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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 3, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JEFF DENHAM 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 3, 2017, 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.

SQUARING RHETORIC WITH THE BUDGET

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, perhaps the most powerful moment on Inauguration Day when the President gave his speech was when he reminded his supporters and the people who were assembled there that there were too many in America who were forgotten by the Federal Government; and that it was his promise that he would, in fact, remember them in terms of how he de-

veloped policies and programs during his time as President. It is a message which obviously he used quite effectively on the campaign trail. I think personally it is what propelled him into the White House.

Fast forward to where we are today, Mr. Speaker. It is hard to really square that rhetoric with the budget, which was submitted a couple of weeks ago by the Trump administration. The one agency which probably has the closest connection to rural America, that part of the country which he was addressing in his comments on Inauguration Day, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was cut by 20 percent in terms of what came over from the White House.

Again, that was the third largest hit of any Federal agency of the entire Federal Government, the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It does so much in terms of helping farmers, small town America, and rural America in terms of dealing with the challenges which, again, I think, were just a huge, powerful undercurrent in last November's election.

In particular, the budget proposes eliminating completely the USDA Rural Development for drinking water and wastewater programs, which, again, for so many communities, is desperately needed.

Again, the property tax base of small town and rural towns across the country really cannot, by themselves, pay for sewer plants, pay for drinking water upgrades. I know because I come from one of those districts.

Even in Connecticut, the eastern half of the State, the Second Congressional District is small town, rural America for which the USDA Rural Development programs have been the lifeblood of making sure that community facilities and, again, a decent quality of life are possible.

So, for example, in towns like Vernon, Connecticut, where I am from, the Bolton Lake sewer plant was just

finished a couple of years ago through USDA Rural Development. In the town of Putnam, \$28 million over just the last couple of years, they just built a new fire station, the north Putnam fire station, with USDA Rural Development.

Stafford, Connecticut, there was a sewer plant upgrade. Windham, Connecticut, there was a new community health facility, which was a community facilities program, through USDA Rural Development. There were projects in Thompson, Connecticut, \$2.4 million for water and sewer; Brooklyn, Connecticut, \$1.3; Killingly, and the list goes on and on.

This budget, let's be clear, doesn't just give this program a little haircut or tailor it back. It eliminates it. It eviscerates this type of help which, again, rural communities, with their own resources, are incapable of accomplishing on their own.

Mr. Speaker, a budget is more than just a collection of numbers. It is a statement of your priorities. It is about what is important to you as an executive or as a legislator, and this budget fails that test for rural America, for the forgotten Americans which the President addressed on Inauguration Day.

I am confident that, in this Chamber, there is potential for a bipartisan group of Members to push back on this type of really just backwards budgeting and backwards priority.

Again, in terms of what my father told me a long time ago: Talk is cheap. Put your money where your mouth is. Put your budget where your rhetoric is.

On that score, this administration has failed that test. It has also failed it with the Sea Grant program for fishermen in America. Again, 90 percent of seafood that is consumed in this country is from overseas.

Even though we are a great maritime country, the Sea Grant program helps

□ 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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fishermen deal with all the complexity of the maritime domain in terms of regulations. I have seen it in Connecticut.

Again, my district borders on Long Island Sound. We have seen shellfish growers coming back to life because of the Sea Grant program administered through the University of Connecticut Avery Point Campus that has given these really hardworking, inspiring entrepreneurs the tools that they need to again give America a domestic seafood industry. It is just ridiculous when you look at the disproportion of imported seafood that is consumed on the tables of Americans all across the country.

Later today, 100 House Members, on a bipartisan basis, will be releasing a letter of support for the Sea Grant program. Congressman ZELDIN, Republican from Long Island, and myself led that letter. Again, this is where our focus ought to be in terms of this country.

If you really care about making America great again, it is about giving people out there in the great heartland and in the coastal sections of this country the tools that they need to grow, thrive, innovate, and succeed. This budget fails that test.

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 6 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. WESTERMAN) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Dan C. Cummins, Skyline Wesleyan Church, San Diego, California, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God and Father, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like sweet perfume upon our heads.

Let us walk together in the vocation wherewith we are called, with all lowliness and meekness, forbearing one another in love, keeping the unity of the spirit in the bonds of kindness, till we all come into the harmony of faith and the knowledge of God's Son unto a more perfect union, till we are no longer children tossed and carried about by every wind of opposition.

Let us speak the truth in love that we may grow up into You in all things.

Sanctify us, Lord, through the truth. Thy Word is truth.

And the glory You have given us; for what purpose, O God? That we may be one? Yes, that we all may be one.

I pray this in Jesus' name.

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.

CONGRATULATING GAMECOCKS, NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last night, the Gamecocks women's basketball team made history, winning the NCAA National Championship for the first time in school history. Defeating Mississippi State 67-55, the Gamecocks dominated the all-SEC game, leading the Bulldogs in scoring and in rebounds.

Early in the season, the Gamecocks set their sights on the championship, themeing the season as 100, with the "1" reflecting their commitment to one goal, one team, one dream, one family, and one focus. They never gave up their goals, and their dedication clearly paid off.

I join all of Gamecock Nation in celebrating this remarkable victory.

We are also grateful for the Gamecock men, who, in the Final Four, were ahead of number one Gonzaga in the last 3 minutes until the disturbing Zags pulled ahead.

Special congratulations to superstar A'ja Wilson of Heathwood Hall and Hopkins, South Carolina, who had a great game, scoring a team high 22 points, and who was also named most outstanding player in the Final Four.

Congratulations as well to Head Coach Dawn Staley, President Harris Pastides, and USC First Lady Patricia Pastides.

The Gamecocks women's basketball team joins Clemson's football team and Coastal Carolina's baseball team as the third college national championship from South Carolina in just 1 year. Go Gamecocks.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

Welcome, Timmerman School of Forest Acres, South Carolina, to the Capitol.

REMEMBERING LOUISVILLE METRO POLICE OFFICER NICK RODMAN

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the city of Louisville will lay to rest Officer Nick Rodman, a loving husband, father, son, and friend, who died in the line of duty last week.

The special commitment that the men and women of law enforcement make to protect and serve their fellow citizens is one that the Rodman family holds dear, and Nick felt that call to service deeply, growing up as the son and brother of fellow officers.

He is survived by the loves of his life: his wife, Ashley; his young son, Mason; and his newborn daughter, Ellie Jean.

I ask my colleagues and our Nation to join me, the Louisville Metro Police Department, and our entire city in honoring this public servant as he is laid to rest.

To Nick's wife, Ashley: I hope the memories you have with your husband will be a source of comfort as you face this heartbreaking tragedy. The city of Louisville joins you in grief, and we will ensure that Nick will always be remembered.

CONFIRM JUDGE GORSUCH

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

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to strongly urge my colleagues in the United States Senate to confirm Judge Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Since being nominated by President Trump, Judge Gorsuch has provided unprecedented transparency and access. He has completed three rounds of intense questioning by the Senate Judiciary Committee, which totaled nearly 20 hours and covered nearly 1,200 questions. This was the longest hearing of any nominee in the 21st century.

During this time, Judge Gorsuch showed himself to be uniquely qualified and experienced to serve on our Nation's highest court. In fact, he showed the exact same qualification that previously earned him unanimous approval by the U.S. Senate in 2006 to serve on the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. Then-Senators Obama, Biden, Clinton, and SCHUMER were all serving in the Senate at that time and raised no objections whatsoever to Judge Gorsuch's nomination.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for the Senate to put politics aside and confirm Judge Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives: