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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 25, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOEY C. ARRINGTON 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.

IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, as we recover from the chaos emanating from the White House and the tweeter-in-chief last week, it is important to recognize children are not invaders. Children must not be used as political pawns for reckless immigration enforcement policy.

I thank JUSTIN AMASH for being a lonely, but principled Republican

voice, reminding your colleagues, even if Donald Trump doesn't recognize the Fifth Amendment, that under the Constitution, nobody is denied of life, liberty, or property without due process of law.

There are over 300 other Republicans in the House and Senate, and I hope America hears from them. And Democrats should welcome a contest of ideas and a contest at the ballot box, not shouting at restaurants.

It is important that we don't lose sight of the bigger picture. There is a reason that tens of thousands of people have come to the southern border: the chaos and violence in parts of Mexico, especially Central America, and the violence especially strong in the triangle of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

The United States is not an entirely innocent bystander there. We have supported repressive dictators in those countries in the 1980s, and we have been meddling in their affairs for generations.

It is the lucrative American drug market that has fueled the drug trade and gang activity. Part of our failed drug policies have destabilized the lives of millions. The immense profits from the American drug trade drives that activity to the borders, corrupts governments, and has created a situation where we cannot even keep drugs and cell phones out of American prisons.

What is the answer? I would suggest that it is not to deny people fearing for their lives a right to prove their case as refugees seeking asylum. The answer is not to hold children hostages in a macabre, hateful drama that is a shame on all Americans.

The answer is not to forcibly take children out of the arms of their mother, and then lose them in the system. I mean, wait a minute. If the Postal Service and UPS can tell you where the sweat socks and the razors that you or-

dered a week ago are in the system, why can't we tell parents where their most precious possession, their children, are—and the notion that some are walking away from detention facilities.

The Trump administration is talking about reorganizing essential government departments. Maybe if they want to do that, they ought to start with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement. They ought to start with the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services, all of the agencies that are a part of this embarrassing spectacle, to figure out how to do it right, how to do it humanely, in an open and transparent fashion, and stop the notion that somehow there will be zero tolerance; that we will separate children from their families at the borders; and we will criminalize people who are seeking asylum.

Let's stop this malignant policy. Let's get children back to their parents. Let's elevate the discourse respectfully, but forcefully battle ideas and support the vulnerable.

It is not merely a question of justice for immigrant children, but of justice and integrity of all Americans.

TIME TO TACKLE THE DILEMMA OF IMMIGRATION

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

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

For those who are not familiar with the insights of Dr. Seuss, that quote concludes "The Lorax." You see, when I got home on Friday night, my 8-year-old wanted to watch a movie with dad. We watched "The Lorax" with him belly laughing at some of the scenes and me just enjoying him curled up beside me, happy to be together at home.

□ 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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Playing through my mind also—as it has for some time—was our collective struggle with legal immigration and our Nation's struggle with addressing this problem.

For anyone wondering if I did not see or feel the real painful events of separating children from their parents at the border last week, as I curled up with my little guy, know that I did. I felt it to my soul. You see, my 8-year-old son is also an immigrant. My wife and I adopted him from Russia just before Vladimir Putin slammed the door shut for other children who could desperately use a loving home in America.

We had to come home after adoption was granted and wait out an appeal period. We had to leave our son behind and then go back and get him weeks later. So I understand the problem well and what is at stake.

America has struggled with this issue since our creation. We are a Nation of immigrants. My ancestors arrived in America during the Irish potato famine. We can't ignore immigration, both illegal and legal, any longer. The issue surrounds us every day, especially if you live in border communities, areas of large immigrant populations—legal and illegal—or resort communities or agriculture communities who depend upon guest workers to even function.

In 1986, Congress passed the Simpson-Mazzoli Act, which was signed into law by President Reagan, the last major immigration legislation. This granted legal status to about 4 million illegal immigrants with a commitment to fund what was necessary to secure our borders.

However, clearly, we did not secure our borders, and that failure is why we struggle right now with this problem. Our Nation's border agents stop about 2,000 people deemed to be high risk, attempting to enter the United States from Africa and the Middle East at our southern border every year.

Does anybody care to estimate the number of people we do not apprehend and the risks they pose to our security?

