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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. WEBER of Texas).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 7, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RANDY K. WEBER, SR. 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.

PENN STATE TO CELEBRATE MILITARY APPRECIATION WEEK AND HOMECOMING

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this week, Penn State University recognizes Military Appreciation Week, which is in conjunction with its homecoming celebration.

The Penn State Homecoming and Military Appreciation game will take place, and appropriately so, on Vet-

erans Day, Saturday, November 11, against the Rutgers Scarlet Knights in Beaver Stadium. This game will celebrate both Penn State and its commitment to alumni and others in the community who have served in our military.

I am so pleased to see the Penn State community honoring servicemembers, veterans, and their families, expressing appreciation to them and recognizing the sacrifices of Gold Star families.

Faculty, staff, and students from around the university and within the community are engaging in planning and recognizing Active-Duty and veteran military personnel and their families.

Mr. Speaker, the State College Borough and Centre County have also joined with University Park to present numerous events for veterans and their families during Military Appreciation Month. Events began on October 2 with the Penn State Veterans Career Fair and will continue through the end of this week.

The Vietnam Veterans Traveling Memorial Wall came to University Park during the month's events. I had the opportunity to participate in both the opening and closing ceremonies for the wall, and it was a moving tribute to all those who served during the Vietnam war.

The theme for the Centre County event was "Welcome Home." We all know that, in many instances, our Vietnam veterans did not receive a warm welcome home when they actually returned home from war. This is a scar on our history and one that we are working to heal. The Traveling Wall served as a reminder of the efforts to promote liberty and freedom that our Vietnam veterans put forth.

Military Appreciation events continue this week in conjunction with homecoming. There will be a Veterans Day ceremony in front of Old Main on Friday, a tailgate before the Military

Appreciation football game Saturday, and a Freedom 5K for post-traumatic stress disorder, to benefit those suffering with it, on Sunday.

The 6-week regional celebration culminates Sunday afternoon with Military Appreciation basketball games for both the Penn State men's and women's teams at Bryce Jordan Center.

Mr. Speaker, caring for our veterans and military has been one of my top priorities since beginning my congressional service. It has a special place in my heart, not just because of all our veterans have done, but because I have seen firsthand the magnitude of their sacrifice.

As a military father, I know that wearing the uniform is about service and sacrifice.

I thank all those who serve and have served this great Nation, and I look forward to honoring their service this week at Penn State and in every corner of our country.

May God bless our veterans, the United States of America, and the Nittany Lions for a homecoming win.

TAX BILL

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

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the dangerous tax plan that is currently being considered by the House Ways and Means Committee. House Republicans wrote this proposal behind closed doors and then presented it to Congress and the public just last week.

This is not the kind of bipartisan tax plan we need to help lift up working families, grow our economy, and lead to a better future for our constituents. In fact, under this proposed plan, about 80 percent of the benefits will go to the wealthiest 1 percent. While helping out wealthy individuals and corporations, the proposal hurts many working families by getting rid of deductions for

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State and local taxes and medical expenses, for example.

Mr. Speaker, there is another place where this bill will hurt working families. Mr. Speaker, Benjamin Franklin said: “an investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” When it comes to education, this plan is an inexcusable lost opportunity.

Education is one of the smartest investments we can make, and tax policy is a place where there is tremendous potential to do great things. Unfortunately, this tax proposal shortchanges America’s schools, students, and teachers.

Ninety percent of students attend public schools, yet this tax plan starves public education by making changes to the property tax deduction and reducing funding sources for the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act.

On top of that, the plan would turn 529 college savings plans into a Trump-DeVos private school voucher scheme that will primarily aid wealthy families and will further undermine our public education system.

This tax plan doesn’t just hurt our students, it also hurts teachers. Right now, across the country, teachers pay an average of \$500 a year out of their pockets to help stock their classrooms with supplies like pencils, notebooks, and materials to enhance learning, and that has been offset by a \$250 classroom supplies deduction, which is the least we could do to help those hardworking, underpaid teachers, but this bill eliminates that deduction for classroom supplies.

We should all also be deeply concerned about the consequences of this GOP tax plan for families who invest in higher education. The bill eliminates the student loan interest deduction, making it harder, rather than easier, for millions of Americans who are working to pay off their student loans.

On top of that, the bill repeals the lifetime learning credit and the Hope scholarship credit, has major reductions in tax credits for tuition, and will make employer-paid tuition count as income.

That is the wrong direction. We need a tax proposal that helps, not hurts, students and working families.

This proposal takes away important investments in education, and at the same time will add about \$1.5 trillion to the deficit, leaving our children and grandchildren to pay the bill.

