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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. MESSER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 9, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable LUKE MESSER 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.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS DAY

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

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, this Saturday on January 11, people throughout our country here, people throughout the world will be observing Human Trafficking Awareness Day. The start of this new year I think is a fitting time to focus on the shameful fact that human slavery is not a relic of ancient history, that in fact it is with us today. It is a brutal reality. A reality faced by more than 20 million victims around

the world, many of them trafficked for labor, but increasingly for underaged girls. For young women, this is a case where they are exploited in this trafficking as well.

Even in my work as chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, I have learned that human trafficking is no longer just a problem "over there." It is a problem in our communities here. It is a problem in developing economies, but also it is a problem in the United States and in Europe. It is a scourge even in the communities that we serve here and that we represent.

In my own community in the last two years, the Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force assisted 250 victims. Ninety-three percent were women, most of them underage, 80 of them from foreign countries. At our November field hearing in Fullerton, the Orange County district attorney testified that, shockingly—we are speaking now about trafficking, sexual trafficking—"shockingly the average age of a child being trafficked in this country is 12" years of age. "A little girl who has not even reached her teens."

We also heard from one brave survivor, Angela Guanzon, who was trafficked from the Philippines into forced labor in Long Beach, California.

I have heard many other stories from the members of the Human Trafficking Congressional Advisory Committee that I established last year in my Los Angeles district office. The forum for communicating on trafficking between law enforcement, advocates, service organizations, and survivors has contributed profoundly to my own knowledge, my own understanding of this issue. I encourage my colleagues to get to know those on the front lines of the fight against human trafficking. Get to know them in their districts and know of their work. You are going to be informed, challenged, and inspired by what you learn.

This January designated as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month is a perfect time to shine a spotlight on the dark issue of trafficking, but awareness is only a first step. More needs to be done.

To that end, I would urge my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring H.R. 3344, the Fraudulent Overseas Recruitment and Trafficking Elimination Act, to combat one critical form of recurring abuse: namely, that is unscrupulous recruiters. By targeting the recruiters we can do a lot—these recruiters who bait foreigners to travel to the United States with promises of good jobs, but trap them in sexual exploitation or forced labor once they arrive.

For example, in my home county, the Salvation Army's Network of Emergency Trafficking Services reports that a full one-third of their clients—33 percent of their clients—were recruited in a foreign country by a labor recruiter. They got here and found it was a very different job than the one they enlisted for. This represents not only an assault on the dignity of the victim but also a subversion of United States labor laws and our nonimmigrant visa system.

In response, this legislation requires that prospective foreign workers be given accurate information about the terms of employment and be given anti-trafficking protections by U.S. laws. It prohibits recruitment fees or hidden charges used as coercive leverage against workers. In other words, once you get here to the United States, you can't find out afterwards, because they didn't disclose to you, that there are fees that you owe. Those fees are no longer allowed. Up front the employer pays those fees.

It requires foreign labor recruiters to register and remain in good standing with the Department of Labor, and it provides new incentives and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that recruiters and employers follow these disclosure and registration requirements.

□ 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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Members may contact the Foreign Affairs Committee to join this important anti-traffic initiative. I encourage you all to sign on to my legislation.

As people of goodwill around the world observe Human Trafficking Awareness Day this weekend, let us move beyond mere awareness, let us abolish this injustice, and protect and restore the dignity of those who have survived such exploitation.

INTERIM AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, our interim agreement with Iran gives us an opportunity to unwind seemingly intractable, interrelated conflicts throughout the Middle East.

There is no reason for Congress to complicate by further enhancing sanctions now that are already working. We have this 6 months to a year window to fashion a longer-term agreement. The fact that we are even talking with Iran is the most encouraging signal that we have seen in 34 years. Let's use this diplomatic window. There are hard-liners in both countries, highly suspicious, very negative, who would like to blow this agreement up.

Unless we are willing to invade and occupy Iran, even repeated bombing will delay the Iranian nuclear effort by, at best, 4 or 5 years, maybe less.

Americans have spent a trillion dollars, lost 4,000 American lives, with tens of thousands of wounded, in more than a decade in Iraq, and the country is still falling apart. Iran is bigger, stronger, and more sophisticated. I don't think you can sell that war to the American people.

Congress should calm down and give diplomacy a chance. Let's learn about this important country, its 4,000-year history, and our past mistakes with Iran, and most important, our common interest.

