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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. YODER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 12, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable KEVIN YODER 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 8, 2018, 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.

RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING SERVICE OF AMY PORTER

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the outstanding service of Amy Porter, my chief of staff for 17 years, including the last 6 years on the Foreign Affairs Committee. Amy is a skillful manager and leader who has been central to everything I have accomplished in Congress.

Amy has been a tremendous asset to my office in no small part because she

has the heart for tackling some of the toughest issues and the drive to see them through. She ensured that issues like combating human trafficking and protecting children in adversity were front and center to our agenda.

When I became chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, she encouraged us to use this platform to call attention to the plight of disadvantaged groups around the world, particularly women and girls. This included holding a series of hearings on ways the United States could support women's empowerment around the globe, from promoting girls' education to women's inclusion in peace processes.

But, of course, Amy made sure we didn't stop there. She pressed us to develop solutions that would make a difference. As a result, the committee has passed many pieces of legislation—the READ Act; the Women, Peace, and Security Act; and the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act—that will give more women and girls a voice in decisions affecting their lives.

Amy traveled during her personal time to Cambodia and to India to work in orphanages and shelters, helping young girls subjected to human trafficking. She was relentless in helping me press governments on human rights, from the discriminating treatment toward those some still call the untouchables, the Dalits of India, to the genocide of the Rohingya of Myanmar, to female victims of trafficking and abuse worldwide.

From day one, Amy has understood how to reach out and connect with my constituents. When she announced over a decade ago that I should hold an annual event for women in my district to network and learn more about what I was doing in Washington, others were quickly dismissive. They questioned whether women who weren't already involved in politics would be interested in attending lectures on various policy

issues or foreign affairs. However, 1,000 women in my district came to our seventh annual conference to hear former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice discuss lessons from her career.

That is the amazing thing about Amy. For her, it is never enough to point out a problem. She possesses an unshakeable drive to make this world a better place, and the vision and leadership to realize even the most lofty ambitions.

It is thanks to her dedication that we were able to bring hundreds of adopted children home from Congo to their legal parents in the United States after their exit visas were suspended. Children stuck in filthy and underfunded orphanages were dying. Amy heard about it and traveled to Kinshasa on these children's behalf.

When she landed, she ran into a protest against the government. She continued on, made her case, and was rebuffed. She vowed to return.

She returned with a congressional delegation, which I led, and thanks to her effort, hundreds of American families now have new members whose lives are better beyond comprehension. These families thank Amy. My constituents thank Amy.

Thank you, Amy Porter, for your 20 years of service to this country.

Mr. Speaker, I know when her daughter, Sara Jo, is old enough, she will thank Amy for what she has done for the empowerment of women and for what Amy has done for Sara Jo.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

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

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind everyone that the enrollment period to sign up for 2019 health plans on healthcare.gov, and in many States like my home State of

□ 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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Maryland, ends in just 3 days. That is Saturday, December 15.

I have often said that voting for the Affordable Care Act was the most important vote of my career. When Congress passed the Affordable Care Act in 2010, we enshrined into law the promise that all Americans have a right to accessible and affordable health insurance coverage in this great country.

By strengthening the individual health insurance market, protecting people with preexisting conditions, and expanding Medicaid, we brought this promise closer to reality. We promised that individuals would not have to worry about affording health insurance or paying outrageous rates because of preexisting conditions. We safeguarded access to care for people who need it by preventing health insurance providers from placing limits on their coverage.

Because of the ACA, individuals and families across this country do not have to live with the daily fear of financial disaster they could face if they got sick while they were uninsured. In total, approximately 20 million Americans gained health insurance coverage as a result of the ACA.

During the November election, the American people reminded us that they want their elected officials to protect their access to affordable healthcare. In my home State of Maryland, the uninsured population is at an all-time low of 6.1 percent. As more people have gotten coverage, the cost of uncompensated care in Maryland hospitals has gone down by \$400 million from 2013 to 2017.

The open enrollment period that is quickly coming to a close in many States is the only time during which people can act to protect themselves and their families by purchasing coverage through healthcare.gov or their State health insurance marketplace.

Quality health plans for 2019 are more affordable than many people may realize. Eight in ten people using healthcare.gov qualify for financial assistance, meaning that most people can find a health plan with a premium of less than \$75 per month.

