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House of Representatives

The House met at noon 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 23, 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 1:50 p.m.

END HUNGER NOW

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, last Congress, we passed a new farm bill. As a member of the Agriculture Committee, I could not support it, either in committee or on the House floor. I couldn't support it because it cut SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, our Nation's premier antihunger program. I couldn't support a bill that I believed made hunger worse in America.

At the time, members of both parties offered many assurances that the changes to SNAP's relationship with LIHEAP, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, wouldn't hurt SNAP recipients, that the changes were merely "closing a loophole" rather than a true benefit cut.

I was skeptical of those assurances at the time—and with good reason. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that the change would reduce benefits for about 850,000 low-income households by an average of \$90 a month in the 14 States and the District of Columbia that took advantage of a State option to link LIHEAP and SNAP. States chose to use this option to alleviate some of the heartbreaking choices that poor families face. Seniors and the disabled are all too often the ones forced to choose between buying food or heating their homes or paying for their prescriptions.

Throughout the farm bill process, antihunger advocates in the "heat and eat" States vigorously opposed the LIHEAP cuts to SNAP, saying their effects would be much greater than the Congressional Budget Office estimates. I'm sorry to say they were right. These cuts are much more than just abstract numbers. We are starting to hear real stories from real people who are seeing their SNAP benefits cut. Hunger is worse in this country because of these cuts.

Take Judy Beals, a disabled senior from Belleville, Wisconsin. Earlier this year, she saw her SNAP benefit cut from \$120 a month to \$16 a month. Let me repeat that, she now gets \$16 a month in food assistance. That is it. That is unconscionable. How could anyone afford to feed themselves for a month on that?

Ms. Beals says she is forced to eat just once a day now that her SNAP benefit has been cut as she tries to figure out how to pay her other bills. To add insult to injury, Ms. Beals found

out that her SNAP benefit had been cut at the register at the grocery store with a full cart of groceries.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Beals' story is not unique. The Hunger Task Force in Milwaukee estimates that, in Wisconsin alone, 255,000 families have seen their SNAP benefits reduced since the LIHEAP cuts went into effect.

We are hearing similar stories in New Jersey, another State that did not extend its heat and eat program. The Food Bank of South New Jersey estimates that 160,000 New Jersey residents have lost about \$90 a month in SNAP benefits due to the farm bill cut.

Now, to be fair, there are several States, including my home State of Massachusetts, that did the right thing and found a way, mostly with State funds, to make up the money lost by the LIHEAP cut in the farm bill. Republican and Democratic Governors stepped up and recognized that those already struggling to put food on the table would be worse off if they didn't find a way to fix the cut. In those States that did not make up the money, we will continue to hear stories of people who have seen their SNAP benefit cut.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to serve on the House Agriculture Committee. Since the beginning of this Congress, the committee has been conducting a top-to-bottom review of the SNAP program. Now, I have no idea where these hearings are going and, once again, we have heard assurances that there will be no cuts in SNAP, but I have this sinking feeling in my stomach that these hearings are not leading to a place that is good for millions of struggling Americans.

The fact is SNAP is a good program. It works. It is effective, and it is efficient. It is one of the most efficiently run Federal programs that exists, with an unbelievably low error rate.

Instead of cutting SNAP or making other harmful policy changes, we

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should be strengthening the program. Democratic and Republican witnesses alike have testified before the Agriculture Committee that the SNAP benefit is already too low.

We have heard that the certification and recertification process is time-consuming and onerous, especially for working families. We have heard about people who are eligible to get renewed benefits who fall off the program because of these onerous, new requirements.

We have heard from charities that they cannot solve the problems of hunger on their own. Charities do incredible work, but they cannot meet the demand for food assistance. They need a strong Federal partner.

We need better coordination among all stakeholders—Federal agencies, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and businesses—to end hunger. That is why I have been advocating for a White House conference on food, nutrition, and hunger. We need a coordinated, holistic plan to end hunger now.

