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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. FARENTHOLD).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 17, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BLAKE FARENTHOLD 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 11:50 a.m.

END IMMIGRANT FAMILY DETENTION

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, you are in the presence of greatness. No, not me, but I am flattered if that was your first thought. Rather, I speak of my excellent grandson, who has come to Washington and to the floor of the House of Representatives to see his grandpa at work.

Tonight, Luisito, who is 12, will be my escort, along with his grandma, at the annual White House picnic for

Members of Congress and their families. It would take way more than the allotted 5 minutes to enumerate all of the reasons for this grandfather's pride, so let me just say I am looking forward to showing him off at tonight's gathering.

But more than tonight's picnic, what I am really looking forward to is Father's Day. This Sunday, in Chicago, along with Luisito, my grandson, I will be with his dad and my daughters, who always make the old man feel loved.

And this Father's Day, I will be especially thankful for being allowed to have my family around me, because on Monday, I will be visiting with hundreds of children who cannot be with their dads.

On Monday, I will be joining seven of my colleagues in San Antonio to visit the two largest family detention facilities in the country. Karnes and Dilley are where moms and their children are being kept behind bars awaiting resolution of their immigration cases seeking asylum.

Remember a year ago when tens of thousands of children and young people were fleeing violence in three countries in Central America? The Republicans thought that these children would bring this country to its knees, and anti-immigration groups organized mobs to protest and keep children out of detention facilities in their communities. Do you remember that?

Well, many mothers with small children were also fleeing to the U.S. last year, and they are still being held in detention facilities, which are operated by private prison companies in Texas and Pennsylvania. They are detained for the completely lawful act of seeking asylum. My colleagues and I are going to see firsthand what is going on.

The minority whip, Mr. HOYER, and two of my closest allies on the family detention issue, Ms. LOFGREN and Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, both of California, are going, and we will be hosted by our col-

league from Texas, Mr. CASTRO, as we visit the two facilities.

I am sure that Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel, and even private companies who are contracted to run the facilities and profit from the incarceration of other people, are trying their best to make the conditions of detention for these moms and kids as humane as they can.

But, you see, that misses the point. We shouldn't be holding vulnerable women and children in detention. We have mothers and small children living in jail-like facilities with uncertain futures, limited access to legal counsel, and this has been going on for some time, for almost a year for some of them. Even with schools and laundry and TVs, they are still being held behind fences.

Moms still have to explain to the youngest children that, no, in fact, they do not know when they can leave or whether they will be deported back to the violent countries they fled after months in detention.

Children who face trauma, gangs, murder, and sexual assault in their neighborhoods were forced to leave alone or in groups or with a parent. They faced all sorts of dangers—smugglers and predators—on the journey to northern Mexico, where we know assault, robbery, and rape are commonplace. Then they crossed the U.S. border, often with the guidance of additional smugglers and criminals, and, following the process in the U.S. law, presented themselves to authorities to request asylum.

Now, because we have not put money into our immigration court system and, by the way, because we have not created ways for people to come here with visas instead of smugglers, we are all paying a higher price to house and feed moms and kids when much cheaper monitoring and supervision options are available. Why? The government feels that imprisoning these children

□ 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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and moms, even in relatively humane conditions, will be a deterrent to others.

But 136 House Democrats, including all 8 Members traveling to Texas on Monday, have asked the Secretary of Homeland Security to end the practice of holding moms and children in detention when there are other ways to get the job done.

The children are paying the highest cost. It doesn't take a developmental expert to know that weeks and months in detention in prison-like conditions, having already lived through weeks and months and years of desperation, are not conducive to good child development.

But with my Republican friends, it is usually not the human cost that matters. So let me break it down another way.

At \$343 per person per day, we are spending \$125,000 per detainee per year—\$125,000. But the alternatives to detention we could be using cost about \$5.50 a day, or about \$2,000 a year. That is cost savings logic that even in Washington we can understand.

Mr. Speaker, regardless of how you feel about the funding and regardless of how you feel about immigration or policy issues, Central America, or any other issues, you cannot lose sight of the fact that we are talking about children.

As a father, I will not be able to look at those children without seeing my grandson, and they are probably a lot like your children and grandchildren, too. I am going to Texas for myself to see these women and children we are holding, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

PAHRUMP VA CLINIC

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

Mr. HARDY. Mr. Speaker, we live in America, a nation conceived in liberty and consecrated by the service and sacrifice of our military men and women.

Veterans throughout the country depend on our integrity to keep our promises. We promise to care for their health after they come home from battle; and yet, too often, we delay making good on the promise.