According to data released by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services through December 1, enrollment is down 11 percent on the Federal exchange compared to last year.

I am proud that Maryland has embraced the ACA to help people in our State secure the coverage they need to keep their families healthy and safe. I am proud of all the hard work the Maryland Health Connection continues to do to make it easier for people to get enrolled.

The Trump administration has focused their efforts on sabotaging the ACA by making it harder for Americans to sign up for coverage through actions such as shortening the enrollment period, slashing funding for marketing and outreach programs, and lowering spending by more than 80 percent on local in-person assistance through the navigator program.

Because of these efforts, there is fear about the future of ACA. I want to make one thing very clear: The ACA is not going anywhere, despite the efforts of the Trump administration to sabotage this law. Please know that I intend to do everything in my power to keep the ACA intact and to make sure that people have health coverage that is meaningful, affordable, and accessible.

So, Mr. Speaker, I urge everyone in the next 3 days to discuss your options and find out how to get the best plan for you as an individual and for your family.

Everyone deserves access to healthcare that will improve their lives. Healthcare is a right, not a privilege, and I pledge to do my part to protect that right.

WHY OUR BORDER MATTERS

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

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, every nation has a natural right and a fundamental responsibility to determine who is admitted within its borders. This is what defines a country and ultimately determines whether its culture, customs, and institutions will endure.

The unique qualities that develop within each country's borders naturally make some countries more desirable places to live than others. These differences drive immigration patterns. The more successful a nation, the greater the demand to immigrate to it, and ours is the most successful in human history.

Most of the world's 7½ billion people live in violent and impoverished conditions, and it is no wonder that they find the United States an attractive alternative. Yet uncontrolled and indiscriminate immigration from those countries to ours risks importing the same undesirable conditions that encouraged their immigration in the first place.

History offers us many examples of great civilizations that have succumbed to this paradox, and the current crisis on our southern border poses a fundamental test of whether ours may join them.

America has traditionally welcomed the truly persecuted who have escaped to our shores, but what is unfolding today makes a mockery of our asylum laws. This was not a peaceful caravan of asylum seekers, as many have attempted to portray. A caravan is a group of people traveling legally and peacefully through a foreign land. An invasion is a group of people attempting to violate a nation's border by force, whether by military or mob action.

The vast majority camped on our southern border are military-aged males. Authorities have already identified roughly 600 as known criminals,

and Mexican law enforcement has reportedly arrested roughly 100 for crimes committed in their country. The fact that this force has attacked both Mexican and U.S. law enforcement, with several injuries reported, contradicts any claims that, as a group, they come with peaceful intent.

Nor are they asylum seekers in any conventional sense. No doubt many are nonviolent and simply caught up in the group dynamic of a mob. But poverty and violence in a country does not entitle every person in it to enter ours. Asylum is reserved for those who have been specifically targeted for harm by their own government based on their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or social group, and who have entered directly into our country from their own.

In these instances, asylum is reached by crossing a border and accomplishing separation from that government. A Central American arriving in Mexico has already achieved this and, therefore, has no call on asylum in any other country. The appropriate request to make is to the Government of Mexico, a request some have already made and Mexico has granted.

Nothing succeeds like success. If this group is allowed to muscle its way into the United States, we can expect many and still larger groups to follow.

If anything, this crisis should emphasize the importance of completing the border wall that Congress first authorized in 1996 and President Trump is desperately trying to construct.

A forceful incursion of our border can be repelled only by applying equal or greater force. That is a recipe for violence and bloodshed. The physical separation provided by a wall can prevent that.

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It not only protects the officers who place their lives on the line in defense of our law, it also protects the lawbreakers themselves from the violent conduct that their behavior otherwise would make inevitable.

Orderly immigration, regulated by law and protected by secure borders, is a prerequisite to a civilized and prosperous nation. If our immigration laws are not enforced, then our borders become meaningless and America becomes a vast, open territory between Canada and Mexico susceptible to every social, political, and economic disorder brought to it.

This seems to be the ultimate aim of the American left and its powerful chorus in the media. We are fortunate in this crisis to have a President obedient to his constitutional command to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed." In the remaining days of this session, Congress has a responsibility to give him the tools to do so. It remains one of the great remaining tests of the 115th Congress.