



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 162

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2016

No. 32

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 29, 2016.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MAC THORNBERRY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2016, 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.

WE MUST UPDATE OUR WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, every day we are reminded by current events of how essential water and sanitation are to our very existence, whether it is Flint, Michigan, droughts in California, or the challenges of safe drinking water and sanitation for underdeveloped countries. This dominates the news and is at the root of an increasing number of conflicts, which will become only more serious.

Water policy is one of the most critical areas that this Congress ought to be able to address on a bipartisan basis. The facts are stark, opportunities vivid, and public support is strong.

That is why I have spent a great deal of time focusing on issues of water and sanitation since I first came to Congress. Legislation for international water and sanitation is critical not just for humanitarian reasons, but to protect the environment. It helps avoid conflict within societies and between nations because of water scarcity or shared river basins.

I have worked on legislation reforming flood insurance, rewriting the Corps of Engineers' outdated principles and guidelines that should inform their practices on water infrastructure and environmental management, and I have worked for a decade on the creation of a water trust fund. Unlike surface transportation, which has a highway trust fund and a source of revenue, the Federal Government has no similar mechanism for water and sanitation.

The status of our water infrastructure is appalling and getting worse, while support from the Federal Government has been in decline. In fact, there has been a slow, steady retreat on water infrastructure spending since the Carter administration.

The American Society of Civil Engineers has rated our water infrastructure a D. We have almost 170,000 drinking water systems around the country. While the useful life of pipes can be sometimes up to 100 years, we have facilities that date back to the 1800s.

A water main breaks every 2 minutes. The American Water Works Association anticipates the need of a trillion dollars, over the next 25 years, to replace the most critical of more than a million miles of pipe, while congressional appropriations have declined to less than \$1.5 billion a year, a tiny fraction of our needs.

The total mileage of sewer mains in the United States is unknown, but it is

probably between 700,000 and 800,000 miles. Many of these pipes were installed right after World War II and are approaching the end of their useful life. The sewer systems with aging pipes and inadequate capacity mean almost a trillion gallons of untreated sewage each year that is discharged into our waterways.

The total needs over the next 20 years for both sewer and water are almost beyond our comprehension, but the current spending, it is clear, is completely inadequate. The public and the scientists are finding more problems, which will argue for even higher standards.

That is why I have developed bipartisan legislation for the creation of a water trust fund. I have been working on this for years with different bipartisan partners. Given that there appears to be little appetite now in Congress for any tax or fee increase, I have adjusted the bill so that the revenue comes from voluntary participation by companies that have a keen interest in clean drinking water and adequate sanitation—indeed, their very business depends on it.

They would be able, for a tiny fee, to voluntarily identify as being supportive of the water trust fund. A little seal of approval would raise several billion dollars a year. This could be used to deal with the problems of low-income ratepayers that make it hard for overall rates to be increased and to leverage more investment at a time of remarkably low costs of borrowing. We could have significant investment to deal with some of our greatest problems.

This is by no means the entire answer to the looming crisis, but we shouldn't wait for the next Flint or the problems in drought-stricken California or some other municipal breakdown. We should start now.

I urge people to cosponsor my bipartisan water trust fund legislation, H.R. 4468. Let's get started.

□ 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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OPIOID AND HEROIN ABUSE

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, on December 22, 2015, Zachary Paul-Allen Greenough, a veteran of the U.S. Army, lost his life to an accidental overdose of heroin in the city of West Haven, Connecticut.

The press accounts after his death, unfortunately, tell a story that is far too common in this country. During the time that he served in the Army, he suffered an injury, which caused great pain and resulted in the prescription of painkillers. That pathway started, which led to an opioid addiction and, unfortunately, him losing his life on December 22 to an overdose of heroin.

The Centers for Disease Control tells us that, in 2014, 27,000 Americans suffered accidental overdose deaths across the country, a drastic increase from 2013. This trend is happening again all across the country.

