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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. TED LIEU of California).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

March 5, 2019.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TED LIEU to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Mariel Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2019, 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.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks, it has been sad to read that a judicial nominee, Brian Buescher from Nebraska, has been targeted for his membership in the

Knights of Columbus as a part of his Senate Judiciary Committee's review of qualifications.

The assertion that being a Catholic and being a member of the Knights of Columbus would prevent Mr. Buescher from properly and effectively serving our Nation is preposterous.

Religion should not be a factor when measuring someone's ability to serve their country.

I remind Senators that our Constitution, in Article VI, states that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States."

The Knights of Columbus was originally founded over 120 years ago. It is a society for working-class and immigrant Catholics and is still true to its founding principles of charity, unity, and fraternity.

As a Catholic, my faith plays a significant role in every aspect of life and fosters a respect for the religious rights and freedoms of others.

I was encouraged to see last month that the Senate unanimously passed a resolution confirming that membership in a religious organization does not make a person unfit for public office.

Fundamental American values, among which are commitments to religious freedom and human rights, will always be the cornerstones of U.S. domestic and foreign policy.

I will continue to advocate for the rights of individuals to express their feelings without living in fear of violence and persecution.

RECOGNIZING MATTHEW ZAJAC

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Matthew Zajac, a double amputee Army vet, for his remarkable service to our country and welcome him to his new home in Little Rock, Arkansas.

In 2007, during a deployment to Iraq, Matt and members of his unit encountered an IED, which exploded under their Humvee.

Matt lost both of his legs; shrapnel tore through his wrist; and severe burns covered the right side of his body. He received the Purple Heart for his injuries and was medically retired.

Mr. Speaker, 2013 marked the start of a downward spiral for Matt after losing his grandmother and his dad, a man who had stood by his side throughout the entire recovery process.

Matt came to Arkansas seeking more than just help. He needed a community. Today, central Arkansas community groups, veterans support organizations, and our VA hospital are helping Matt restart his life.

He is seeking proper treatment for his PTSD and acts as a spokesman for our Second Congressional District veterans group, We Are the 22, which offers assurance and hope for veterans who are considering suicide.

Matt's sacrifice for Arkansas and America will never be forgotten, and I join all Arkansans in offering Matt a heartfelt welcome to his new house in North Little Rock.

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN VENEZUELA

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and the ineffective, inhumane, and irresponsible actions of the Maduro government.

For years, Venezuela's United Socialist Party has pushed a once-prosperous nation towards desperate poverty and open tyranny.

Today in Venezuela, Maduro celebrates while his people eat garbage.

For too long, the authoritarian regime has acted without accountability. Water sanitation is nonexistent, and hospitals stand without power or medicine, the results, Mr. Speaker, of 20 years of irresponsible socialism under the Chavez and Maduro regimes—all this while 200 tons of U.S. food and medical assistance sit unused at the Venezuela-Colombia border, blocked by Maduro from entering the country.

I stand with the Organization of American States and over 50 countries

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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with interim President Juan Guaido and call on Maduro to step down so that humanitarian aid can flow to the Venezuelan people, who are sick, starving, and scared.

All Americans stand with Venezuelans, who want their republic back; they want their rights back; they want their freedom back.

CLOSE THE LOBBYIST LOOPHOLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. ROSE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROSE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support the Lobbyist Loophole Closure Act.

This bill will close a loophole that lobbyists on both sides of the aisle—and they are lobbyists—have been taking advantage of for far too long. They have been using it to skirt disclosure under the guise of just providing strategic guidance for billion-dollar corporations.

You know, when I go back to Staten Island and south Brooklyn, they see right through this. They see it for what it is, people getting over on the system on the backs of hardworking Americans. And they are tired of it.

It is time that we do our job here in the Halls of Congress to end this. This is the way our jobs should work, because for far too long we have been allowing lobbyists on both sides of the aisle to undermine this process and keep our constituents in the dark.

Just look at this—both sides of the aisle. We have seen this in my own party with former Senate majority leader Tom Daschle:

He laid the blueprint for the shadow lobbying industry. He did work that looks, smells, and tastes a lot like lobbying, but the public was in the dark. He earned millions advising healthcare clients and others about how to navigate Congress without registering as a lobbyist.

And on the Republican side, the President's former lawyer, the infamous Michael Cohen, getting paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for providing strategic guidance to corporations when, in truth, it was providing access to the President without ever registering as a lobbyist. Again:

Used his ties to the President to land consulting agreements; secretly hired to work on the same issues their lobbyists were already registered to work on; was paid millions of dollars to help influence administration policy without once registering as a lobbyist.

Folks, this is corruption. Mr. Speaker, make no mistake, this is corruption.

And no matter if you are a Democrat, if you are a Republican, or if you are an independent, we all see it for what it is.

Now, this is why H.R. 1 is such an essential step. I applaud my Democratic colleagues for putting a bold anticorruption bill on the floor of the House this week, of which the Lobbyist Loophole Closure Act will be a part.

We have got to take this opportunity and push the ball forward because, for the last 4 years, the American people have been voting for change. The Republicans called it draining the swamp. The Democrats called it anticorruption.

The American people are united against the American political class. They are united against the D.C. political class.

We have got to do something about it, because, if it looks like a lobbyist, if it talks like a lobbyist, if it acts like a lobbyist, then, Mr. Speaker, let's call it a lobbyist. Let's disclose it and regulate it as such.

COMMEMORATING THE 157TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HOMESTEAD ACT

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

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 157th anniversary of the Homestead Act passing the House of Representatives.

The Homestead Act was instrumental in bringing settlers to the Midwest and forming the State of Nebraska, as it allowed any qualified person to claim up to 160 acres of Federally owned land in exchange for 5 years of living on and improving the property.

Homestead National Monument, which is located in Nebraska's Third Congressional District, commemorates this law.

Unfortunately, the name of this facility does not represent its cultural and historical value, as many tourists show up looking for a physical monument rather than a park, which would more accurately describe it.

For this reason, and at the request of the local community, I introduced a bill on Thursday, February 28, the law's anniversary, to reclassify Homestead National Monument as a national historical park.

I ask my colleagues to support this bill in order to maximize its value in terms of education, tourism, and economic development for the surrounding community as it commemorates an important event in our Nation's history.

REMEMBERING REPRESENTATIVE WALTER JONES

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

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor to remember my good friend and our late colleague Representative Walter Jones.

Walter Jones was someone who deeply cared about this institution and the constitutional principles that undergird our service. He was a respected member of the Armed Services Committee, where he was a passionate advocate for military families and against endless, senseless wars that seem, too often, to have a small per-

centage of Americans bear a disproportionate burden for the decisions that are made by this body and others.

Walter was a deeply caring individual. He was an encourager. When he saw Members on the floor, regardless of your seniority or your status within the institution, he referred to everyone as "chairman." He thought that was a distinction that should be shared and one he used to reverse those with whom he served in this body.

He had friends on the right, on the left, and in the middle, because Walter treated everyone with respect and was the ultimate southern gentleman.

I will miss his friendship, his guidance, his mentorship, and this institution and this country will miss the principle with which Walter Jones served our great Nation.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 12 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. TED LIEU of California) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Bless the Members of this assembly, and us all, that we would be worthy of the call we have been given as Americans, to nurture and guarantee democratic freedoms to all who dwell in our great Nation. Help us all to be truly thankful and appropriately generous in our response.

Give each Member the wisdom, patience, and perseverance to attend to the pressing issues of these days.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.