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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MEADOWS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 19, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK MEADOWS 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 1:50 p.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

NATIONAL PHYSICIANS WEEK

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

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, March 25 through March 31 is National Physicians Week. As a practicing physician for nearly 30 years, I would like to use my time today to acknowledge the dedicated doctors nationwide who devote their lives to providing quality care for our patients.

I am so thankful for the doctors who have led the charge to observe a week dedicated to our Nation's physicians,

and especially thanks to Dr. Kimberly Jackson. Dr. Jackson is a true pioneer for the medical profession. In June of 2015, she founded the Physicians Working Together organization. This group was created to bring physicians together from a broad spectrum of specialties. Dr. Jackson then, just 1 year later, established the last week in March as National Physicians Week.

This year's celebration will include a physician-led virtual conference hosted by the Physicians Working Together group. The conference is available for free and will provide physicians with valuable ways to improve their everyday practice. The virtual sessions will also highlight ways that physicians can take action in policy through advocacy groups and navigate the world of politics. I encourage my friends in the medical industry to tune in.

As an obstetrician/gynecologist, I have had the privilege of building relationships with patients that I will always hold dear to my heart. There is nothing quite like watching a family grow before your eyes and having a hand in their healthy growing.

Although government regulations piled on over the years have continued to make it difficult to build and nurture these relationships, my patients have become no less important nor less of a priority to me. I know this to be the case for many other doctors throughout the Nation.

During my time practicing medicine in Great Bend, Kansas, I had the opportunity to work alongside many fellow physicians who practice with a level of care that I want for my own family, physicians who are more than deserving of a week of appreciation. So please take a few moments to show your support for your local physicians.

For more information regarding the conference, I would ask you to check out the National Physicians Week Facebook page, or look at my own social media pages for more ways to spread the word.

IT IS TIME TO STAND UP FOR AMERICA

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to talk about the events of Friday night and concern for the continued special counsel position of Robert Mueller.

On Friday night, late, the Deputy Director of the FBI, Mr. Andrew McCabe, was fired. I haven't seen the IG report. Nobody has seen it. It won't be available until April. But it is concerning that, that late at night, people were working at Justice to fire a career employee and possibly deprive him of his pension.

Mr. McCabe believes the reason he was fired was because of his knowledge of Mr. Comey's conversations with the President, and his own conversations with the President, and his being a corroborating witness. I don't know what the cause was, but the process was awful. It was rushed, and it seemed to violate the due process rights of this career Federal employee.

And then to watch the President of the United States, a multibillionaire, spike the ball on being able to deprive a 20-year Federal employee of a pension was cruel, un-American, and mean-spirited. It was a shot across the bow at other government officials who are doing their jobs—Justice Department officials, FBI officials, law enforcement officials who love this country and put their lives on the line—and that if they don't agree with the Mueller investigation continuing; or if they see concerns about the United States President and his campaign and some involvement with Russia or with obstruction of justice, or violations of emoluments clauses; that they too risk their jobs and risk their pensions, and risk their financial security.

It is a scary time in America, and we are looking at the abyss.

□ 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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In December, I was concerned about this as well. And Representative WALTER JONES from North Carolina, a Republican, and I, have a bipartisan bill, H.R. 4669, which has a Senate companion filed, and is bipartisan as well, by Senator TILLIS and Senator COONS, which is S. 1741; and it gives the special counsel due process if he is fired for causes that are not objective—related to his job and the performance of his duties.

But it means he couldn't be fired for politics and he couldn't be fired to squelch an investigation concerning the very fundamentals of this country and allegiance and adherence to the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America for which we have all taken an oath to uphold. Nothing is more sacred.

If the President has done nothing wrong, as he has said on many occasions, and he has tweeted recently about Mr. Mueller and said it is a "witch hunt" and said there is no collusion. If there is no collusion, if there is no obstruction of justice, if there are no violations, the President should, as Representative TREY GOWDY has said, welcome the continuation of the investigation to clear him.

As Representative TREY GOWDY said: He is not acting like a man who is innocent. And Representative CHARLIE DENT has said similar things.

If you have nothing to hide, why stop an investigation if there is nothing to find? And if there is something to find and something for the American people to know about, and for Congress to know about and act on, then it is incumbent on us to protect Mr. Mueller and protect that investigation.

That is why we have these bipartisan bills. I know there is Democratic support for these bills, but there hasn't been Republican support that I know of, beyond Senator TILLIS and Representative WALTER JONES.

I call on Speaker RYAN to schedule this bill, have it scheduled in Representative GOODLATTE's committee, my committee, the Judiciary Committee, for a hearing, or bring it directly to the floor for a vote.

