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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. EMMER of Minnesota).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 2, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable Tom EMMER 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 6, 2015, 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 1:50 p.m.

DHS FUNDING

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

Mr. TAKAI. Mr. Speaker, there is a letter from me sitting on your desk today asking you to pass a clean funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security. All Democrats in the House have introduced and cosponsored a clean bill, and the Republican-controlled Senate has passed one as well.

Mr. Speaker, clause 2 of House rule XXI prohibits inclusion of language “changing existing law,” commonly referred to as the prohibition on legis-

lating on appropriations bills; yet that is why the House comes in today facing another deadline that puts our national security and DHS workforce at risk—because we are trying to legislate through appropriations.

I am completely in favor of the deliberative process by which this body is supposed to conduct itself, and, while I support the President’s executive action on immigration reform, I would also support a robust debate on it in this House.

However, you know as well as I do that forcing this debate through holding hostage the funding of a critical component of our Nation’s security is not the proper way to go about having this debate.

At the beginning of the 114th Congress, you wrote an op-ed with Senate Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL entitled “Now We Can Get Congress Going.” That is what I wrote to you and urged you to do today, Mr. Speaker.

Let’s pass a clean DHS funding bill and get going with the tough legislative choices that we have to make this year.

FORT DRUM SEQUESTRATION AND CENTCOM CODEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. STEFANIK) for 5 minutes.

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the 10th Mountain Division, their service to Fort Drum, the 21st District of New York, our North Country community, and our Nation.

For 30 years, the brave men and women of the 10th Mountain Division have stood in harm’s way to protect and defend our country. Since September 11, 2001, the 10th Mountain Division has been the most actively deployed division to Iraq and Afghani-

stan. Too many of our soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice and lost their lives in service.

As leaders in Congress, we have an obligation to protect and serve our constituents and members of our Armed Forces. We cannot repay the debt we owe these servicemembers and their families, but we can work to honor their legacy and recognize what they have done for us.

We must protect the promises we have made to these brave individuals and strengthen our Nation’s commitment to helping them as they return from combat. In Congress, I will do everything I can to protect the interests of Fort Drum and to ensure the 10th Mountain Division has the necessary resources they need to do their work.

It is critical for Fort Drum and the entire 21st Congressional District to have a voice at the table to fight on behalf of our military families and veterans.

To that end, I am honored to serve on the House Armed Services Committee as the vice chair for the Subcommittee on Readiness and as a member of the Military Personnel Subcommittee and Intelligence, Emerging Threats, and Capabilities Subcommittee.

As a member of these subcommittees, I will work to ensure the Defense Department, our troops, and Fort Drum have the necessary tools they require to defend our Nation from those that wish to do us harm.

However, we continue to see threats to our national security increase, and reductions to our military remain due to the Budget Control Act and sequestration. These substantial budget cuts will have significant negative impacts to Fort Drum and the U.S. military.

Under sequestration, the Pentagon’s proposal states that Fort Drum could lose up to 16,000 soldiers and civilian jobs. This loss of jobs will have severe and devastating effects to the installation, the North Country community, New York, and the entire Nation.

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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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General Dempsey and our military leaders have declared time and time again that sequestration reduces our Armed Forces' readiness and their capabilities, and it unnecessarily puts our men and women in uniform at increased risk.

Here, we expect our servicemen and -women to protect our Nation; however, the imposed budget cuts due to sequestration inhibit their readiness and threaten our national security. It is our duty to ensure our Nation is protected and, in doing so, maintain the operational readiness of our military.

I pledge to work to preserve and strengthen our Nation's Armed Forces and follow in the footsteps of Representative John McHugh by advocating for our troops and veterans stationed in the 21st Congressional District of New York and in our surrounding communities.

Two weeks ago, I had the honor to attend a small congressional delegation visit to Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan. On this trip, I was privileged to meet with soldiers who are based out of Fort Drum, as well as many others who have trained there.

What an opportunity it was to visit with the troops from the Resolute Support headquarters forces, USFOR-A soldiers, and counterterrorism operations forces. I thanked them for their service and discussed ways we can protect and strengthen Fort Drum for our district.

This trip was truly essential in order for me to gain a personal perspective of the circumstances under which so many of our brave soldiers from Fort Drum have served abroad.

Additionally, I was able to meet with many important foreign dignitaries, including King Abdullah of Jordan, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, and Iraqi President Fuad Masum, to discuss issues of concern to the region. These nations and their leaders play a key role in the effort among Arab nations to combat ISIS and other terrorist organizations.

The discussions and meetings with these dignitaries were informative and useful. I believe that continued open dialogue and conversation with these leaders will be incredibly beneficial to maintain and establish our Nation's perspective on defense policy.

