExxonMobil, last year, they were hurting. They only made \$32.6 billion. Their last CEO, when he retired, they gave him a \$500 million bonus. They are hurting. He went out and bought oil fields with it in Africa. That is pretty cute.

There is a shortage, and that is why you are paying over four bucks a gallon in many places, particularly in my district and in the Western United States, over four bucks a gallon because of this extraordinary shortage.

So here we are, it is Memorial Day. Wouldn't it be nice if we reined in the oil companies? Wouldn't it be nice if we stopped subsidizing them with tax breaks?

Well, not on the Republican side of aisle, they think that is patriotic to subsidize the oil companies' tax rates because they need them because there is a shortage. Well, no, there isn't a shortage, but, hey, they still need and want those tax breaks, and they want to price gouge people at the pump.

So I, for one, will celebrate Memorial Day appropriately, remembering those who have served our country, but for one Member of Congress, I would like to do something about what is going on with oil and gas prices.

I would like to take away their subsidies. I would like to get the speculators on Wall Street out of the oil and gas business. They are driving up the price.

Even according to ExxonMobil, 75 cents a gallon you pay at the pump today, 75 cents of that dollar—\$4—that is going to Wall Street speculators, something that didn't use to be allowed and a bill that I voted against which deregulated that commodities markets, which was supposed to be re-regulated under Dodd-Frank, but the Republicans are opposing any and every effort to re-regulate the commodities market.

Unfortunately, there are few on my side of the aisle who are in the pockets of the oil industry, too, so we could do better. We could do better for our veterans, and we could do better for the American consumers. Let's do it.

□ 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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RECOGNIZING CHANCELLOR MARK A. NORDENBERG, UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Mark A. Nordenberg, chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, which includes regional campuses in the Pennsylvania Fifth Congressional District, in Bradford, McKean County, Pennsylvania, and Titusville, Crawford County, Pennsylvania.

This August, Chancellor Nordenberg will step down after 19 years as chancellor, but will remain at the university that he has served for over 37 years.

During Chancellor Nordenberg's tenure, the university experienced tremendous growth. Annual applications for admission climbed from 7,825 to 27,626. Overall enrollments have steadily increased. Average SAT scores for incoming students are now 185 points higher, and the university continues to expand and to modernize.

Today, the University of Pittsburgh is ranked nationally and competing for the best students in the region, the country, and the world.

Chancellor Nordenberg joined the faculty of Pitt's School of Law in 1977, eventually serving as dean and interim provost of the university. In 1995, he was elected interim chancellor by the university's board of trustees, and in 1996, he was elected chancellor.

Through Chancellor Nordenberg's vision and leadership, the University of Pittsburgh now has an outstanding foundation for success which will last for years to come.

Tomorrow, Chancellor Nordenberg will receive Pitt-Bradford's highest honor, the Presidential Medal of Distinction, which recognizes individuals who have demonstrated outstanding long-term service to the university.

It is my honor to join Dr. Alexander, president of Pitt-Bradford, and the entire University of Pittsburgh team, in offering my congratulations on receiving this important distinction.

Mr. Speaker, we thank Chancellor Nordenberg for his commitment to educational excellence, for his drive and passion to build the University of Pittsburgh into a renowned institution of higher learning.

FREE AMIR HEKMATI

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, this week, I and many others were in Lafayette Park joining the family of Amir Hekmati, my constituent, to commemorate a very sad anniversary.

For 1,000 days, Amir Hekmati, a young man born in the United States, grew up in my hometown of Flint,

Michigan. His parents emigrated to the United States long before Amir was born, in the late 1970s, from Iran. Amir Hekmati has been sitting in a prison—in Evin Prison in Tehran, for 1,000 days.

He traveled to Iran for the first time in August of 2011 because, like many other young men and young women, he wanted to explore his own roots. He had served in the United States Marine Corps, came home; and, before enrolling in school, he wanted to go visit family that he had never met and, in fact, wanted to meet his grandmother whom he had never seen before.

He was there for about 2 weeks before he was arrested. For months, nobody knew where he was, and then soon it was revealed that he had been arrested, tried, and convicted of espionage. Because he was an American who had served in the Marine Corps, he was convicted of espionage.

That death sentence that was initially executed on him was set aside, and that death sentence was suspended. Apparently, there had been a new trial, and he is now, according to a New York Times report, serving a 10-year sentence.

This is a young man who simply went to visit his family, traveled with permission, in a transparent fashion, and is now caught up in the geopolitical struggle as Iran, apparently, seeks to rejoin the international community.

One thousand days in prison—holidays have passed; we experience every one of these days, the changing of seasons. For all of us, we take these moments, these passages for granted.

For Amir Hekmati, every day is the same. Every day, he is in a cell, for many, many months, in a 3 by 3 cell, unable to even sit down for all but 10 minutes of every day.

If Iran truly seeks to rejoin the international community—of course, there are the P5+1 negotiations taking place right now. If Iran seeks to join the global community, and if this Congress is to take any agreement that might be struck seriously, Iran must now free Amir Hekmati. If they expect to be taken seriously, they cannot hold political prisoners.

Now, for most of us, we don't think there is much that we can do about this, but I think every American citizen, every Member of Congress—especially those who have joined me in a bipartisan fashion in calling upon Iran to release Amir Hekmati—can do something. We all can.

For those of you that use Twitter, #FreeAmir. Believe me, it sends a message. It sends a message across the globe. It sends a message to the Iranian people, to the Iranian Government. It sends a message to the friends and the family of Amir Hekmati that our country stands with him.

During those 1,000 days, Amir Hekmati's father has fallen ill. He has brain cancer. It is time, even if for just humanitarian purposes, it is time, long past time, for Iran to do what is right

and to release Amir Hekmati, so he can come home and be with his family.

SUPPORT OUR AIR NATIONAL GUARD

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today's congressional business is to deal with the defense authorization legislation. This is a critical bill, a real opportunity to balance our needs for a strong defense and care for our men and women in uniform, with the hard budget realities and unsustainable trend lines that we are seeing across the budget categories.

But because we are ducking the hard tradeoffs in this Defense Authorization, tradeoffs that at least the administration—to its credit—and the Pentagon laid before Congress with their recommendations. We are going to have to resort to an amendment process on the floor to use these areas of opportunity to make longer-term savings and to use part of that money to address key priorities that are short-changed.

□ 1015

Now, I have an amendment that would help support our Air National Guard. The Guard and Ready Reserves are a cost-effective way to provide support for our military establishments. They have proven their worth time and time again overseas, like in Iraq and Afghanistan, and here at home as they help us deal with natural disasters.

The Air National Guard also operates a fleet of 130 F-15 fighter jets in installations across America, but more than half these planes rely on an outmoded, limited radar technology from the 1970s. That means that for many of our pilots, their radar is older than they are. It went out of production in 1986. It limits their capacity, and it breaks down more frequently. It is less reliable. That is why my amendment will actually save money over the next 10 years.

Soon we will be voting on whether or not we will do the right thing to support this vital work of the Air National Guard. Now, during the debate last night, the opponents couldn't argue against the wisdom of making the Air Guard more effective by upgrading this outmoded radar technology that is unreliable and limits their capacity. In fact, they admitted that the little bit that the budget will do to upgrade some of them actually was helpful. They had no good reason to continue to shortchange the Guard.

Instead, during the debate, they tried to make this modest proposal into a larger debate about the one-half to two-thirds of \$1 trillion we will be spending over the next 10 years for our whole nuclear weapons program. Now, that is a debate I will welcome on the floor of the House.