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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. JOLLY).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 4, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DAVID W. JOLLY 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.

OPENING OF THE FLORIDA CENTER FOR CYBERSECURITY AT UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

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

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to bring to the attention of my colleagues an important event taking place this Friday in the 15th Congressional District of Florida which I have the privilege to represent.

With the opening of the Florida Center for Cybersecurity on the campus of the University of South Florida, also known as USF, in Tampa this Friday,

our State marshals the strength of all of Florida's public universities to respond to our Nation's cybersecurity workforce needs.

The center will help develop the next generation of technology to prevent cyber attacks and provide a resource for Florida businesses to help them prevent and, if necessary, respond to cyber threats.

I want to congratulate the board of governors for our State university system, our Florida State Legislature, and our Florida Governor for recognizing the critical importance of the growing cyber threat to Florida residents and business owners throughout the world. These leaders are doing something about that threat by establishing the Florida Center for Cybersecurity.

They recognized that with our growing reliance on Internet connectivity each and every day, cybersecurity becomes increasingly more vital. Cybersecurity reaches every facet of modern life, from national security to personal communication, from data storage to banking security, from health care privacy to transportation safety.

In just 7 short months, the center has enrolled its first 100 students in a special cybersecurity master's degree program. Just last October, the program at USF became only the second in the Nation to be designated as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance and Cybersecurity.

The center continues to address the serious shortfall in our Nation's cybersecurity workforce by bringing online degree, certificate, and training programs to facilitate industry-recognized specializations to enhance the cybersecurity workforce, mitigate cybersecurity threats, and attract new businesses to Florida and across our great Nation.

Most importantly, the university will reach out to our Nation's heroes who have proudly served in uniform and re-

turn to civilian life to allow them to continue to protect our homeland.

Tampa is the perfect home for this new cyber mission with its close proximity to the headquarters of the U.S. Central Command, U.S. Special Operations Command, and the Joint Cyber Command at MacDill Air Force Base.

The Tampa Bay region is also a center for our State's financial and health care industries. National, State, and local businesses—large and small—will benefit from the continuing outreach and educational programs offered by the Florida Center for Cybersecurity at USF.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud USF's energy and innovation in responding to the national and international cyber threat. This is the type of quick and thorough response our Nation needs as we bring together the best our public and private sectors have to offer in protecting our citizens and our businesses from this ongoing threat to our national security, our personal security, and economic security.

Congratulations to USF, and go, Bulls.

AWARE ACT

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, one of the areas where Congress has repeatedly come together in a non-partisan fashion to make real progress has been legislation dealing with the protection of animals. This is something that unites us as we have been able to deal with a series of simple, commonsense steps to assure we meet the standard of care.

That is why it was so horrific to read the terrible front-page article in The New York Times on January 20 about the Federal Meat Animal Research Center in Clay Center, Nebraska. Moving from the front page to two full

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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pages on the inside were truly grotesque and horrifying examples of animal abuse.

A young cow had its head locked in a cagelike device to keep her immobile while she was repeatedly—you can only describe it as sexually tortured for hours by as many as six bulls being studied for their sexual libido. Her back legs were broken, her body—in the words of one of the observers—was “torn up,” and the cow understandably died from her injuries.

There were other experiments detailed, sheep and pigs, without consideration of animal health impact. It detailed horrifying and often unsuccessful results. At least 6,500 animals were known to have starved to death at this facility, and unknown numbers died from negligence from easily treatable infections, exposure to bad weather, or attacks by predators—all of this at a cost of almost \$200 million of taxpayer money over the last 10 years, resulting in this grotesque abuse of animals.

There is the ability to abuse, neglect, and even torture farm animals because there is no law that requires their protection. There is a loophole in the Animal Welfare Act which exempts farm animals used for research.

Think about it. If you are abusing, neglecting, or even torturing farm animals for agricultural research, you don’t have to obey the Animal Welfare Act. It is absolutely unjustified and outrageous.

This week, Congressman MICHAEL FITZPATRICK—my cochair of the Congressional Animal Protection Caucus—and I are introducing the AWARE Act which would require that in Federal facilities, farm animals used in agricultural research be included in the definition of “animal” under the Animal Welfare Act.

It seems rather simple. It would ensure that these animals are treated like other warmblooded animals in other Federal research facilities. It is time that we step up to stop this horrific abuse. There is no reason that the USDA agricultural research facilities experimenting on farm animals should not be held to the same standards as Federal research facilities that conduct lifesaving disease research with the same kinds of animals.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this AWARE Act, the Animal Welfare and Agricultural Research Endeavors. It is supported by The Humane Society, the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Humane Legislative Fund, and countless people across the country who deeply believe in animal welfare.

