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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. BOST).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 24, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE BOST 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 11:50 a.m.

BENEFITS OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the Affordable Care Act and the Trump administration's efforts to repeal the health care of millions of Americans.

Every person in this body has constituents who have health insurance because of the Affordable Care Act. Whether you represent the rural community in Kentucky where the uninsured rate declined 60 percent under the ACA or you represent the most lib-

eral district in the country, you should be committed to working across the aisle to fix what is wrong with the ACA and build upon what is working.

While the law and President Obama may not be popular in many districts, political expediency has no place in this hallowed body, especially when the economy and American lives are at stake. It is not just Democratic districts that benefit from the ACA. Everyone—everyone—has Americans in their districts that benefit from the ACA.

While I am the only Democrat in Alabama, my district has only the fifth highest population of enrollees in Alabama, behind four Republican districts. Alabama's First Congressional District has over 29,000 enrollees, and the Fifth District has over 25,000 enrollees. The Sixth and Fourth Districts of Alabama both have over 23,000 enrollees. My district has 22,000 people who are enrolled in the ACA.

In total, there are 165,000 Alabamians who have coverage through the healthcare marketplace, and over 20 million nationwide. There are many who benefit in Alabama and across this Nation from the ACA. And while we all benefit from not having to have pre-existing conditions be a deterrent to getting health care, all of us will not benefit from the repeal. In fact, it should not surprise many of us that the repeal of the ACA will benefit the wealthiest Americans.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, ACA repeal will lavish Medicare tax cuts on our Nation's 400 highest income households, while 7 million low- and moderate-income households will lose premium tax credits. The average annual income of those top 400 families is \$300 million apiece, and they will benefit from an average annual tax cut of approximately \$7 million apiece. What my Republican colleagues do not want Americans to know is that the repeal of the

ACA will not benefit the majority of Americans but, rather, only the rich.

An average income of \$300 million is more than 6,000 times the average household income in Alabama and nearly 9,000 times the average household in my district. Mr. Speaker, 99.9 percent of my constituents make incomes below \$200,000. I know that they will never see the tax breaks that the repeal of the Affordable Care Act will give to the wealthy.

While healthcare costs have been growing nationwide at the slowest rate in over 50 years under the ACA, we cannot ignore the hardworking Americans who are facing outrageous premium hikes in States that have not expanded Medicaid like Alabama. On average, States that have been hostile to the law are facing the largest premium increases for 2017. One study showed that States that fully embraced the ACA will see increases of 18.2 percent, as opposed to States that have fully resisted the law—like Alabama—which saw increases of 29.8 percent.

Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable to Americans that we have this rise in premiums at any level, but my point is simply this: We should not be looking to repeal the Affordable Care Act without replacing it with something; because the fact of the matter is, in this great country that we live in, no one—no one—should not have access to affordable, quality health care.

Alabamians enrolled in employer-based healthcare insurance are paying more in their employee contributions than those in California, even though Californians have a significantly higher cost of living. This is one of the reasons why I have worked across the aisle to try to make meaningful changes to the ACA that don't compromise the law's benefit.

The American people deserve Representatives that will work together to fix what is wrong with the ACA and build upon what is working. We need 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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work together to increase access, market stabilization, and minimize premium cost rises. We need to work with States that haven't expanded Medicaid to bring down premium costs for the self-insured.

I stand ready to work with my colleagues to achieve these goals and protect the millions of Americans and thousands of Alabamians who are more financially secure today because of the protections of the ACA.

HONORING THE LIFE OF TOM MURRAY

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

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today on behalf of myself and all readers of the Daily Local News, a newspaper in my congressional district, Pennsylvania's Sixth Congressional District, to honor the life of Tom Murray, the editor of the Daily Local News, who just passed.

Mike Rellahan, in writing an obituary on Mr. Murray, accurately had this to say:

Tom Murray's personality shone through in the way he dealt with reporters, photographers, other editors, and colleagues on the multiple newspapers and media outlets he worked at over the years. It showed in his passion for helping people get better at their craft, in his own strong work ethic and in his sense of humor and humanity.

He was a hard-core newspaperman who loved a good lead paragraph, a clever headline, and an action-packed photo. He believed the society page was as important in the Main Line papers he worked for as the sports page was to the Gloucester, New Jersey, Daily Times, where he held the post of sports editor for 9 years, because he believed a newspaper at its best reflects its readers.

More than that, however, Murray stayed true to the ideals of old-school print journalism, loving the traditions and storytelling while at the same time embracing and chasing the future with enthusiasm. He began reporting when electronic journalism was in its infancy, but became so involved in the new digital age that one of his happiest moments came when a video screen showing the realtime activity of the Daily Local News' Web site was installed in the newsroom.

