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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

During these cold, early-darkening days, we ask Your special blessing upon those who labor in the Nation's Capitol.

Help the Members of the House and those of the Senate to act wisely and carefully in the important work they do. In the waning days of the session, may they continue to heed the voices of all their constituents, both those who voted for them and those who did not.

May all that is done within the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

THE SPEAKER. 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. Will the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. LANCE 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

THE SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

CONGRATULATING FOOTBALL STATE CHAMPIONS

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

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate three State high school football champions in New Jersey's Seventh Congressional District: Westfield High School, North Hunterdon High School, and Somerville High School.

Westfield High School finished its year with its third consecutive State championship and with its 37-consecutive-game winning streak intact. The North Hunterdon Lions won their division, and Somerville High School finished as State football champions with award-winning Coach Jeff Vanderbeek at the helm.

I congratulate the communities and families supporting our student athletes. I also congratulate all of the faculty and coaches who devote themselves to cultivating and nurturing the talent of these athletes.

Each of those public schools, in addition to athletic achievement, has also been recognized for academic achievement regularly across the Nation, highlighting that New Jersey's reputation of having among the best public schools in the Nation continues.

TAX POLICY LEAVES BEHIND NATIVE AMERICANS

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, as Republicans continue to rush their tax plan through both Houses of Congress, they leave behind tens of millions of Americans to give deficit-expanding tax breaks to the absolute wealthiest. They are also leaving behind some really important Americans: our Native American brothers and sisters.

For years, issues of taxation and how Federal tax policy impacts Tribal gov-

ernments have been the subject of discussion, and for those years that we have talked about the need for tax reform, there have been continuous promises made to Tribal governments that we will deal with these inequities, these issues of double taxation in Tribes.

For example, a Tribal member who gets an adoption through a Tribal court doesn't qualify for an adoption tax credit. That is just one example of the many ways that Federal tax policy does not anticipate or recognize Tribal governments. But they have been left behind again.

This bill should be written in a way that actually addresses the real problems in the Tax Code. It does not.

BILL OF RIGHTS DAY

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, today I wish to commemorate Bill of Rights Day. Initially, this was passed by Congress in August of 1941 as a joint resolution, signed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt on November 27, 1941, where, in his words: "I . . . do hereby designate December 15, 1941, as Bill of Rights Day. And I call upon the officials of the government, and upon the people of the United States, to observe the day by displaying the flag of the United States on public buildings and by meeting together for such prayers and such ceremonies as may seem to them appropriate."

The Bill of Rights was first introduced by James Madison, who later became the fourth President. Initially, 12 amendments were proposed. Two were not ratified. One did become ratified later on in compensation of Congress in 1992.

There were 14 original copies produced of the Bill of Rights at the time,

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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one for each of the 13 States and one for the National Archives. Twelve of them survive today.

When Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed that proclamation on December 15, 1941, he had no way of knowing what was coming. Just 9 days later, those who have long enjoyed such privileges as we enjoy forget in time that men have died to win them. They come in time to take these rights for granted and to assume their protection is assured. We, however, have seen these privileges lost in other continents and other countries.

Indeed, prescient words for the time.

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

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

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, in California, wildfires have become a year-round threat. Because of these fires, communities across our great State have suffered devastating loss of life and property.

Last year, in my district on the central coast of California, we had the most expensive fire in United States history, the Soberanes fire. This year, we have had some of the deadliest and costliest fires in California history in Napa and Sonoma. This week, we watch fires burn in the hills from Los Angeles and Santa Barbara to Oakland and Big Sur.

Governor Jerry Brown calls this “the new normal.” We should call it unacceptable, and we must do something. We must fully fund the cost of fire suppression. We must include California fire relief in this year’s disaster package. We must think outside the box when it comes to fire prevention and focus our efforts to better manage our forests in the future.

TRUCKERS’ ELECTRONIC TRACKING DEVICE

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

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, millions of American truck drivers helped elect President Trump last November, and I am calling on him to step in and give them a hand.

