



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2017

No. 116

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 11, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JAMES COMER 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. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

HONORING FRANKLIN HOBSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Franklin Hobson for 60 years of service in the Fall Creek Volunteer Fire Department in Yadkin County.

Franklin was a young man of 21 when he became a charter member of the fire department in 1957. Since that time, he has been a dedicated leader in both the department and his community, including service as the Yadkin County

fire marshal. Still active in the Fall Creek Volunteer Fire Department today, he will celebrate his 82nd birthday on September 27.

It is volunteers like Franklin Hobson who help our Nation thrive. Through the generous example he has set, Franklin inspires others to think about ways they can give to their local community.

I thank Franklin for all of the good that he does for his community and for being a great example for all of us.

RECOGNIZING FALL CREEK VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the 60th anniversary of the Fall Creek Volunteer Fire Department in Yadkin County.

The first meeting of these dedicated citizens was held on June 13, 1957, at Fall Creek Elementary School as 12 local men worked to establish the fire department. Its charter calls for 60 members, and its membership ranks have remained nearly full for 60 years. A pillar of the community, members have been awarded North Carolina's Order of the Long Leaf Pine on three occasions.

Helping others is one of the most honorable activities anyone can engage in, and this kind of selfless dedication to one's community is critical to the well-being of our country.

I thank the members of the Fall Creek Volunteer Fire Department for the selflessness and bravery they demonstrate as firefighters. America needs more courageous individuals like them to give of their time and talents to keep our communities safe.

FUNDING THE ENEMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, today I have the front page cover of Douglas

Wissing's book, "Funding the Enemy: How U.S. Taxpayers Bankroll the Taliban." A few years ago, I had the pleasure of meeting with Douglas in my office here in D.C. to discuss his book.

One of the analyses of this book by the Publishers Weekly said: "'Funding the Enemy' is sober, sad, and important . . . it peels back the layers of American engagement in Afghanistan to reveal its rotten core: that United States dollars meant for that country's future instead fund the insurgency and support the Taliban. Paying for both sides of the war ensures America's ultimate defeat, and Wissing's book tells the story."

Mr. Speaker, I am reminded of this book as we recently heard President Trump talk about how he would allow General Mattis to recommend troop level increases in Afghanistan. I am disappointed for many reasons. I am disappointed because Congress deserves a debate and a vote, and I am disappointed because we continue to lose American lives.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the administration of comments that President Trump made a few years ago regarding Afghanistan:

First, in August of 2011, he said that the United States was wasting lives and money in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2012, President Trump referred to Afghanistan as a "complete waste" and also declared it was "time to come home."

Then again the next year, he made many comments on the Twitter feed, first saying: "Do not allow our very stupid leaders to sign a deal that keeps us in Afghanistan through 2024—with all costs by USA."

He further tweeted: "Let's get out of Afghanistan. Our troops are being killed by the Afghans we train and we waste billions there. Nonsense. Rebuild the USA."

That is what President Trump said, and I agree with President Trump.

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.



Printed on recycled paper.

Returning to the book, “Funding the Enemy” shows: “With the vague intention of winning hearts and minds in Afghanistan, the U.S. Government has mismanaged billions of development and logistics dollars, bolstered the drug trade, and dumped untold millions into Taliban hands.”

President Trump and Douglas Wissing clearly agree. Afghanistan is a failed policy.

Mr. Speaker, that is why Congressman JOHN GARAMENDI and I have introduced H.R. 1666, asking for a debate on Afghanistan and a new AUMF. You can vote against the bill, but the discussion is still needed. We are joined by at least 13 of our colleagues in support, and I hope more Members in both parties will join us. All we are asking for is a debate.

Mr. Speaker, the week before the Fourth of July, I handed a letter to Speaker RYAN asking for a debate, which I include in the RECORD.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 27, 2017.

Hon. PAUL RYAN,
Speaker of the House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: First, let me commend you on your words regarding the need for Congress to find increased civility following the tragic shooting in Alexandria. Your words were very prophetic at this time in history.

Sir, respectfully, your recent response to my Afghanistan letter was very disappointing. At the time of my writing this, President Trump has decided to give troop level increase authority over to James Mattis. Now more than ever, it is time for a policy debate on the future in Afghanistan by the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill that I have introduced, H.R. 1666, would allow that debate.

