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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 26, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RICK W. ALLEN 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.

529 COLLEGE SAVINGS PLANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, paying for college is hard work, and it is getting more difficult as tuition and fees continue to increase at rapid rates.

Fortunately, American families have an investment tool known as a 529 plan to help them save for their child's college education. Since 2001, students have been able to withdraw earnings from these plans tax free if the funds are used to pay for qualified higher education expenses.

It was disheartening to learn last week that President Obama now wants to tax those withdrawals and treat the earnings as student income, which would hurt a child's chances of receiving financial aid. With student loan debt surpassing credit card debt, it is incredibly irresponsible of the President to take away this valuable tool that millions of American families use to save for college.

House Republicans will fight this attempt to raise taxes on hardworking American families. We want to encourage, not discourage, families from investing in their child's future.

PRESIDENT EARNS THREE PINOCCHIOS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, "Our diplomacy is at work with respect to Iran where, for the first time in a decade, we have halted the progress of its nuclear program and reduced its stockpile of nuclear material."

This absurd claim by the President last week earned him three Pinocchios from The Washington Post. Many disagree, including a former International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, official, who says:

It appears that the production of centrifuge components continues. No new nuclear components have been installed, but it does not mean that the production of those came to a halt.

For over a decade, the United States, along with the rest of the U.N. Security Council, has tried, but failed, to reach a deal with Tehran on its nuclear weapon program. Iran has defiantly marched toward developing nuclear weapons, while refusing to negotiate with the United States in good faith. Instead, its leaders have continued to call for the destruction of Israel and the destruction of the United States. Now, isn't that lovely.

Just this November, in the midst of nuclear negotiations, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps released this statement:

The United States is still the great Satan and number one enemy of the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Republic and the Iranian nation.

Iran's actions over the years are not surprising. After all, it is the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism. Using both its own military operatives and its proxy, Hezbollah, Iran has planned attacks, terror, and murder throughout the globe. Hezbollah is the puppet, but Iran pulls the strings.

Finally, after years of Iran stalling and defying calls to halt its nuclear weapon development, the West played hardball with sanctions, primarily targeting Iran's bank and energy industries. The sanctions worked. Iran's GDP dropped for the first time in 20 years, and Iran finally came to the negotiating table.

Then came the white flag and the great retreat of 2013. The administration relaxed sanctions just when Iran was beginning to feel the consequences of its actions. Relaxing sanctions has helped Iran, helped its economy, and resulted in Iran reverting to its defiant ways.

Mr. Speaker, sanctions worked. Now is not the time to retreat, appease and play the Chamberlain. If anything, we should increase sanctions. Congress is trying to do that, but the President has now publicly told Congress—and Iran—that he will veto any legislation that increases sanctions. This seems to be at odds with United States national security. Negotiators in Europe and the U.S. want to relax sanctions. They are acting like timid sheep. They cannot lay down with the jackal of the desert, Iran, for they shall be his mutton meal. Mr. Speaker, loosening up on sanctions is foolish, dangerous, and not dealing in reality.

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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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Further, the Iranian negotiations do not even discuss intercontinental ballistic missiles. Why is Iran building intercontinental ballistic missiles? Prime Minister Netanyahu said it best:

Iran isn't building ICBMs for Israel. They have missiles that can hit us. They are building ICBMs to hit America.

Iran wants ICBMs to carry a nuclear weapon across the pond to us, the U.S. A top adviser to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani recently said:

Obama is the weakest of all U.S. Presidents.

Now is the time for the leader of the free world to prove Iran wrong. The world, including our enemies, are watching. The U.S. must make it clear and unequivocal: there will be no reductions in sanctions without verified steps to show that Tehran is abandoning, not just freezing, its nuclear weapon program. If Iran obtains nukes, the consequences are all bad. Israel will be less secure. The United States will be less secure. Other nations, like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt, will all seek and obtain nukes to balance power in the Middle East.

The Iranian Government cannot be dealt with like normal countries. This “hug diplomacy” with them is not in the national security interest of the U.S. Their Supreme Leader has never wavered on his religious and political agenda to destroy the United States. Iran must be forced to cease its nuclear weapon program by sanctions. We must impose such sanctions that cripple Iran's economy to force the Iranians to stop their nuclear weapon development. And hopefully at some point the people of Iran will soon have had enough warmongering by its leaders and replace their government.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is just the way it is.

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 8 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. COLLINS of New York) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

We give You thanks, O God, for giving us another day.

We ask Your blessing upon this people's House, as we are in the beginning days of this new Congress. Encompass with Your power all the walls of this building, truly a symbol to the world of

inalienable rights and the freedom of people.

Guide and protect Your elected servants in government and all who work in this place. May all who visit here be treated with respect and kindness.

May the comings and goings of Your people be under the seal of Your loving care and all work accomplished here this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

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 Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PITTS 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.

REMEMBERING CHIEF JAMES ALLEN

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

Mr. WOMACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of a terrific leader and public servant in northwest Arkansas, Rogers Police Chief James Allen, who passed away last Thursday after a long battle with cancer.

Chief Allen began his law enforcement career in 1977 as a patrolman and EMT for the Jacksonville, Arkansas, Police Department, and then served with the Arkansas Alcoholic Beverage Control Enforcement Division and the Pulaski County Sheriff's Office before moving to Bentonville in 1989, where he enjoyed 22 years of faithful and dedicated service as that city's chief.

In 2011, Chief Allen left Bentonville to serve my hometown of Rogers, where his leadership and professionalism were admired by all. He leaves behind a law enforcement community shaped impeccably by a firm but fair leadership standard.

Our two communities, Mr. Speaker, mourn with his family and friends, and it is with a heavy heart that we say good-bye to this respected law enforcement professional.

Rest in peace, Chief Allen. Our State and Nation are forever grateful for your service.

STUDENT LOAN DEBT CRISIS

(Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania asked and was given permis-

sion to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to be here and speak on the House floor for the first time. I want to thank my constituents, the 13th Congressional District of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia and Montgomery County, for giving me this unique opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I am here to speak about an issue that affects millions of Americans in the middle class, myself included—the student loan debt crisis. While I applaud President Obama's announcement of the America's College Promise proposal, which would provide 2 years of community college to responsible students, we do need to make expansion of higher education more enduring through the weight of legislative action.

According to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, student loan debt has become the largest form of consumer debt in the United States other than mortgages. The financial load on America's students has more than tripled over the past decade to well over \$1 trillion. The formidable costs that aspiring students face as they consider college or trade school poses an enormous obstacle to their personal and professional development.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to many other occasions to speak about this issue, as we clearly have to deal with it as a nation and come together.

INDIA HUMAN RIGHTS

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the state of religious freedom and pluralism in India. In a very troubling pattern, India's historic pluralism is being replaced with intolerance, division, and majoritarianism.

Reports from NGOs, one of which I will submit for the RECORD today, have documented a rise in attacks by Hindu nationalists against minority Christian populations in the first 100 days of the new government. Continuing reports show a pattern of targeting religious minorities, including India's notably moderate Muslim population. The burning of churches, brutal beatings, intimidation, and arrests of pastors have created a tenuous climate in Indian society.

As the government embarks on economic reforms, it should not ignore the plight of minorities. Newly elected Prime Minister Modi must speak out and act on this violence. Furthermore, the Obama administration must forcibly speak out on behalf of oppressed populations. Human rights should be elevated in the strategic dialogue between our two countries. Our government must display moral clarity in our approach to gross violations of international religious freedom—no matter where they occur.