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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. DUNCAN of Tennessee).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 21, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN J. DUNCAN, Jr., 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.

DRUG CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, my State of West Virginia is experiencing a crisis. West Virginia is leading the country in a rather grim category: drug overdoses. This issue goes beyond party lines, and it is ripping our State apart.

President Obama is bringing national attention to our drug crisis by coming to my district this afternoon to discuss the prescription drug and heroin epidemic.

The statistics are disturbing. Overdoses in West Virginia increased by 134 percent between 2012 and 2013, which accounts for about 34 drug overdose deaths per 100,000 West Virginia residents. This overdose rate is more than double the national average.

There is no magical solution to this epidemic. We need local, State, and Federal officials to work together to effectively fight back. One of the ways that we can do this is to have the Federal Government support the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas program, also known as HIDTA. The HIDTA program provides needed funds to law enforcement to combat drug trafficking while also helping local treatment and prevention efforts.

I have been hosting roundtable discussions across my district to hear directly from communities that are affected by the drug epidemic. I recently held one of these discussions in the town of Romney, West Virginia, in September, to talk about the ongoing issues they face in that community.

Officials at the meeting agreed that we need to utilize all resources available at the local, State, and Federal levels, and we agreed that HIDTA was a key tool in fighting back. It was also pointed out that foster parents are needed to help care for children whose parents are struggling with drug addiction issues.

So you can help, too.

But addressing drug trafficking is not the only thing that needs to be done to help fight the epidemic. We need to help the youngest victims of our shared battle with this crisis: infants who are born addicted.

That is why I cosponsored and voted for H.R. 1462, the Protecting Our Infants Act of 2015, which passed the House unanimously and is awaiting action in the U.S. Senate. This bill addresses a condition called neonatal abstinence syndrome by helping to find the best way to diagnose, evaluate, and

coordinate Federal efforts to help research and respond to this debilitating condition. Infants who suffer from neonatal abstinence syndrome can experience seizures, respiratory impairments, tremors, fever, and difficulty feeding.

Research published by the Journal of Perinatology found that the number of infants suffering from withdrawal grew nearly fivefold from 2000 to 2012. Evidence also shows that an infant is born with drug withdrawal every 25 minutes in the United States.

In West Virginia, it is estimated that, in 1 out of every 13 births, a baby is addicted to drugs. This is a problem that needs serious attention immediately, but this is just one crucial step.

To help fight addiction, one of the latest tools available to the public in West Virginia is a new 24-hour call line that has been launched to help people battling substance and mental health issues in West Virginia.

The call line is 1-844-HELP4WV. The line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with the promise of never being put on hold. We must continue to work together to fight this epidemic.

LEGALIZING MARIJUANA

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, advocates from the new emerging marijuana industry in Oregon are descending on Capitol Hill at a very critical time for this fledgling industry.

They have a report about the implementation of Oregon's Ballot Measure 91—overwhelmingly approved by voters last year—to legalize, tax, and regulate marijuana at the State level. Possession became legal July 1. Retail sales were authorized in existing dispensaries on the 1st of October to significant interest around the State.

□ 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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The first week saw an estimated \$11 million in sales.

They are working hard to implement the spirit and the letter of the measure, working closely with the Oregon legislature to refine it, learning from the experience of States like Washington and Colorado that have already legalized adult use.

Theirs is a positive story of economic opportunity, product development, tax revenues, more freedom for individuals, and eliminating the racial disparities in the enforcement of a failed policy of prohibition that comes down heavily against young men of color, especially African Americans.

At the same time, there was a scathing report this week from Brookings Institution researchers John Hudak and Grace Wallack that called out the roadblocks that are being put in place by law enforcement and Federal policies that stifle medical marijuana research, that interfere with the science and the doctor-patient relationship in ways that are completely unwarranted, counterproductive, and destructive.

They come at a time when the Federal Government has told the Drug Enforcement Agency to stop harassing medical providers after Congress clearly passed legislation to protect the industry and, more importantly, a patient's right to medicine.

The Rohrabacher-Farr amendment passed with strong bipartisan support, clearly specifying that the Federal Government should not interfere with State-legal medical marijuana operations.

The Department of Justice, unfortunately, took an outrageously flawed position, which infuriated those of us who authored these provisions and have worked to pass them over the last 2 years. The DEA ignored the law, and the Department of Justice defended them in this unfortunate action.

It is the latest example of how far out of touch the Federal Government agencies are with the reality on the ground, with the will of the majority of the American people, who think that marijuana should be legal, and with the policies of the President himself.

President Obama has declared marijuana no more harmful than other perfectly legal substances, like tobacco, which is, in fact, true, and that he had bigger fish to fry than fight against State legalization. Unfortunately, some parts of his Federal Government are still frying those fish.