Members of both parties are so frustrated by the 16 years we have spent in Afghanistan. Without further intervention by Congress, the loss of life and the waste of tax dollars in that country will continue. Sir, you have the authority as Speaker of the House to instruct the U.S. House committees to debate this conflict.

Let me close with a sentence from a recent email I received from the 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Chuck Krulack: “[Afghanistan] is fragmented . . . tribal . . . controlled by war lords, economically a basket case, no real government outside of Kabul and that is questionable, a poorly organized and led Army (who will shoot at Americans as well as the ‘enemy’), and no sense of what the country wants to be.”

On behalf of all Americans who have died in Afghanistan, and the continued waste, fraud and abuse of money that persists, I respectfully ask how much longer will Congress do nothing? Please join in our effort to bring a debate to the House floor. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

WALTER B. JONES,
Member of Congress.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I said that if he doesn’t read my letter, at least read the comments from the 31st Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, my friend and unofficial adviser, General Chuck Krulak. This is what I wanted PAUL RYAN to read, and I hope he did read it: “No one has ever con-

quered Afghanistan . . . and many have tried. We will join the list of nations that have tried and failed.”

How prophetic is that, Mr. Speaker, that we will continue to go down this road and see this country spend and waste lives for absolutely nothing, known as Afghanistan?

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

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

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, this Saturday, my staff and I finished our 34th townhall in the home of one of America’s greatest citizens: my mentor and my hero, Bob Dole. At every location we go, most often, several people ask me about the \$20 trillion of deficit this country has and our debt, the \$600 billion of deficit we have every year. Americans work too hard and there are too many worthwhile functions of government for the Federal Government to irresponsibly spend taxpayer dollars.

From the time I started thinking about running for office, it has been a priority of mine to help create a fiscally responsible plan to reduce our annual deficits and national debt. Yet again, this year, 70 percent of our budget is mandatory spending—70 percent of our budget is mandatory spending—and therefore is spent before the annual appropriations discussions even begin. If we hope to eliminate the deficit, we must address mandatory spending programs and be willing to engage in tough conversations.

This administration and Congress have taken steps to limit bureaucracy and rein in the size and scope of the Federal Government. In this spirit, we hope Congress stays true to this objective as we debate the upcoming budget in order to ensure that our limited taxpayer dollars are spent where they are most needed.

CLARK COUNTY, KANSAS

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring my colleagues up to date on my last visit to Clark County, Kansas.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues may remember that earlier this year wildfires consumed a vast sum of Clark County. The wildfires wrought havoc for many ranchers, farmers, families, and landowners in Clark County and across much of southwest Kansas, not to mention parts of Texas, Colorado, and Oklahoma. Besides the lives lost, including one in Kansas, thousands of livestock, 650,000 acres, and many family properties that had been passed down through generations burned in this disastrous blaze.

Through the perseverance of Kansans living in this region, a considerable amount of progress has been made since I visited right after the fires in March thanks to so many people throughout the country who donated hay as well as their personal services helping rebuild the hundreds of miles of fences that were burned down.

After visiting with the Giles family and the Grigsby family—both families impacted by the fires—their resilience, their strength, and their faith was made clear. These are the type of folks who are now working day in and day out to restore this section of the heartland.

I am delighted to see green rising in the pastures which was once scorched earth, burnt-to-the-ground grass. I am again reminded of the honor I have of working to represent some of the most hardworking Americans in the world: the Kansas agriculture, the Kansas farmers, and the Kansas ranchers.

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. SIMPSON) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Loving and gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We pray for the needs of the Nation, the world, and all of creation. Bless those who seek to honor You and serve each other and all Americans in this House through their public service. May the words and deeds of this place reflect an earnest desire for justice, and may men and women in government build on the tradition of equity and truth that represents the noblest heritage of our Nation.

These July days are busy, and the work to be done in the people’s House is complicated—and very important. Bless all Members with a surfeit of energy, wisdom, patience, and firm resolve to do their best work for the benefit of all Americans.

May Your blessing, O God, be with us this day and every day to come, and may all we do be done 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 gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) come forward and