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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. PALAZZO).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 28, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVEN M. PALAZZO 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.

JOHN A. BOEHNER, THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the Speaker of the House, JOHN BOEHNER.

Speaker BOEHNER and I, as some would note, do not always agree. We have been on opposite sides of this floor and on opposite sides of debate many times. However, that is behind us for JOHN BOEHNER.

In all of the years I have served with him, Speaker BOEHNER has shown me

the same kindness, grace, and friendship that he has shown so many of his House colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

JOHN BOEHNER is a gentleman in the truest sense of the word and is a leader who, even in the act of stepping back from his position in the leadership, has always put the best interests of our country first.

When it came time to make difficult decisions, even in the face of strong opposition from some in his own party, Speaker BOEHNER was willing to work across the aisle to make sure that this House was achieving its most fundamental responsibilities to those we had the honor of serving.

We did not have a catastrophic default on our debt—at least twice—in large part because of JOHN BOEHNER’s determination not to let it happen. Millions of children benefitted from the forms of No Child Left Behind because JOHN BOEHNER, the chairman of the committee, put children’s interests first and worked in partnership with the late Senator Ted Kennedy and Congressman George Miller.

That was in the best traditions of a President Bush-sponsored piece of legislation—a Republican chairman, a Democratic chairman, and a ranking Democrat working together on behalf of our country’s interest.

JOHN BOEHNER worked to keep his Conference and this House marching forward down a productive path. History will be the judge of his success as the leader of his party, but all of us who have had the honor of serving with him will judge him as we know him—a considerate and thoughtful individual, who is a patriot and who cares deeply about this House and the Nation it serves.

I want to thank him, as I would hope all of our Members would and, frankly, those Members who served with him, but who are not in this House now, for his service and for his friendship.

I want to wish him well and wish him luck out there on the golf course, where I am sure he will be spending a lot more time—I am going to be envious of that—in addition to the time that he will spend with his family and in continuing to serve his community, his State, and his Nation.

JOHN BOEHNER served his country and this House of Representatives with fidelity and responsibility, and we should all thank him for that.

We wish the Speaker and his wife, Debbie, well as they embark on a new phase of their lives. He has served his country well. I am confident that he will continue to do so.

DEBT CEILING BILL FINANCIALLY IRRESPONSIBLE

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

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, Benjamin Franklin advised: “When you run in debt, you give to another power over your liberty.”

Washington is in the middle of an epic battle between elected officials who, on the one hand, are financially responsible, have the understanding and backbone needed to prevent an American bankruptcy, heed the wisdom of Founding Father Benjamin Franklin, and fight out-of-control debt that threatens our liberty, and you have those elected officials who, on the other hand, are financially irresponsible and are too weak to resist spending money America does not have, has to borrow to get, and can’t afford to pay back.

This week Congress faces yet another last-second debt deal, negotiated in secret, sprung at the last moment, that fails the American people by not fixing the cause of the debt ceiling problem: out of control deficits.

Earlier this year America’s Comptroller General and the nonpartisan

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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Congressional Budget Office warned Congress and President Obama that America's current financial path is "unsustainable," meaning that America faces a debilitating insolvency and bankruptcy unless we get our financial house in order.

The CBO issued two other dire warnings:

First, America's debt service costs will increase by, roughly, \$600 billion in 10 years. For perspective, \$600 billion is more than what America spends on national defense, which begs the question: Where will the money for that additional \$600 billion debt payment come from?

Second, the CBO warns that, by 2025, America will face an unending string of annual trillion-dollar deficits, deficits that can only end in a debilitating American insolvency and bankruptcy.

Mr. Speaker, economic principles don't care if you are a family, a business, or a country. If you borrow more money than you can pay back, you go bankrupt.

There are good and bad ways to raise the debt ceiling. Today's debt bill is bad because it not only fails to restrain America's spending addiction, it makes things worse by increasing spending by \$80 billion.

I have been in Congress since 2011, when America's debt blew through the \$14 trillion mark. Now America's debt is \$18 trillion. This debt deal blows America's debt through the \$19 trillion mark, meaning America's bank account will soon be \$5 trillion weaker than it was in 2011.

Rather than fixing America's deficit problem while we still have the financial ability to do so, this debt deal kicks the can down the road to 2017, when America will be financially weaker and less able to rise to the financial challenge that threatens us.

Mr. Speaker, today's debt bill is akin to a sick patient going to the emergency room and getting pain-killing drugs that make the patient feel better, yet does nothing to cure the disease that kills him. In the real world, that is medical malpractice. Similarly, today's debt bill that makes America feel good, but does nothing to cure our debt disease, is governing malpractice.

