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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. FOXX).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 3, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable VIRGINIA FOXX 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 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

GUN SAFETY

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, what if the headline in the morning paper was slightly different? What if we had a disease that had killed 59 people yesterday and sickened over 500 others? Do you think the Nation would demand action?

If we had an outbreak every day that had over 100,000 people a year killed and injured, Congress would be in a

frenzy. Yesterday, we found 2 minutes for a moment of silence, and we moved on.

Gun violence is a public health hazard every bit as important as any other disease or outbreak. Ours is the only developed country in the world that cannot protect our families from death and injury from guns on a massive scale.

After years of frustration in Congress and another school shooting in my district, I sat down with my constituents to go through, what are the things that we can do that would make a difference?

We understood that you cannot completely stop evil people. There is not a statute that is foolproof, but our statutes are filled with efforts to try to make things better.

Let's stop dealing with gun violence as a political issue and think about it as the public health epidemic that it is, already claiming over 12,000 lives in the United States this year.

We attacked auto death and safety in a resolute fashion. It didn't happen overnight that we made automobiles safer and our highways less dangerous, but we stayed at it with law enforcement, with engineering, and with research, and we cut the rate of death over half.

We are starting now to deal with massive addiction and overdose as a medical condition that requires treatment, not just law enforcement with harsh punishment.

My report outlined nine areas where we could take action. There are 26 bills in Congress now that deal with these items, and we haven't been able to deal with them meaningfully: no hearings and certainly nothing on the floor of the House.

There are provisions to keep guns away from the most dangerous users. Even members of the NRA support that. We can improve the mental health system. We can authorize and increase research into gun safety.

There is an outrageous provision in United States law that prevents the Centers for Disease Control to research gun violence that was authored by our late colleague Jay Dickey from Arkansas who, later in life, realized that was a horrific mistake. We ought to be able to understand and find ways to help prevent it.

We can control access to the most dangerous products. We can increase product safety for guns, which are inherently dangerous. We can empower healthcare professionals to deal with families to help prevent gun violence and understand what risks their families face, rather than outrageous provisions that seek to limit what healthcare professionals can do to deal with their patients. We can effectively regulate the sale of firearms. There should be no hidden sales where we do not have background checks.

This is all within our capacity. We can enforce existing laws, and we can mitigate the loss of life in shooting by helping provide more resources for first responders.

This isn't pie in the sky. This will do nothing to take away the rights of Americans who want to target shoot or hunt. What it will do, is start the slow, steady process toward making our families safer and make sure that America is not the only developed country that cannot protect its families from gun violence.

GENERAL AVIATION

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

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to do a little myth-busting. Critics of the 21st Century AIRR Act are selling a myth that the 21st Century AIRR Act will be damaging and adverse to general aviation. This couldn't be further from the truth.

I am a regular general aviation user and a student pilot. My brother-in-law

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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is a GA pilot. I would never support legislation that would be bad for my rural communities and the airports in those communities.

Let's address a few of those myths.

The nonprofit service provider for air traffic control will be prohibited from charging user fees to any segment of general aviation in contrast to the myths that are being sold out there.

The act also prohibits the ATC provider from restricting access to any airspace or any airport.

Further, any changes to access to airports or airspace would be subject to extensive government review and approval.

Additional funding is provided to community airports to assist them to continue to grow and be vibrant in our communities.

Critics would have you believe that general aviation will not have a seat at the table. Again, not true. The non-profit board of directors designates a seat for community airports, as it designates a seat for general aviation, lease pilots, airlines, and air cargo.

The FAA, in a hearing, indicated it would take another 10 years and \$30 billion to update an air traffic control system from the archaic system we have now. When asked, they said that they hoped they would have it accomplished in 10 years. Hope is not a plan.

The Trump administration supports the 21st Century AIRR Act. Air traffic controllers support the 21st Century AIRR Act. Airline pilots support it. The airlines support it, and air cargo supports it. We can go through a long list, yet we continue to deal with myths being spun out there that somehow this is adverse to aviation.

We have an archaic air traffic control system that is hurting our Nation and that is damaging our economy. It is time to move beyond fear and myths.

Madam Speaker, I urge colleagues to move beyond those myths and see the 21st Century AIRR Act will benefit all users. Let's bring the bill to the floor, let's have a vote, and let's move the air traffic control system back.

PUERTO RICO, YOU ARE NOT ALONE

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Madam Speaker, I just returned from Puerto Rico, and to start my remarks, I would like to say a few words in Spanish, the language of Puerto Rico, and then I will switch back to English.

