



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 160

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2014

No. 128

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,
September 9, 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.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SELFLESS SERVICE OF SERGEANT FIRST CLASS SAMUEL C. "SAM" HAIRSTON

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is with profound sadness and gratitude that I rise to pay tribute to a fallen and decorated American hero.

Army Sergeant First Class Samuel C. "Sam" Hairston of Houston, Texas, was killed on August 12, 2014, in Ghazni, Afghanistan, from injuries sustained when his unit was engaged while

in support of Operation Enduring Freedom by enemy small-arms fire.

Sergeant First Class Hairston was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Born to Bennett and Josephine Hairston June 22, 1979, at Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina, Sergeant First Class Hairston was raised in Shalimar, Florida, and graduated from Choctawhatchee High School in 1997.

Sergeant First Class Hairston wanted to follow in the footsteps of his father and brother by joining our Nation's Armed Forces. After pursuing a Division I football scholarship as defensive lineman at the University of Houston and earning a bachelor's degree in economics, he joined the U.S. Army in 2003 as an infantryman.

Upon completion of the basic airborne course at Fort Benning, Georgia, he was assigned to 1st Brigade Combat Team, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in August of 2013. He selflessly served four combat tours throughout his career, which included two tours in support of both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Sergeant First Class Hairston has been described as someone whose smile could light up a room, and to his wife Tawana and stepson Hayden, he was a loving and devoted husband and father.

In terms of his military service, whenever he was thanked, he responded that serving our country was his choice and his service was so Americans can enjoy the freedoms that are all too often taken for granted.

He took pride in every mission and never expected anything in return. "An exceptional noncommissioned officer and a valued member of our team," is how he was described by Lieutenant Colonel Chris Hockenberry, Hairston's battalion commander.

Sergeant First Class Hairston's qualifications included the Ranger Tab,

Combat Infantryman Badge, Pathfinder Badge, Military Master Free Fall Parachutist Badge, and the Army Parachutist Badge.

Throughout his time in service, he was awarded the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal with three oakleaf clusters, Army Achievement Medal, Meritorious Unit Citation with two oakleaf clusters, Army Good Conduct Medal with two oakleaf clusters, the National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with two campaign stars, Iraqi Campaign Medal with two campaign stars, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.

Throughout his unwavering dedication to country, Sergeant First Class Hairston helped ensure that our constitutional rights were upheld and that our Nation was protected from harm, both here and abroad. His ultimate sacrifice will never be forgotten.

To Sergeant First Class Hairston's loving wife Mrs. Tawana Hairston; his stepson Hayden; his parents Bennett and Josephine Hairston; his brothers Junnee Cardama, Broady Hairston, and T.J. Hairston; his entire family; and friends, my wife Vicki joins me in offering our sincerest condolences and prayers.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of a grateful United States Congress and Nation, I stand here to honor Sergeant First Class Sam C. Hairston and all of those heroes we have lost.

May God continue to bless them, the men and women of our United States Armed Forces, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

LEGALIZING MARIJUANA

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

□ 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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Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, there is much that Congress deals with that seems intractable. We struggle with the great issues of war and peace. We view climate change and its devastating impacts and are paralyzed. We look at this still-simmering racial unrest and the painful events of Ferguson, Missouri, and largely are ignoring the underlying issues.

There is one area where government at the State and local level and here in Congress can make things a little easier, a little more sensible, and that is dealing with our failed policy of marijuana prohibition.

There was a sad article on the front page of *The Times* yesterday about a call center employee, paralyzed since he was 16 years old, who was fired from his job because he used medical marijuana in a State where it is legal, on his off-hours, at home at night, to control his back spasms.

That had nothing to do with his job performance, yet this person was terminated. There is a certain degree of hypocrisy, where someone having a glass of wine at home is treated radically different.

This is just one small example of a much larger problem. The cost of our failed prohibition causes untold damage to racial minorities, especially African American young men who are much more likely to be arrested and jailed, even though they use marijuana no more frequently than young White men, jailed for something most Americans now think should be legal.

That hypocrisy was on display with the NFL, who suspended a player for a year for smoking marijuana, but remember, the wifebeater was suspended for only two games until an even more graphic video of the beating forced the NFL's hand because of the public outrage; yet this is the same NFL that encourages—some would say pressures—players to be pumped with shots and pills to dull their pain, which often leads to serious consequences for these players later in life, especially prescription drug dependency.

Remember, we have an epidemic of prescription drug abuse that kills more people every year than heroin, methamphetamines, and cocaine combined, and of course, no one has ever been killed from a marijuana overdose.