President George Washington advised Congress: "No pecuniary consideration is more urgent than the regular redemption and discharge of the public debt. On none can delay be more injurious."

George Washington's advice in 1793 is prudent today. Congress and President Obama must balance the budget before America's debt burden spirals out of control, before it is too late to prevent the debilitating insolvency and bankruptcy that awaits us.

Mr. Speaker, I exhort Washington to rise to the challenge and be financially responsible when raising the debt ceiling. The first step is to defeat this debt bill that not only fails to fix a time-critical problem, but that actually makes America's spending addiction

\$80 billion worse. America's future as a great Nation and a world power depends on it.

I will vote against this debt deal. I urge my colleagues to be financially responsible—do the same—and insist that the debt ceiling be raised only if we simultaneously fix America's addiction to deficit spending. Today's debt ceiling bill fails that benchmark. It threatens America. It should be defeated.

THE BUDGET

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, we are in the process of wrapping up a budget agreement that is welcome since it protects against default on the national debt and prevents draconian cuts for disability payments and unfairness in Medicare premiums for our senior citizens; but it continues a downward spiral in government spending for essential items that would improve America's infrastructure, education, medical research, and much more. Yet, at the same time, we are continuing on autopilot with some of the largest expenditures for generations to come.

We had an announcement yesterday that we will be replacing the next generation of stealth bombers for our nuclear triad—up to 100 of them—at an estimated cost of over \$550 million each, and that is just the estimated shelf price, the opening bid, plus another \$20 billion in development costs.

Our history of developing weapons of this magnitude is that from the opening bid, the price is likely to spiral much higher in the future. The same contractor, Northrop Grumman, which won this bid, could only build 21 B-2s out of a planned 132 as the costs spiraled to over \$1 billion a plane.

This comes at a time when we are committed to spending over \$1 trillion in the coming decades in upgrading our nuclear fleet. Think about it: 12 new ballistic missile submarines, up to 100 new long-range, nuclear-capable bombers, 642 new land-based ballistic missiles, 1,000 new nuclear-capable, long-range standoff cruise missiles.

And why are we doing this in the first place?

Think for a moment. These weapons that we have already are far in excess of anything America will ever need—a destructive capacity to obliterate any nation multiple times over—yet, we are moving ahead without ever discussing this spending here on the House floor as to whether or not it is what we need.

Think about the security threats of today in terms of an inability to withstand the devastating impacts of climate change on our communities, the threats from ISIS, different challenges of encroachment from Russia and China—not nuclear attack, but moving

ahead in building artificial islands, invading neighboring countries. These are threats now—the Taliban, international terrorism—and we are committed to spending vast sums on weapons that we are never likely to use and are useless against the real threats we face.

We don't need 454 land-based nuclear missiles now. These end up threatening us. Look at the recently released information about the stand-down around Russian paranoia in 1983 regarding NATO exercises. We didn't realize how panicked they were or the steps that they took. That is the real threat from nuclear weapons, accident or miscalculation.

Consider the opportunity costs of vast sums of money that we are tying up that could be used for other purposes, including strengthening our military for today's threats or helping our veterans or our communities on what is bearing down upon them or equipping our citizens to function in this century.

We just had a fascinating lesson when the Export-Import Bank was freed from the iron grasp of the committee and was allowed to actually be debated on the floor of the House. It had been bottled up for years. It had never had that sort of attention. We had more time and energy spent on the Ex-Im Bank over the last 50 hours than, probably, the last 50 years—certainly, in the last 50 months.

What would happen if Congress actually addressed and debated the wisdom of our current nuclear policies and the vast sums of money that are being spent on autopilot that will be chewing a hole in the budget to the detriment of the Department of Defense and everything else?

There is a lesson to be learned, and I hope someday Congress will learn it, because there is a path for a stronger, safer America, for more meaningful, targeted military spending, and for a balanced, thoughtful budget prioritization. If Congress does its job in the open, collectively, the decision becomes easier and the results become better.

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CONGRATULATING STUDENTS AT NATIONAL FFA CONVENTION

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the students from Pennsylvania participating in this week's National Future Farmers of America, or FFA, convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

"I believe in the future of agriculture." Those are the first words from the FFA creed. The Pennsylvania group is among 60,000 FFA members at this week's convention, participating in a variety of competitions and stressing the importance of agriculture to our Nation.