If we make further cuts to SNAP, we will no doubt hear more stories like Ms. Beals where those who are already struggling to put food on the table see their food assistance benefits cut.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is that we should not be making hunger worse in this country. We should end hunger now.

CONGRATULATIONS TO JUAN FELIPE HERRERA

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and pay tribute to Juan Felipe Herrera, who was recently appointed to serve as the United States Poet Laureate.

The son of migrant farmworkers, Mr. Herrera is the first Latino American to be appointed to this position and has published more than a dozen short stories, novels, and collections of poetry.

In 2008, he was awarded the National Book Critics Circle Award, and in 2012 he was appointed California's Poet Laureate.

Never one to shy away from experimentation, Mr. Herrera conducted a 2-year poetry project, entitled, "The Most Incredible and Biggest Poem on Unity in the World," where California residents of all ages submit their writings on unity. The project resulted in a 170-page collection of poems on unity and how we as Americans can come together.

A recent retiree from the University of California, Riverside, Mr. Herrera taught creative writing and worked with young people in the Inland Empire by creating an antibullying poetry project that allows kids affected by bullying to channel their feelings through poetry. Poetry, after all, is an incredibly powerful medium.

In his work, "Let Me Tell You What a Poem Brings," Herrera spoke of poetry's impact, saying:

Before you go further,
let me tell you what a poem brings,
first, you must know the secret, there is no poem
to speak of, it is a way to attain a life without boundaries,
yes, it is that easy, a poem, imagine me telling you this,
instead of going day by day against the razors, well,
the judgments, all the tick-tock bronze, a leather jacket
sizing you up, the fashion mall, for example, from
the outside you think you are being entertained,
when you enter, things change, you get caught by surprise,
your mouth goes sour, you get thirsty, your legs grow cold
standing still in the middle of a storm, a poem, of course,
is always open for business too, except, as you can see,
it isn't exactly business that pulls your spirit into
the alarming waters, there you can bathe, you can play,
you can even join in on the gossip—the mist, that is,
the mist becomes central to your existence.

As a former student of Juan Felipe Herrera's, I offer my congratulations and know that he will continue to inspire and move us with his words as our next Poet Laureate.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 10 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FARENTHOLD) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Barry Black, Chaplain of the United States Senate, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

Sovereign Lord, Your kingdom cannot be shaken.

Thank You for inviting us to ask and receive, to seek and find, and to knock for doors to open. Lord, forgive us when we forfeit our blessings because of our failure to ask. Remind us that we have not because we ask not.

Inspire our lawmakers to harness prayer power continuously. May they follow Your admonition to pray without ceasing. Throughout this day, may they repeatedly ask You for wisdom and guidance. May their fervent prayers make a positive impact on the legislative process.

We pray in Your great name.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

CONGRATULATING JOE RAMSTAD

(Mr. EMMER of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Joe Ramstad, a high school senior from Forest Lake, Minnesota.

This impressive 18-year-old from my district was recently named the 2015 Star in Agriscience by the Minnesota Future Farmers of America for his work teaching a local agricultural literacy program.

Agriculture is a vital part of Minnesota's economy, and we are dependent on these young men and women to ensure that agriculture remains a bright and thriving industry in our State.

In the fall, Joe will be heading to the University of Minnesota with plans to work toward an agricultural education degree. Eventually, he hopes to work in an urban setting to educate students on a variety of agricultural opportunities that exist.

I applaud Joe and all Future Farmers of America for their interest and passion in agriculture and Minnesota.

Thank you, and congratulations on your recent honor, Joe.

HUMANE COSMETICS ACT

(Mr. BEYER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a bill that Representatives MCSALLY, CÁRDENAS, JOE HECK, and I have introduced, the Humane Cosmetics Act.

The Humane Cosmetics Act would phase out the use of animal-based testing for cosmetic products. It will eventually prohibit the sale of cosmetics tested on animals in foreign countries, making sure that only safe products tested with cutting-edge technology enter the American market.

It is time for us to end the painful and completely unnecessary process of testing American cosmetics on animals. Safer, more cost-effective, and