In the State of Connecticut, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner reported its statistics for 2015, which showed that 723 individuals lost their life, including Mr. Greenough, to overdoses of heroin and opioids. Again, this is a trend line which shows that it was a 20 percent increase from the year before.

We are in the midst right now of a problem that is sweeping across the country, that is affecting States that are Republican and Democrat, blue and red, and we as a Nation need to get all hands on deck and come to grips with it.

President Obama, in his budget that he submitted a few weeks ago, made a promising start. He proposed \$1.1 billion in new funding to law enforcement, to folks who are involved in treatment, whether it is detox centers or treatment programs, or whether it is programs for education and prevention; because we know, from talking to people in the field, you need to get early and quickly to young people to make sure that they understand that this pathway, which has exploded across the country, is something that people need to know about and to avoid.

In New London, Connecticut, over the course of 2 days in February, we had a summit involving law enforcement, healthcare providers, and others. We had the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy from the White House, Michael Botticelli, come in. Again, the good news is that there is a lot of good work that is being done at the local level—not just in New London County, Connecticut, but all across the country—where people understand that this is a problem that requires everyone working together in all those factions and all those sectors.

But the fact of the matter is that President Obama's proposal is not until 2017. We need help now. We need to get

an emergency appropriation, just as we would if there were a hurricane or an earthquake or a wildfire that was sweeping across different regions of this country.

We need to understand that emergency appropriations for our military, which the Speaker and I will be voting on together in the Committee on Armed Services, that this problem which is affecting thousands of families and resulting in fatalities for people, again, who follow a pathway that, through legally prescribed medications, needs to be addressed, and we need to get those resources out to people as soon as possible.

I have a bill in the House that tracks a bill sponsored by Senator SHAHEEN in New Hampshire, another State that has been hit hard by the problem. The bill provides \$600 million of emergency assistance—again allocated to police, providers, education, and prevention—and this week they will begin consideration in the U.S. Senate. It has been endorsed by law enforcement groups. It has been endorsed by people who are in the field dealing with this problem, who are dealing with families who can't get beds in detox centers, who can't get beds in treatment facilities, with police departments that are trying to get Narcan, a miracle drug, so that they can save lives. But the fact of the matter is we need everybody involved, particularly the Congress, to help communities solve this problem.

Last week the National Governors Association—Republicans and Democrats—convened in Washington, D.C., to talk about their priorities. This emergency funding was their number one request to Congress because they are the ones on the front lines who are being confronted and forced to deal with this issue.

We have an opportunity to listen to the people who know what they are talking about, to just drain away the politics and the partisanship and understand that veterans, people living in rural communities, people living in suburban communities, people living in urban areas of our country are getting hit with this problem. Just like any other disaster, we as a Nation need to come together to address it now and not wait for 2017—now—to pass this measure.

We can do more in terms of reforming the protocols, as the VA and DOD and the civilian healthcare sector, frankly, have gone too far in terms of overprescribing. We can do more about the disposal of drugs. Walgreens, to their credit, has set up disposal sites all across the country where people can come in with excess opioids to get rid of them safely.

The fact of the matter is that the willingness is there but the resources are not to deal with a problem of this magnitude. Let's pass the Shaheen-Courtney measure. Let's get emergency funding to the folks who need that help and who are ready. They are on standby. They are there to help

those families and those individuals who need the help that we, as Americans, should come together and support.

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 11 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. SMITH of Nebraska) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Merciful Lord, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

At the beginning of a new workweek, we use this moment to be reminded of Your presence and to tap the resources needed by the Members of this people's House to do their work as well as it can be done. May they be led by Your Holy spirit in the decisions they make.

May their faith in You deliver them from tensions that might tear the House apart and from worries that might wear them out.

All this day and through the week, may they do their best to find solutions to pressing issues facing our Nation. Please hasten the day when justice and love shall dwell in the hearts of all peoples and rule the affairs of the nations of Earth.

May all that is done 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 South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina 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.

SOUTH CAROLINA RECOGNIZED AS A TOP EXPORTER

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