The Middle East has long been a simmering cauldron, with a conflict suppressed by a lid of repression held down by empire and colonial powers. That started to change a century ago with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and colonial powers trying from afar to influence human behavior by drawing lines on maps from European capitals, irrespective of religious, tribal, or ethnic realities. It set in motion a series of forces that are playing out today with tragic consequences.

Iran as the dominant Shi'a force in the region could play a huge role where we share common interest, in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan for instance.

The current situation is a result of partnerships between Congress and the Obama administration that got us to this point where Iran is willing to negotiate. Strong, effective sanctions would never have worked without careful, artful diplomacy that involved other countries like India to help us

squeeze Iran. It has worked. Let's claim credit and move on to the next steps.

We could start by trying to learn about each other. Let's promote an exchange between Iran and the United States with students, religious leaders, maybe even parliamentary members and Members of Congress. Let's focus on our shared interest, like Afghanistan, where we had earlier cooperation with Iran to help overthrow the Taliban. Let's work to make progress with the agreement and beyond.

The Congress can do this most importantly by leaving it alone. Congress shouldn't meddle, Congress shouldn't muddle, Congress shouldn't give the Iranian hard-liners who don't want any agreement at all an excuse to scuttle it.

We have an opportunity to improve the most volatile region in the world and Congress shouldn't blow that opportunity.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, 48 hours, a million-plus Americans received letters in their mailboxes. They weren't overdue tax letters. They were not letters suggesting that you are at fault. It was not a notice to say that you are no longer an American citizen. It was not a letter to say you are now relieved of any responsibility to pay any bills or to provide for your family.

It was a letter denying, or extinguishing, taking away the unemployment insurance that most Americans have come to understand that, as working Americans, having worked in their life, that they would be the recipient of these benefits during a brief lapse or an extended lapse of not being able to find work. The chronically unemployed percentage is the highest that it has been in decades, and therefore, this is not the time to delay.

I hold in my hand as well a resume of a competent worker, a college graduate who has the responsibility to support his family and who has been looking for work for 2 years, earnestly, energetically, and intensely, and cannot find work.

The clock is ticking on the 30 hours in the United States Senate, but the real concern is my friends in this body. Recognizing that these letters deal with people's lives, and to make a representation that all is well, unemployment generally is 7 percent. However, it was lower than that when President Bush signed the unemployment insurance benefits in 2008. These guys, these distinguished Americans, misfits, why can't they find work? Twenty thousand-plus are veterans looking for work, men and women who served in the United States military, or, as we met in the White House on Tuesday, a mother of two distinguished men who are serving in Afghanistan.

So the 1.3 million languish while we are trying to make a determination that may not be able to be made. Frankly, I would ask that we all be reasonable. I would simply make the point that it is an emergency.

I want to pause for a moment and thank the Houston Apartment Association that has worked with me and has sent a letter to all of their members asking for those 12,000, some of whom are residents of apartments in Harris County, to be sensitive and tolerant of those individuals who can document that they were the beneficiaries or the recipients of unemployment insurance that was cut off on December 28. I want to applaud them for their sensitivity in dealing with those particular individuals. I ask mortgage companies and utility companies and city water bill companies to be tolerant as well, to be working with families who are basically without a lifeline.

□ 1015

But the issue before us is the fact that these letters have gone to people such as this woman, who has looked for work every day. She liked her job and was laid off for no fault of her own.

Right now, we have the opportunity to pass a 3-month emergency relief—some of us have introduced bills for 1 year—and then contemplate, discuss, and work with what might be the appropriate way of funding the continuation.

No person unemployed, chronically or not, is happy with an unemployment benefit check. What they are happy with, Mr. Speaker, is the ability to work and to provide for their family.

So I would make the argument that as we discuss privacy issues on the Affordable Care Act, which are already taken care of by CMS, today and tomorrow on the floor we should be passing unemployment insurance. I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me, recognizing that Americans want to work. Let's help them transition with a bridge of unemployment insurance.

OPPOSITION TO UNESCO FUNDING

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, last November, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, came to meet with my colleagues and me who serve on the Foreign Affairs Committee. In that meeting, Ambassador Power told us that despite U.S. law that prohibits any funding to UNESCO because of its decision to admit a nonexistent state of Palestine to its membership, the administration was going to make it a priority to seek waiver authority to continue U.S. taxpayer funding to UNESCO.

Indeed, this is coming to fruition. There is a congressional push by some to grant the administration this waiver