A group of young people, often called the DACA population, are estimated at 1.6 to 1.8 million people and they are here, young people brought here by their parents—yes, illegally, I grant that—but the question remains: What do we do? Leave them in limbo? Leave them in fear on the edge of society?

America has an immigration system that is old-fashioned at best. Rather than doing what is necessary, like other nations have, a merit-based immigration system, we have visa lottery, family chain migration, and a refugee and asylum system that does not work—all backed up by illegal immigration that we can't address solely through deportations and hearings.

We must secure our borders now. Not some day. Not maybe.

We must end the political circus of the DACA program and fix the limbo status for the DACA population now. We must move to merit-based immigration, end the visa lottery, and end family chain migration.

There is no answer to these issues that is perfect, in the view of myself and many, because we are in a representative democracy. I don't believe perfect exists in the world.

I spent 35 years in a private business. I don't think I ever saw perfect. My spouse and children will tell you I am far from their definition of perfect. I came here to address our Nation's challenges and take those tough votes gladly because I want to make a difference.

I chatted with a more senior member at the airport Friday who commented that only 100 or 150 Members of this body are prepared to truly work on solving this problem, to compromise, and take a tough vote on immigration.

Some believe their idea is the only approach. Some have election fears. Some want to message on this issue at elections.

Less than 12,000 individuals have ever served in the House of Representatives. To all with the honor and responsibility of being in this Chamber, I say, now is the time to step up, work on this issue, compromise, tackle the dilemma, and then take a vote to move it forward to a better place.

Because, again: "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

COMPASSIONATE, COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, this week we plan on voting on a very strong bill known as the Border Security and Immigration Reform Act.

To better assess our immigration system and the security of our border, I went to the United States-Mexico border near El Paso, Texas, this weekend. I rise today to share some of the stories I heard from our Customs and Border Patrol officers and the compassion they had for these families and children they interact with.

These agents and officers had the highest on-the-job injury rate among all law enforcement groups across the country. Additionally, these officers see some of the worst conditions and are exposed to wide-ranging health risks like scabies, lice, tuberculosis, chicken pox, and many others.

Day to day, these officers are on the front lines protecting our Nation's borders. They are often stopping drug trafficking, human trafficking, and much more. They see the worst of the worst, and put their lives on the line to secure our Nation every day. In exchange for this, they are often portrayed on the national media as cruel and are compared to unthinkable, unimaginable groups from our world's history.

This is not the experience I had with them this weekend. These officers have huge hearts, and they are often given a tough task at the border. They told me story after story of how they bring personal items like teddy bears and toys

from their homes to provide to children, and oftentimes run to McDonald's and other restaurants to get food for hungry kids who had a very long, dangerous journey.

No one is denying that the situation on our Nation's border is terrible, and our agents at the border see this tragedy daily. Seeing this for myself firsthand, I quickly realized, there is no perfect fix. But it is imperative that we recognize and honor our Border Patrol agents' hard work, and do our part in Congress to pass compassionate, comprehensive immigration reform that still secures our borders and helps alleviate the situation of crisis which now exists.

AMERICA IS A NATION OF LAWS

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

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, some of the political rhetoric and political opportunism is at an all-time high of ridiculous on this issue of immigration. Let's take a step back and let's think through this, and let us reason together as Americans.

No American who I have talked to in my district in west Texas or beyond, has any problem with folks immigrating to this great Nation. We are a Nation of immigrants. But we are a Nation of laws.

And just like if I took folks out of the unemployment line and took them to your office and sat them in your office and said, you have got to hire them, or you are heartless. You don't care about them.

You would look at me like I had three heads, and you would say, they have got to go through an application process. We have got to vet them. We need to know that they have the merit to fill the job, that they are competent, that they have the moral character, that they are qualified.

□ 1215

There is not a single Democrat, if I brought them people from that unemployment line, who would just hire them on account of my threats of their being heartless and any other fear tactic. Why would we be any different with the standards of citizenship in this great Nation? Why?

Most of these kids coming over here are unaccompanied, about 83 percent, and then some with their parents. There has been this recent uproar about kids coming and being separated from their parents. I don't like that. I wish it weren't the case. I am prepared to fix it. That is what we should do in Congress, fix the laws when we find something that is not working.

This President is just enforcing the laws. We haven't had a President enforce the laws. We haven't had the respect for the Constitution and the rule of law in so long that we are outraged that a President would actually just