We are wasting lives, law enforcement resources, and money when we have more important issues to tackle. I am pleased that my State of Oregon, which was the first State to decriminalize a small amount of marijuana, now may become the next State to legalize adult use.

We have seen significant progress here in Congress to allow the cultivation of industrial hemp, allow Kentucky tobacco farmers and Oregon ranchers to grow hemp for products that are perfectly legal and you can buy in any city in America.

We have helped rein in the Federal Government interference with the 23 States that allow over 1 million people

to use medical marijuana. People are picking up and moving to States that permit medical marijuana to get access to the therapeutic benefits of marijuana, which can reduce the violent epileptic seizures that torture their children.

It is time for us to do a reality check. Let's legalize, regulate, and tax marijuana, and then get on to those bigger problems that need our attention, like war and peace, the consequence of a failure to deal with climate change, and the epidemic of prescription drug abuse that is killing three or four Americans every hour. Let's get our priorities straight.

RADICALIZED AMERICANS FIGHTING WITH ISIS

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

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, according to a new poll released by CNN last evening, "Americans are increasingly concerned that ISIS represents a direct terror threat" and that they are "fearful that ISIS agents are living in the United States."

A Washington Post poll released this morning shows that 90 percent of the American people believe that ISIS poses a "serious" threat to the U.S.

This threat is growing, largely due to the fact that an increasing number of radicalized westerners, including more than 140 Americans, are freely traveling to Syria to link up with ISIS and al Qaeda-affiliated groups.

Consider that over the last month, while this Congress was out on recess, the number of Americans killed fighting with terrorist organizations in Syria quickly grew, signaling a trend that should be troubling to all Americans.

Earlier this summer, Moner Mohammad Abu-Salha, a 22-year-old from Florida, became the first American suicide bomber fighting in Syria for the al Qaeda-affiliated al-Nusra.

Equally concerning as his deadly act was the fact that he traveled from Syria to Florida and back again in the months before his deadly terrorist act. In August, two more Americans were reportedly killed fighting with ISIS—Douglas McArthur McCain and Abdirahmaan Muhumed, both originally from Minneapolis, Minnesota.

We must take proactive steps to discourage Americans from traveling to Syria to link up with these groups. Unfortunately, current law does not prevent Americans from traveling freely to Syria and back, which creates loopholes would-be jihadists can exploit.

Currently, unless the U.S. has solid evidence that they have joined one of these terrorist groups, the FBI cannot arrest suspects upon their return. Unfortunately, it can be very hard to prove that suspects fought with a terrorist group in Syria, due to limited U.S. intelligence about their activities in the region.

I am concerned that the absence of laws preventing unrestricted travel to Syria means the U.S. is not taking any substantial steps to discourage Americans from going over to fight. This is an untenable situation that puts our country at greater risk of attack from a radicalized American who trains and fights with these groups and later returns home. That is why I have introduced legislation in March, aimed at curbing this threat.

Over the last 6 months, since its introduction, the dramatic gains by ISIS and a growing number of foreign fighters has only reaffirmed the need for legislation to address this issue.

My bill, H.R. 4223, the International Conflicts of Concern Act, will give the President authority to temporarily restrict travel and material support to countries like Syria, and the President could add additional countries of concern when conflicts spill over into other countries, as we have seen in Iraq.

The bill would also contain important protections, allowing legitimate travel by licensed humanitarian aid workers, journalists, and other groups cleared by the U.S. Government. I want to add that this bill was developed with the input of the FBI and has been supported by Director Comey of the FBI.

I believe it is a commonsense solution to an increasingly urgent threat, and the House should bring up this bill and pass it before it recesses. Should we fail to do so, I believe that one day we will regret not doing all that we can to protect our homeland from the radicalized fighting with ISIS in Syria.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to close by encouraging the President to call on the expertise of two men who know more about fighting terrorists and insurgent threats in Iraq than anyone, General David Petraeus and General Stanley McChrystal.

Although both have retired and neither work for this administration anymore, our country would benefit greatly from their expertise as the military and intelligence community address the growing threat in Iraq. I hope the President and his team will ask for their assistance.

THE SEPTEMBER MESSAGE

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, September should be a particularly important month for this House. It will be a month of contrasts. It will be a month in which the American people will be able to see that the Republican message to the American people is, "You are on your own," while Democrats say, "We are on your side."

All right. Well, what does that mean? The Republicans' announced agenda for this month ought to be no surprise to anyone who has been paying attention to the gridlock in Congress.