I call on Representative GOODLATTE to schedule the bill for a markup and have it voted on.

But, more importantly, I call on my Republican colleagues to stand up for America and stand up for their oath of office.

We get along, Republicans and Democrats. Republicans are good people, too. They have different thoughts on certain issues and different perspectives than most Democrats and I do. But we all believe in an America that should not be capitulating to Russia, and an America that shouldn't be seeing the Constitution shredded and laws violated.

So I call on my Republican colleagues to look into their soul, look into their heart, remember their oath. Sign on to H.R. 4669, as Representative WALTER JONES has, and stand up for America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

NEVER AGAIN

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, over 4 weeks have passed since our Nation suffered an unspeakable tragedy in Parkland, Florida, where we lost 17 souls that we cannot get back.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the names of these young, brave souls who will move this country to act to protect other young students across this Nation.

Alyssa Alhadeff, Scott Beigel, Martin Duque Anguiano, Nicholas Dworet, Aaron Feis, Jaime Guttenberg, Chris Hixon, Luke Hoyer, Cara Loughran, Gina Montalto, Joaquin Oliver, Alaina Petty, Meadow Pollack, Helena Ramsay, Alex Schachter, Carmen Schentrup, Peter Wang.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I have met with the brave students of Parkland. I have also met with the parent of one of those lost souls.

I have met with students and parents and teachers alike in my own district in Pennsylvania. I have seen the fear and the anxiety in their demeanor. I have seen the tears in their eyes. They are asking for this Congress to do what past Congresses have failed to do.

Mr. Speaker, there were countless missed signals and missed opportunities that could have prevented this tragedy from happening. However, this is not the time for finger-pointing; this is a time for healing, and, more importantly, this is a time for action.

We were elected to Congress not to hide from tough decisions, not to be afraid to tackle tough problems. Mr. Speaker, we were elected to lead, and lead we must.

As a 14-year FBI agent, I carried a weapon on my ankle every day in order to save lives and keep people safe. And as a Federal gun crimes prosecutor, I prosecuted and imprisoned those who committed violent gun crimes in order to protect people, in my role as a prosecutor, and keep our communities safe.

Keeping our communities safe and protecting the Second Amendment are not mutually exclusive concepts. We can advance both and preserve both simultaneously. All we need to do, Mr. Speaker, is be willing to do what every American wants us to do, which is put away ideology and come together in a bipartisan fashion.

Of all the responsibilities we have, of all of the responsibilities we have, we have no higher responsibility as elected officials, and as citizens, than to protect our kids.

After the terror attacks of September 11, we said: Never again. Never again will we allow terrorists to seize control of a cockpit and turn a commercial airliner into a guided missile.

What did we do? We created the Department of Homeland Security; we deployed a Federal Air Marshal Service, the likes of which this country has never seen; we fortified our cockpits; we deployed state-of-the-art screening equipment across our Nation's 450-plus airports across the country. We said: Never again.

I am calling on my colleagues to have the same response to school shootings: Never again.

Mr. Speaker, the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus, of which I am a proud member, has developed a well-thought-out list of 10 legislative proposals that help us achieve this goal, to protect our kids, to say never again to this needless violence.

I urge my colleagues in this House, Democrat and Republican alike, to show leadership in tackling these tough issues. Call for a floor vote and support these bipartisan proposals. Let's do it for our kids. They need us now more than ever.

GUN SAFETY PROVISIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the presentation from my friend from Pennsylvania. I could not agree more that it is time for us to come forward with action.

It was my honor this morning to address the Council of the Great City Schools, who are gathered in our Nation's Capitol—board members, superintendents, dealing with the challenges of education. And they are standing in solidarity with the young people who have raised their voices calling upon Congress to finally act.

One of the things that is deeply troubling is that the Republican leadership refuses to allow a robust debate and action on the floor of the House. There are dozens of provisions that we can come together, produce majorities, enact legislation that will protect children's lives.

Mr. Speaker, the Council of the Great City Schools had a resolution calling upon us to take action that I include in the RECORD.

RESOLUTION

COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS, RELATING TO SCHOOL SHOOTINGS IN THE UNITED STATES

WHEREAS, the Bylaws of the Council of the Great City Schools assign the Board of Directors all powers and duties necessary to define the policies and positions of the organization and state that the Board may conduct acts in furtherance of those policies, except where the organization is prohibited from doing so by law or other governing documents;

WHEREAS, there is a need for the nation's major city school systems to express their positions on school safety matters that affect its students and the children residing in its cities;

WHEREAS, thousands of our students have publicly expressed concern for their safety