I will provide a translation to the desk.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

My beloved Puerto Rico, you are not alone. We hear your cries for help and the full strength of the American government and military is finally coming to help.

It has been slow and no one has been as frustrated as I am that the response

did not happen with the urgency and priority that Puerto Ricans—and every human being who is suffering—deserve.

I tell my colleagues what I saw and what you told me while I was there. I will work with them immediately, and make sure that this Congress treats Puerto Rico fairly and generously.

And I am not alone. The other Puerto Ricans and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus are working with the leadership of the House to put together an aid package.

Cities and towns, Mayors and Governors from across the country are making their communities available to you so that you have a safe place to be while the rescue and recovery and rebuilding continues.

And standing with the Mayor of Chicago just yesterday, he said he wants the City of Chicago to be a place where any and all Puerto Ricans who need a safe place can come and we will help you resettle.

You are not alone.

Mi amado Puerto Rico, no estás solo.

Oímos tus peticiones de ayuda, y la fuerza del gobierno y milicia estadounidense finalmente vienen a ayudar.

Ha sido despacio, y comparto tu frustración sobre una respuesta que no se dió con la urgencia y prioridad que los Puertorriqueños—y cualquier ser humano que está sufriendo—se merecen.

Les digo a mis colegas lo que he visto, y lo que me has dicho cuando estuve ahí. Trabajaré con ellos inmediatamente para asegurar que este Congreso trate a Puerto Rico justa y generosamente.

Y no soy el único. Otros Puertorriqueños, y el Caucus Hispano están trabajando con el liderazgo de la Cámara para conformar un programa de ayuda.

Ciudades y pueblos, alcaldes y gobernadores a través del país, están abriendo las puertas de sus comunidades para que tengas un lugar seguro mientras el rescate, la recuperación y la reconstrucción continúan.

Y ayer, presente con el alcalde de Chicago, él me dijo que quiere que la ciudad de Chicago sea un lugar en el cual todo Puertorriqueño que necesite un lugar seguro pueda llegar y re establecerse.

Madam Speaker, I flew to Puerto Rico on Friday to see what was happening on the ground with my own eyes. Madam Speaker, it was worse than I imagined, and it broke my heart to see my beloved island so destroyed and so scared for its future and feeling so alone and isolated.

There were dead animals all over the place, and people were so desperate for food and water. Anyone who is sick or elderly is finding it hard or impossible to get medicine and medical care.

Things are improving day by day, and the number of helicopters flying missions of mercy to the interior of the island is increasing. But almost every-

one has no electrical power. Almost everyone has little or no food and trouble finding it. Almost everyone has no water, and some are seeking water from unreliable or possibly contaminated sources.

At the same time, I also saw an amazing unity and toughness, a can-do spirit that my fellow Puerto Ricans have the ability to make a way where there is no way, to improvise, and, most importantly, to work together.

Any divisions of party or class that are right on the surface on a typical day in Puerto Rico, this faction versus that faction, all of that was blown away. The only status issue that matters for Puerto Ricans right now is the status of the SOS, save our souls. We need help, and plenty of it, now.

Yesterday, I spoke at a press conference in Chicago with Mayor Rahm Emanuel and leaders from Chicago, including Fire Commissioner Santiago and the head of Chicago's Office of Emergency Management and Control, a brigadier general in our National Guard.

The mayor announced that 22 Chicago firefighters, on their own dime, are going to Puerto Rico to help with the rescue and recovery efforts, including bringing equipment that may help communications to remote parts of the island.

The mayor also announced that, in Chicago, we want to be for Puerto Rico what Houston was for New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina—a place of refuge where we will help you get settled, get your kids into school, get you the medical care you need, and make you feel welcome.

One thing I learned in Puerto Rico this weekend is that, in Chicago and in the rest of the U.S., we need to start thinking about evacuation in addition to rebuilding and recovery.

I have welcomed my own family into my home, and people I know across the country are welcoming relatives escaping Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. But we need to wrap up our commitment beyond the family-to-family informal relationships and look systematically at how we organize ourselves to meet the great need of our fellow citizens on the island in the Caribbean.

Rebuilding Puerto Rico—making her a strong and self-sufficient island nation of industrious and hardworking people again—will take years and require a long-term commitment from this Congress and this country so that the well-being of our fellow man on the island can be met.

So, Madam Speaker, let's roll up our sleeves and get to work. Once again, Chicago is there to welcome you, to enroll your kids in school, to get you medical attention, and to make sure you have a safe place until the recovery and rebuilding has been accomplished.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Illinois will provide a translation of his remarks to the Clerk.