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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: God of all creation, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

In the midst of cold winds and uncertain and sometimes disastrous weather patterns, the consistent warm rays of light fall upon the good and the bad, the believers and unbelievers alike. Gradually, the days are already growing longer but, like the movement of Your grace, often unnoticed.

Lord, You are ever present, especially to those most in need. Show Your mercy to the weakest among us, the children, the poor, the elderly, the homeless. And on this National Day of Prayer, may all Your people be mindful of these anawim among us.

Send Your spirit upon the Members of this people's House, that they might be inspired to do what they are able, to care for those whom You have favored from biblical times, the powerless and most vulnerable.

Bless us this day and every day. May all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. 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. Will the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KILDEE 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 5 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

TALIBAN

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

Mr. MCKINLEY. Mr. Speaker, on January 28, the White House refused to recognize the Taliban as a terrorist group, calling them an "armed insurgency" instead. What part of terrorism don't they understand?

Under Federal law, a "terrorist organization" must meet three criteria: be foreign, be engaged in terrorist activity and intimidation, and threaten the security of the United States of America.

The Department of the Treasury and the National Counterterrorism Center define the Taliban as a "terrorist organization," but the White House refuses to do so. Common sense says, if we can't call our enemy what they are, then how can we fight them?

Mr. Speaker, my resolution is simple. It urges the administration to publicly recognize the Taliban as a terrorist organization. We could use a little straight talk around here.

I ask for your support of House Concurrent Resolution 13.

PUT AMERICA BACK TO WORK

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, instead of taking action for bigger paychecks for Americans or rebuilding America's

crumbling infrastructure, House Republicans yesterday introduced legislation to repeal and undermine the Affordable Care Act.

This legislation would undermine fundamental guarantees under the ACA that you can no longer lose or be denied coverage due to a preexisting condition. This latest proposal would put coverage for things like maternity care up to the whim of the States. It would include a tax hike on working families and would leave millions uninsured without any coverage at all.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a serious proposal, and more than 2,000 days after President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act, Republicans still lack a serious alternative.

Thanks to the ACA, uninsured rates are at a record low and hardworking families can afford health care, but Republicans continue their obsession with stripping protections from affordable coverage.

This is the wrong direction for our country. We should be working on putting America back to work.

OBAMACARE REPEAL

(Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, what a wonderful opportunity to set the record straight.

I rise today to applaud my colleagues in the House for passing H.R. 596 on Tuesday which repeals ObamaCare in its entirety. This bill also instructs committees to pass solutions that are patient-centered, free market alternatives because ObamaCare is unaffordable.

I hear it when I am at my son's football games or when I go to the grocery stores: it is important to Americans that Members up here in Washington are listening to and fighting for them on this issue because the President refuses to.

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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Today, in Thomas County, in south Georgia, a \$3,500 deductible will cost a 25-year-old \$33 a month, and it will cost a 60-year-old \$900 a month. \$900 for a \$3,500 deductible, that is more like a mortgage payment where I come from. This is the solution that according to the President—the Democrats—that is affordable? Well, it is not affordable, and it is hurting people.

I am proud to cochair a task force of conservative Members who are working towards a patient-centered, free market alternative that respects the freedom of the American citizens.

HONORING THE LIFE OF KYLE LONG

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

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Kyle Ean Long who was born in Sacramento on June 14, 1987, and died on January 10, 2015, at the all too young age of 27.

The son of James and Tina Long was born and raised in Sacramento, California, attended local public schools, and was a graduate of Sacramento State University. I became familiar with Kyle when he came to work for me as an intern, quickly rising to a legislative aide in my previous position as a Member of the California State Senate.

Kyle's passion for public policy and his enthusiasm for bringing people together made him a highly effective legislative staffer. During his tenure in the State senate, Kyle successfully steered bills through the legislative process in California that helped to provide counseling services for rape victims, prohibited pesticides at school sites and child care facilities, and provided school supplies for homeless children.

In addition to being an important member of the California State family, Kyle was a beloved friend, family member, and a member of the broader Sacramento community. He died when he went to his local gym in the morning to start his daily exercise regimen, had a heart attack, and passed away at the all too early age of 27.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the extraordinary but all too brief life of Kyle Long.

FIRE IN EDGEWATER

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

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, a five-alarm fire ripped through 240 apartments in Edgewater, New Jersey. The fire completely destroyed the complex and displaced nearly 1,000 residents. You could see and smell the flames and ashes for miles around.

I rise today to extend my sympathies to the families and recognize and honor the brave men and women of the Edgewater Volunteer Fire Department

who responded to this devastating blaze, as well as over 500 first responders from 35 municipalities who came to Edgewater, rescued victims, and battled flames that blazed for 7 hours.

Under the leadership of Fire Chief Tom Jacobson, firefighters rescued people from three floors and miraculously managed to prevent any loss of life or severe injuries.

Thanks to the quick response by the American Red Cross and other aid organizations, the more than 1,000 displaced people were able to take refuge in the Edgewater Community Center.

On behalf of my constituents, Mr. Speaker, in Edgewater, I want to once again extend my gratitude to all the first responders who answer to the call every day and helped prevent further damage in this particular travesty.

SMALL BUSINESS REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2015

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous materials on H.R. 527.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 78 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 527.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 0910

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 527) to amend chapter 6 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the Regulatory Flexibility Act), to ensure complete analysis of potential impacts on small entities of rules, and for other purposes, with Mr. WESTMORELAND in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

General debate shall not exceed 1 hour, with 40 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary and 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Small Business.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MARINO) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 20 minutes. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) and the gentle-

woman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MARINO).

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Good morning, Mr. CONYERS. It is good to see you.

Six long years into the Obama administration, and notwithstanding some fleeting, recent signs, jobs have yet to recover from the recession. Wages also have not recovered, and the rate of new business startups has not recovered as well.

Instead, permanent exits from the labor force are at historical levels. Real wages have fallen. Dependency on government assistance has increased. Our economy is failing to give enough hardworking Americans the confidence they need to start new small businesses and create new jobs.

At the root of our problem are, more than anything else, the endless drain to Washington of hard-earned income that working people and small businesses need to turn things around in their homes and communities and Washington's endless placement of regulatory roadblocks in the path of opportunity and growth.

That regulatory burden hits small businesses especially hard. Small businesses generate 63 percent of net new private sector jobs and employ nearly half of America's private sector workers; yet they have to pay significantly more to comply with Federal regulations than do larger employers.

Poll after poll has demonstrated that the level of Federal regulations coming from Washington is at the top of the list of obstacles faced by America's small businesses, our top job creators.

This is not fair, and it is exactly the wrong burden to place on small businesses as this Nation struggles to produce a true jobs and wages recovery. Congress can and should act to free small businesses of the burdens and waste associated with excessive Federal regulations so that more jobs will be available to Americans trying to make a better life for themselves and their families.

That is why prompt passage of the Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act is so important. This legislation will, for the first time in nearly 20 years, overhaul the laws that govern how Federal regulators should consider—and minimize—the adverse impacts of new regulations on small businesses.

Primarily, the bill reinforces the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 and the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996. It only requires agencies to do what current law tries to achieve and what common sense dictates should be done.

□ 0915

However, current law is beset by loopholes, and those loopholes must be closed. That is what the Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act, at long last, does.