The good news is that the tide has turned. As I mentioned, the majority of the American people now think marijuana should be legal, as 23 States, the District of Columbia, and Guam now have medical marijuana and 17 more have authorized a limited version of medical marijuana. We have 4 States and the District of Columbia that permit outright adult use, with more States considering this over the course of the next year.

All the Federal Government has to do, as Secretary Clinton recently said

in Colorado, is just stay out of the way. Stop interfering. Let legal marijuana businesses have bank accounts. Don't force them to be all cash. Let them deduct their business expenses from their taxes instead of penalizing them with grotesquely punitive levels of tax. Let the States continue in their efforts at reform. Let them treat it just like we do alcohol.

The day is fast coming when the Federal policy will be to robustly research and, ultimately, deschedule—or remove—marijuana from the Controlled Substances Act, no longer pretending that it is or should be a Schedule I controlled substance, and, instead, tax and regulate it at the Federal level.

In the meantime, the States will continue marching forward; the public will continue to request that we, at the Federal level, stop interfering with medical marijuana; and Congress will continue our efforts with increasingly large, bipartisan majorities to make this policy work to replace the failed attempt at marijuana prohibition.

CONGRESS AND ISRAEL MUST STAND TOGETHER

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, the United States and Israel share the same principles and values: fundamental ideas like freedom, democracy, respect for the rule of law, and human rights.

Our nations also share, sadly, the same security concerns, like fighting terrorism and seeing stability in the Middle East, two issues that seemingly grow worse for the entire region day by day, but especially for Israel. Many of the recent tragic terror attacks and incidents of violence in Israel have been incited by both the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, with Abu Mazen openly inciting the violence himself.

Tomorrow the Foreign Affairs Committee will mark up a resolution that I introduced alongside my south Florida colleague, Congressman TED DEUTCH, which condemns the anti-Israel and anti-Semitic incitement by Abu Mazen and the Palestinian Authority. When Israeli citizens cannot walk out of their homes to go safely to work or to go to the grocery store for fear of another terrorist attack, we must hold the Palestinian leadership accountable.

Abu Mazen is also threatening Israel at the United Nations, where he seeks to delegitimize Israel and seeks unilateral Palestinian statehood. Just last month, Abu Mazen told the U.N. General Assembly that Palestinians would not abide by past agreements, proving, once again, that he is no partner for peace.

This morning a maneuver was foiled at UNESCO when the P.A. attempted to include incendiary text in a resolution that claimed the Western Wall was part of a Muslim holy site; and, next

week, Abu Mazen is scheduled to speak at a special meeting at the U.N. Human Rights Council.

You have got to be kidding: Abu Mazen speaking at a Human Rights Council.

President Obama must hold Abu Mazen accountable instead of continuing to give him a pass for his actions and show that actions have consequences.

But these aren't the only challenges that Israel faces. In addition to the terror inside Israel, it remains surrounded by threats like ISIL, Iran, Syria, challenges that are shared by the United States.

The Iran deal is riddled with loopholes, with ambiguities, and with outright dangerous provisions, including a sunset clause that paves the way for a nuclear-armed Iran in as little as 15 years—just bide the time. It also includes the lifting of the arms embargo against Iran and the lifting of sanctions on Iran's ballistic missile program.

In addition, the Iran deal releases billions of dollars that is allowing the regime to increase its terror financing and helps fulfill its destructive ambitions in the Middle East.

For years, Congress, not the administration, has led the charge to push back against Iran and to sanction it through an effective sanctions program that constricts its energy, transportation, and financial sectors.

It is now up to Congress to be proactive again, to get out in front of the Iranian deal, and to ensure that the administration holds Iran accountable and will not allow incremental cheating, because it is almost impossible to see this administration scuttling the deal for anything less than a major violation on Iran's part. We need to develop stronger sanctions against Iran for its illicit behavior and ensure that the administration fully enforces the sanctions on the books.

While the U.N. resolutions implementing an arms embargo and restricting Iran's ballistic missile program are still in place, Iran is already testing our resolve. It is violating these resolutions. It test-fired a ballistic missile, and it continues to ship arms to Assad and Hezbollah to use against the people of Syria and against Israel.

□ 1015

Congress must move to enact additional sanctions against Iran, and we must designate and sanction Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps and the Quds Force, because they will be the big winners in this sanctions relief. We must target Hezbollah and Iran's other proxies because you can be sure that, with Hezbollah, it is only a matter of when, not if, it decides to attack Israel.

We must ensure that Israel has what it needs to defend itself from Hezbollah and from other outside threats. With Iran providing Hezbollah with more advanced rockets and missiles, even with precision-guided systems, Israel is facing an enemy with almost 150,000 rockets pointed at every major city in