Mr. Speaker, this plan will limit opportunities for people to get ahead. That is wrong. We should come back to the table and craft a plan that works for all Americans, not a plan that strongly and wrongly favors those at the top.

AN OUTSTANDING REFUGEE

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

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate an outstanding educator in my district.

Ayan Omar of St. Cloud recently was honored as one of seven recipients of the Outstanding Refugee award from the Minnesota Department of Human Services. This award honors refugees or their children who are making innovative contributions to their community, and Ayan is well deserving of this commendation. She earned this honor as the result of her civic leadership efforts as a language arts teacher at St. Cloud Technical High School.

But for Ayan, her work extends beyond the classroom and into the community. She often speaks on panels or at events, and she was recently a featured speaker at St. Cloud’s TEDx event, where she spoke about interpersonal communication.

We are lucky to have educators like Ayan who take their work into the communities they serve. Thank you, Ayan, for your commitment to education, and congratulations on this well-deserved award.

A COMMITMENT TO SAFETY AND CUSTOMERS

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding constituent from my district, Andy Thiele of Monticello.

Andy recently competed in the 2017 International Foodservice Distributors Association Truck Driving Championship in Orlando, Florida. This competition highlights the best drivers in the food industry. This competition honors drivers from all over the country and their commitment to safety and excellent customer service.

Andy’s devotion to safety is clear, as he has been accident free for 11 years and counting.

IFDA members, like the Twin Cities division of Reinhart Foodservice where Andy is employed, supply food to professional kitchens, hospitals, care facilities, colleges, and hotels.

We need truck drivers like Andy who deliver our Nation’s food efficiently and safely across the country every day. I commend Andy and all those who competed in the competition this year for their dedication to professionalism and safety. I am glad my district, the State of Minnesota, and our Nation have dedicated truck drivers like Andy Thiele.

LIFESAVERS IN ST. CLOUD

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize five outstanding constituents in my district for an act of heroism that saved a fellow Minnesotan.

Police officer Curt Grosz, firefighters Adam Imholte and Dennis Ertl, and high school students Abigail Trelfa and Madison DeMarais worked hand in hand to save the life of Daniel Fleigle.

Daniel was on a bridge in Sartell, Minnesota, this summer when he accidentally touched a live wire and was electrocuted, sending him to the ground. Thankfully, his friends Abigail and Madison reacted immediately, calling 911 and beginning CPR. First responders Curt, Adam, and Dennis all responded to this scene shortly thereafter, and together they saved Daniel’s life.

The quick response of these heroes ensured Daniel’s full recovery. Without them, Daniel would likely not be with us today. I am lucky to represent such selfless and heroic people who run to their fellow citizens in times of need.

Thank you Curt, Adam, Dennis, Abigail, and Madison for saving Daniel’s life and showing our community what a true hero looks like.

ELK RIVER’S OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the incredible members of the Elk River Chamber of Commerce. Communities in my district like Elk River are successful because the members support and encourage one another.

Recently, the Elk River Chamber of Commerce, which represents 360 local businesses, honored some of its most active members as this year’s outstanding volunteers. One was Pam Artmann of Edina Realty Elk River. In just 2 years with the chamber, she was named Ambassador of the Year for bringing positivity to her role.

The chamber also honored Tamara Ackerman of Avalon Salon for her work chairing and growing the Shiver Elk River 5K/10K Run. For this, she received the PACEsetter award, which highlights her dedication to service on the chamber board.

Finally, the chamber recognized Mark and Deb Urista of Edina Realty Elk River with the Keystone award, which recognizes their longstanding commitment and work with and on behalf of the chamber.

I am honored to represent servant leaders and entrepreneurs like Mark, Deb, Pam, and Tamara.

Congratulations to all of you on your well-deserved awards.

100 PERCENT OPPOSED TO THE GOP TAX PLAN

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

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say what many in this body have said: we should simplify our Tax Code. However, I am 100 percent opposed to you and your caucus’s efforts to write this bill in secret, hidden away from the public eye.

I am 100 percent opposed to your plan to give massive tax breaks to a superrich few and leave middle class and working families to pay the bill. As written, the richest 1 percent of Americans will receive one-third of the overall benefits from your so-called tax reform plan in 2018, but by 2027, this lucky superrich handful of Americans will receive half of its benefits.

Mr. Speaker, that is just wrong. Hardworking moms and dads deserve a tax break, not the wealthiest.

So, yes, I am 100 percent opposed to limiting the State and local tax deduction, a provision in the Republican tax plan that would hike taxes on more than 40 percent of my constituents.

I am 100 percent opposed to limiting the student loan deduction, especially