Tom Murray, you will be missed. Thank you for your service and your contribution to journalism, to our democracy, and to sharing news with those throughout the tri-county area for so long.

REALIZING FULL POTENTIAL OF ADVANCED NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H.R. 590, the Advanced Nuclear Technology Development Act, legislation that takes an important step towards developing safer, more reliable clean energy. Nuclear energy accounts for approximately 20 percent of all U.S. electricity and, very importantly, 60 percent of all carbon-free electricity in the U.S.

As our existing nuclear infrastructure moves closer to retirement, ad-

vanced nuclear technology offers a modern solution to ensure that American families have a safe, affordable, and reliable source of clean energy for generations to come. However, in order to fully realize the potential of advanced nuclear, we must remove the costly red tape that prevents innovation and streamline existing practices to allow for the safe and effective development of this technology.

I thank Congressman LATTI for his leadership on this bipartisan issue, and I am pleased to support it and see it pass the House.

KEEPING PERSONAL DATA SECURE FROM SPOOFING

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 423, the Anti-Spoofing Act, a bill I also supported last Congress.

Mr. Speaker, call spoofing is a telephone scam used to change the information on a caller ID and pose as a trusted source, such as an official government agency, a medical center, or a bank.

The intention behind call spoofing is to collect valuable personal information, such as banking information, to defraud or cause other harm to an individual or family. Seniors and veterans are frequently targeted in these scams.

In an effort to protect your personal information, this bill would close existing loopholes and direct the Federal Communications Commission to ensure those who engage in spoofing face criminal fines and penalties.

Call spoofing is not just limited to voice messages. Those using this tactic also utilize text messages, and H.R. 423 would include text messages in these fines and penalties. This bill would keep personal data secure and protect consumers, and I am pleased to see that it has passed the House.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE HIRING FREEZE

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday President Trump issued an executive order. He imposed a hiring freeze on the Federal workforce. It was not only a freeze, but an attack on those serving our country and a misguided action that will achieve the opposite of what is intended.

For those who are listening in the Chamber, Mr. Speaker, let me say that I am proud to represent 62,000 Federal employees. Hopefully, all of us refer to them as working people. We all say we want to be supportive of working people. Some people, however, in this body and down the avenue exempt Federal employees as working people.

They are not only working people, but they are working for the American people. Let's not forget that two-thirds of Federal employees live and work outside the Greater Washington area. It is very nice to say "all of those bureaucrats in Washington," but two-

thirds of our Federal employees serve in every community around our country, serve in protecting them: FBI agents; agents around the world who work for the Central Intelligence Agency—117 of whom died in service, and the President spoke in front of their memorial the other day—employees of the Centers for Disease Control keeping us healthy as communities and as a country, protecting our children and our families from diseases that would attack us; Federal employees at the National Institutes of Health studying how we prevent and cure cancer, heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, autism, other afflictions that confront our country, both health care from a physical and mental standpoint; and, yes, nurses at our veterans hospitals. A freeze so that if a nurse leaves, you can't replace her or him; a doctor at a veterans hospital leaves, you can't replace that doctor, apparently; even at the IRS where we talk about making sure our tax system is fair and making sure that everybody pays their fair share, we undermine the ability to make that a reality; our Border Patrol to keep our borders safe; homeland security to keep our homeland safe—they serve the public in every State and every congressional district in the country.

This hiring freeze will not save us money or do anything to make the government more efficient. Should we do both? Yes. Will this policy do it? No. Its effect will be a reduction in the level of service benefiting the American people, greater difficulty in recruiting and retaining the most talented Americans to public service, and increased costs as a result of having to hire more expensive private contractors to do the work that still needs to be done.

That is something that the public doesn't understand, that, frankly, we exploded, in the early part of this century, the contracting out, which gave us less control and more cost. It is more expensive to contract out.

□ 1015

Already, our Federal employees have made significant sacrifices toward achieving a greater fiscal sustainability in this country. Now, let me give you the magnitude of that. Federal employees, over the last 10 years, have given up \$159 billion in pay and benefits to which they would otherwise have been entitled, but we withdrew those resources from them.

Instead of continuing to vilify Federal civilian employees, as they have done for years—and when I say they, the politicians have done it, mostly on the Republican side of the aisle, but perhaps not exclusively—vilified our Federal employees. Republicans in Congress and in the White House ought to be thanking them for their hard work. I can't imagine any of us would treat our own employees, Mr. Speaker, in a fashion that said we are going to lay you off, we are going to undercut