President Obama left office back in January, but a \$2 billion regulation that he wrote in 2015 to require electronic tracking devices be put in every truck in America is still scheduled to go into effect this Monday. Yes, an Obama regulation that shamefully seems to remain on the books is going into effect this Monday under a Republican Congress and White House.

The Department of Transportation can give a 90-day waiver for all truckers from this mandate, giving several waivers for specific industries, including one just this week. Instead of offering fairness and relief, they are picking winners and losers.

Millions of American truckers are pleading 24/7 for relief from this mandate using the hashtag #eldorme, but it has fallen on deaf ears at the Department of Transportation.

Mr. President, you call the shots in this administration. Please issue an executive order today and instruct the Department of Transportation to give all truckers relief from this mandate for 3 months. Don’t implement this colossal Obama mandate a week before Christmas.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK). Members are advised to direct their remarks to the Chair.

NEWTOWN ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, on this day in 2012, we watched together in horror as news broke of a shooting in Newtown, Connecticut. Twenty innocent children and six brave educators were gunned down at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

In the 5 years since, this House has paused 40 times for moments of silence to recognize the victims of mass shootings. The names are now familiar: Emanuel AME, Pulse nightclub, Las Vegas, and Sutherland Springs.

Since Newtown, there have been more than 1,700 mass shooting events, nearly one every single day.

Across the country, there have been nearly 170,000 gun deaths—let me repeat that figure—170,000 gun deaths since Newtown.

But in those 5 years, this House has taken no significant action to improve our gun safety laws. We are not debating universal background checks or restricting assault weapons or even banning the bump stock used 2 months ago in Las Vegas, the worst mass shooting in our history.

I have met some of the parents of Newtown. We all grieve for them and their loss. But our moments of silence are not enough. The 26 who lost their lives deserve more. We must honor them with action.

I urge this House to end the obstruction and finally consider legislation that would improve safety for all of our communities.

TAX REFORM

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

Mr. CURTIS. Mr. Speaker, the House is in the midst of historic tax reform. Now that the House and Senate have almost reached agreement, I would like to take a moment to express a few ideals that I hope will be guiding principles as we complete this process.

The final tax bill should cut taxes for all Americans while also retaining important incentives making homeownership, raising a family, and obtaining higher education possible.

Additionally, the bill should continue to uphold American values by encouraging our people to be generous and charitable.

The lowering of our corporate tax rates is critical. As a former business owner, I know firsthand the difficulty of the tax burden.

Most importantly, the bill must help working American families keep more of their hard-earned money.

I am confident that Congress will deliver on its promise to simplify the Tax Code and to cut taxes for all Americans. I know that this historic legislation will spur economic growth and prosperity.

A PARTISAN TAX BILL

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

Mr. SCHRADER. Mr. Speaker, how do you make a bad, partisan tax bill better? For my Republican colleagues, apparently that means cutting tax rates for the wealthy even more than the original bill, as we have heard over the last couple days.

Where is the fairness for average, hardworking Americans?

Medical expenses are no longer deductible.

Student loans and tuition waivers are no longer deductible.

Interest is not deductible for families, but it is for business.

The mortgage interest deduction is reduced.

State and local taxes are not fully deductible.

Small businesses don’t get the same tax cuts that big businesses do.

No help for capital gains.

No help for dividends, advertising, or entertaining.

Other business expense is no longer deductible.

Renewable energy tax credits go away.

Private activity bonds that help veterans and many others are also gone.

Worst of all, individual tax cuts flip back and are rescinded in a few years, while corporations go on forever.

Where is the fairness for seniors, for our youth, for our families, and for small businesses? Not in this partisan tax bill.

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL MISSOURI’S WOMEN’S SOCCER TEAM

(Mrs. HARTZLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the University of Central Missouri’s women’s soccer team on winning the NCAA Division II national championship. This is the Jennies first NCAA women’s soccer national championship in program history.

The Jennies completed the season with a perfect record of 26 and 0, making them only the third women’s Division II national champion to finish a