This trip gave me a chance to hear from our servicemen and -women on the ground and other national leaders about real solutions related to stabilizing the region, continued threats to our own national security, the readiness of our Armed Forces, and the tools they need to keep our country safe.

Serving the Fort Drum community in Congress and as a member of the House Armed Services Committee is an incredible honor. I am beyond thankful to our men and women in uniform and grateful to their families for their service to our community.

Thank you to you and your loved ones for keeping our Nation safe.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF MRS. ALLIEFAIR ROGERS

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

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the milestone in the life of Mrs. Alliefair Rogers who, this week, is celebrating her 100th birthday. Mrs. Rogers is also, incidentally, a second-generation centurion, as her mother, Ida Jane, also lived to the age of 103.

Throughout her life in the past century, Mrs. Rogers has witnessed some of the most significant moments that have shaped our Nation. Born during the onset of World War I, Mrs. Rogers was only 2 years old when America entered the Great War, sending our doughboys across the Atlantic.

By the time she was 5 years old, the first radio stations were going on the air in America, prohibition was enacted, and women for the first time had the right to vote. By her 12th birthday, Charles Lindbergh had flown across the Atlantic Ocean, and the first motion picture with sound was played in theaters. At the age of 14, she witnessed the beginning of the Great Depression.

Just months before turning 25, Mrs. Rogers learned of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and, over the next 5 years, said goodbye to family members and friends as they left Walhalla, South Carolina, to fight against the Axis Powers.

Before her 31st birthday, she had witnessed the D-day invasion, the Battle of the Bulge, the Battle of Iwo Jima, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the surrender of both Germany and Japan. By the age of 33, she witnessed the rebirth of Israel as a nation; and, at 40, America sent troops overseas to fight in Korea.

By her 50th birthday, she had lived through the building of the Berlin Wall, America's first satellite in space, the deployment of forces to Vietnam, the Cuban missile crisis, and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

By 60 years old, Mrs. Rogers witnessed the end of the Vietnam war, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the first human to step foot on the moon.

Within the next 15 years, by the age of 75, Mrs. Rogers experienced the first resignation of a United States President, the invention of the personal computer, the first woman Supreme Court Justice, the end of the cold war, and the beginning of the space shuttle program.

In her lifetime, Mrs. Rogers has witnessed the administration of 17 United States Presidents and a significant portion of this Nation's history.

Today, I join with the many friends and family who are celebrating the virtuous and faith-led life of my aunt Mrs. Alliefair Rogers and wish her a very happy 100th birthday.

ONGOING IRAN NUCLEAR TALKS

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my serious concerns about the ongoing Iran nuclear talks. Iran is no friend to the United States or our allies. Iran remains the foremost state sponsor of terrorism in the world.

Iran has continued to develop intercontinental ballistic missile technology. The only legitimate purpose of such technology is to deliver a nuclear payload.

Don't just take my word for it. Lieutenant General Vincent Stewart, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, recently wrote in his statement for the record to the House Armed Services Committee:

The Islamic Republic of Iran continues to threaten U.S. strategic interests in the Middle East. Iran's actions and policies are designed to further its goal of becoming the dominant regional power, as well as to enhance its strategic depth. Tehran views the United States as its most capable adversary and has fashioned its military strategy and doctrine accordingly.

In terms of nuclear capabilities, General Stewart goes on to say:

We continue to assess that Iran's goal is to develop capabilities that would allow it to build missile-deliverable nuclear weapons, should a decision be made to do so. The regime faces no insurmountable technical barriers to producing a nuclear weapon, making Iran's political will the central issue.

One Arab official recently told The Wall Street Journal: "We prefer a collapse of the diplomatic process to a bad deal."

Since they started in 2009, the negotiations with Iran have been marked by missed deadline after missed deadline. It seems like each time details of the deal are leaked to the press, the United States is giving up more, whether it is the number of centrifuges or the length of the deal.

□ 1215

Just last week, Secretary of State John Kerry came before the House Foreign Affairs Committee and pleaded for more time and understanding as the State Department continues to hold talks about Iran's nuclear program. He asked it to sit silently while the details are negotiated in secret. He urged us to just trust him and his team.

Mr. Speaker, it is becoming increasingly hard to trust an administration that continually fails at these kinds of negotiations. Look at the Bergdahl deal when he gave away five high-level al Qaeda officials. Look at the recent talks with Cuba in which the United States received very little while we released Cuban spies and pledged open trade relations. And we can't forget about President Obama telling Russian President Dmitry Medvedev that he will have "more flexibility" to deal with nuclear issues after the 2012 Presidential elections—flexibility to deal with Vladimir Putin. Far too often they give away the bank, and we get very little in return.