Specifically, why have veterans of Pahrump, Nevada, had the promise of a new clinic dangled over their heads for years? Construction was finally approved nearly 1 year ago, and the ground remains unbroken.

Later today, the VA is holding a town hall in Pahrump. My staff will be there to hear the latest updates. I hope they will finally have something to tell the veterans there other than what they have shared with me.

Something is very wrong with the VA right now. My advocacy for the veterans of my district, especially those who need better and more accessible health care now, will not cease.

Let's not leave our veterans with more unmet promises. We can do better

for the more than 8,000 veterans of Nye County, Nevada.

STOP MESSING AROUND WITH FAILED TRADE AGREEMENTS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, 44 days—44 days—that is when the highway trust fund runs dry.

Now, this isn't a surprise. We have been kicking the can down the road for awhile. The Republicans have been in charge for 4½ years. And today, the Ways and Means Committee is, rather begrudgingly, holding its first hearing on the issue of the highway trust fund. However, they have already foreclosed the options.

The chairman and the Republican leadership have said: We can't do user fees the way Dwight David Eisenhower and Ronald Reagan did. That is off the table. We are going to come up with some other creative or phony way to pay for these investments.

And they pretty much have said they are going to try to kick the can down the road until the end of December.

Well, those sorts of patches won't deal with the massive pothole that we have with our infrastructure in this country: 140,000 bridges need repair or replacement; 40 percent of the service of the National Highway System is degraded to the point where you have to dig it up and put in a new roadbed, not just pave it over a little bit; \$86 billion backlog to bring our transit system just up to a state of good repair—not to build out more options to get people out of congestion and traffic, just to bring the existing system up to a state of repair. It is so bad that in the Nation's Capital they are unnecessarily killing people because of a system that is outmoded, obsolete, and defective.

But we are the United States of America. We can't afford to invest, according to Republicans. They don't distinguish between investment and spending, unless it is the Pentagon, where spending is good. But rebuilding American infrastructure, they can't find the money for that.

Luckily, there is furious, furious activity going on now. The President went to the baseball game last week for the first time in 7 years. He showed up at the House baseball game. He came to the Democratic Caucus last week. He sent three secretaries here. He is inviting groups down to the White House, bringing them down by motorcade. He is on the phone with JOHN BOEHNER, his former archenemy. They are furiously, furiously at work.

Unfortunately, what they are scheming over is how to undo what we did last week, blocking the last worst trade agreement that America will ever have, saying: We want a new paradigm on trade. No more failed trade policies for this country. It is not working, to just rebuild or build upon the massive profits of multinational

corporations, hoping some of it might trickle down.

Actually, it has just led to job exports because they can get 30-cent-an-hour labor in Vietnam. They desperately want this agreement. And Malaysia, hey, the House stripped out the minor restrictions on human trafficking so that U.S. companies could feel free to go to Malaysia.

So they are furiously plotting what way they can trick us or somehow overcome 85 percent of the Democrats in the House caucus here and a number of Republicans who have concerns about these failed trade deals.

Now, just think—just think—if Speaker BOEHNER, President Obama, and corporate America assembled, were just working to help us find a solution to our crumbling infrastructure, because it is certainly important to everybody in this country. If we found that solution, if we moved forward with a long-term bill, we could, instead of having to argue over assistance for workers who are going to lose their jobs because of this trade agreement, we could be hiring hundreds of thousands of Americans, and not just construction workers. This would involve manufacturing. For transit, it involves high tech. It involves small business. It involves minority business enterprises. It involves family-wage jobs where people can make a living, not getting retrained to go to McDonald's because their job was sent to Asia or Mexico or someplace else.

We have a tremendous opportunity. Stop messing around with these failed trade agreements, and let's put our heads together and figure out how to pay for a long-term transportation bill and get this country moving again.

LGBT PRIDE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, June is national LGBT Pride Month, and so I rise today to honor and recognize the determination, advocacy, contributions, and talents of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans.

I was 15 years old, a high school student in a small town, when I gave my first gay rights speech. I did not know in 1975 that I would one day have the opportunity to be here on the floor of the House of Representatives to support equal rights, but I did know that it is wrong to discriminate against fellow Americans because of who they love.

And I think I knew on some level that my brother Jamie was gay. I was, and still remain, committed to stand with those who fight bigotry, discrimination, and violence against those who love another.

And looking back, I am so deeply thankful to stand here today and to celebrate the remarkable progress we have made in recent years. That progress is due to the tireless determination and enduring struggle of