This is our job in Congress, and this is a small step that we can quickly make to show that we respond to animal abuse and that the Federal Government will lead by example.

I would urge my colleagues to join Congressman FITZPATRICK and me as members of the Congressional Animal Protection Caucus to work together on behalf of God’s creatures who cannot speak for themselves.

PUERTO RICO STATEHOOD ADMISSION PROCESS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the most forceful and ambitious statehood admission bill for Puerto Rico in U.S. history. The bill, fittingly, has 51 original cosponsors from both parties.

Before I describe the bill, let me explain its background. In 2012, the Puerto Rico government sponsored a referendum in which voters rejected Puerto Rico’s current territory status and expressed a clear preference for statehood.

In the 113th Congress, at my initiative, the President proposed and Congress approved an appropriation of \$2.5 million to fund the first federally sponsored status vote in Puerto Rico’s history. The funding will remain available until it is used by the Puerto Rico government.

While the law does not prescribe the exact format of the ballot, it does establish important conditions; namely, the law provides that the U.S. Department of Justice must certify that the ballot and voter education materials are consistent with U.S. law and polity.

The bipartisan bill I am introducing today flows from and builds upon the 2012 referendum and the Federal appropriation enacted in response to that referendum. In other words, this bill is being filed now because the strategic foundation is firmly in place.

Every action I take is designed to advance the statehood cause because it is beyond dispute that territory status is the main source of Puerto Rico’s grave economic and social problems. My constituents have no interest in symbolic gestures or empty rhetoric. They care only about concrete steps that bring Puerto Rico closer to equality.

My bill would authorize a vote to be held in Puerto Rico within 1 year of the bill’s enactment—that is, by no later than the end of 2017. The ballot would contain a single question: Shall Puerto Rico be admitted as a State of the United States?

To conduct this vote, the Puerto Rico government may use the \$2.5 million that Congress already approved since this format clearly satisfies the conditions of the appropriations law. If a majority of voters affirm their desire for admission, the bill provides for an automatic series of steps to occur.

First, by February 2018, the President would issue a proclamation to begin Puerto Rico’s transition to statehood.

Second, the President would appoint a commission to prepare a report that describes the Federal laws that treat the territory of Puerto Rico differently than the States. The commission would complete the report by July 2018. The congressional committees of jurisdiction could then enact legislation to phase in equal treatment of Puerto

Rico during the transition period so the admission process is structured and orderly.

Third, in November 2020, the American citizens of Puerto Rico would vote for President and Vice President, two U.S. Senators, and voting Members of the U.S. House.

Finally, on January 1, 2021, the President would proclaim Puerto Rico to be a State. Puerto Rico’s congressional Representatives would be sworn into office, and Puerto Rico would be treated on equal footing with all other States.

My bill is modeled on the legislation enacted by Congress with respect to Alaska and Hawaii. When Alaska and Hawaii were territories, they each held votes sponsored by their local governments in which voters expressed a desire for statehood. This is also what occurred in Puerto Rico in 2012.

Ultimately, Congress enacted an admission act for Alaska in 1958 and an admission act for Hawaii in 1959. Those acts of Congress provided for admission to occur once a majority of voters in each territory affirmed in a federally sponsored vote that they desired statehood. That is precisely what my bill would do with respect to Puerto Rico.

Every Member of Congress who cosponsors this bill is standing up for a powerful, powerful principle, which is this: the people of Puerto Rico are U.S. citizens, they have enriched the life of this Nation for generations, and they have fought and died to defend her.

If a majority of Puerto Rico’s voters affirm their desire in a federally sponsored vote to become a full and equal part of the American family, the will of the people should be honored. Democracy requires no less.

SERVICEMEMBER ASSISTANCE FOR LAWFUL UNDERSTANDING, TREATMENT, AND EDUCATION ACT

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

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last week, my fellow Chester County Congressman, PATRICK MEEHAN, introduced the Servicemember Assistance for Lawful Understanding, Treatment, and Education Act, otherwise known as the SALUTE Act.

I want to praise Congressman MEEHAN for his leadership on this issue and speak a little bit about it in support of the SALUTE Act.

□ 1015

It is going to help veterans overcome addictions and PTSD by providing yearly Federal funding for Veterans Treatment Courts. This is an opportunity for all of us to help troubled veterans break free of the cycle and get the help that they need.

It is estimated that one in five veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq will experience a stress-related