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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. MCGOVERN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

May 8, 2019.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JAMES P. MCGOVERN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

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 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

AMERICA IS IN A CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because there are some things that I must call to the attention of the Congress.

Some news sources have indicated that somebody has said that we are in a crisis, a constitutional crisis. Mr. Speaker, I am that somebody. We are in a constitutional crisis.

Mr. Speaker, we currently have the executive branch and the legislative

branch in a standoff, a standoff because the President of the United States of America has refused to cooperate and has encouraged others to do so, refusing to allow subpoenas to be properly honored—subpoenas properly issued, I might add. He has indicated that he, as President, will continue to do so in his words and his deeds.

So, Mr. Speaker, I still rise, and I do so because there is a crisis. But I also do so because this obstruction by the President continues to this day.

As I speak currently, the President is engaged in obstruction. This policy that he is implementing of not allowing persons to testify if he can prevent them from doing so, thwarting the investigation that is taking place—lawful investigations, I might add—is a form of obstruction in and of itself. He continues to obstruct.

Mr. Speaker, I rise, also, because many have said that the soul of the country is at stake. Mr. Speaker, I would amend this. I would agree that the soul of the country is at risk, but I would also say that the soul of the Congress is at risk.

The Congress of the United States of America must do its job, Mr. Speaker, the Congress of the United States of America, many of whom, as Members, have indicated that the President has committed impeachable acts but then go on to say that we should not impeach him.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot say that a President has committed impeachable offenses and then not impeach. To do so would legitimize the President's actions. This Congress cannot allow this President to continue to do what he is doing, say that he ought to be impeached, and then step back from impeachment. That would say to the President that he can go out now and claim legitimacy.

He can say that, if I were a person guilty of impeachable offenses, the Congress would have impeached me. He

will say that one party had enough votes to do it without the assistance of the other party. He will say to the country, "I have done nothing wrong," and that would be wrong, in toto, for him to say such a thing because he has done many things that are wrong.

We as a Congress have a duty to bring before the body the President of the United States for impeachment purposes. This is the only place where such an action can take place, and the longer we delay, the greater the opportunity for the President to obfuscate, to confuse the country, to give people the impression that it is just a witch hunt.

It is not a witch hunt. It is the proper thing that we should do, pursuant to Article II, Section 4 of the Constitution of the United States of America; and our failure to do so will only allow us to give the President reason to go forward and say that he has been vindicated when the truth is he has committed impeachable acts, starting with the firing of Mr. Comey and continuing through his efforts to deny the House of Representatives, by and through its lawful investigative authorities, to look into and bring witnesses before investigative bodies.

Mr. Speaker, this is a sad day in the history of our country. It is a red letter day, but there is hope, and I assure you that this President will not—will not—go unchecked. There will be Articles of Impeachment brought before this body. I assure you there will be Articles of Impeachment.

I pray that we can get this done through the proper committees, but if nobody else does it, each Member of Congress is accorded the authority to come to the floor, the ability, and to bring Articles of Impeachment.

I don't want to do it. This is not something that I came to Congress to do. But I love my country, and I will not watch and allow such a thing to happen before this country without my

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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taking appropriate action. I will bring Articles of Impeachment if nobody else does.

And finally, I will say more about this this evening. I should have 30 minutes of time. I will speak to a greater extent on the issue that I have called to Members' attention now.

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

ENRIQUE PADRON OP-ED REGARDING CUBAN SOCIALISM DANGERS

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

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, socialist Democrats advocate dictatorial and guaranteed-to-fail socialism over liberty and the free enterprise economic system that has created America's prosperity.

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines "evil" as "morally reprehensible," "causing harm," or "pernicious." By that definition, socialism is evil, and anyone in America who supports socialism supports evil.

Enrique Padron recently published an editorial in the New York Post entitled: "Hey, Democrats: Here's the price I paid for your Socialist dream." It is such a revealing test of the evils of socialism that today I read it in part into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

"American Democrats are pining ever more loudly for socialism these days, for 'free' education, 'free' health care and much else.

"Let me tell you about socialism as I lived it under the Fidel Castro regime.

"The house where I was born in Communist Cuba had a dirt floor, a bathroom hole in the ground, which we shared with six other families, and a zinc roof that left us unbearably hot in the summer and shivering in the winter.

"We had no running water, no refrigerator and no door in the back of the house. We cooked with charcoal. My mother raised four boys by herself in that 'house,' working 12 hours a day to earn 160 Cuban pesos, or approximately \$6, a month.

"Why didn't we fix it?

"In addition to the meager income, we had no access to hardware stores to buy nails or cement to fix our humble house. In fact, the local member of the national assembly was the only person authorized to approve whether we could buy a bag of cement or a roll of roof paper—if they were available.

"We couldn't buy these simple materials without that precious piece of paper.

"Can you imagine going to your congressional Representative to ask for permission to buy a box of nails? Or roof tiles? Or roof paper? It seems unthinkable in the United States. But in Cuba, where we lacked the necessities of life, we had to. And when we complained, the authorities scolded us to

be grateful for free education and free healthcare.

"In Cuba, it is illegal to speak against the government or complain about living conditions. We were prohibited from speaking with local media, but the journalists were state employees and wouldn't publish our stories anyway. We couldn't express our unmet needs and were reminded that we shouldn't complain anyway, because we were promised—you guessed it—free education and free healthcare.

"In Cuba, doctors make the equivalent of 25 cents an hour and teachers 21 cents an hour. Pharmacists earn eight cents an hour.

"In Cuba, there is no right to free speech and virtually no independent media. There are no free, fair, multiparty elections. In fact, there is just one political party, Communist, and only members of the Communist Party may run as candidates for any office. But we were told we couldn't object to this system, lest we lose our free education and free healthcare. . . .

"In Cuba, if you dare to yell something true, like 'Fidel and Raul are dictators,' you could spend many years in prison. Dictatorship is another price we had to pay for free education and free healthcare.

"I desperately needed something more than the promises of free education and free healthcare. I knew that I needed freedom—freedom to speak my mind and vote my conscience. It was worth the risk of being eaten by sharks than to continue living a life with no purpose and no freedom.

"On August 16, 1994, I decided to get into a boat with 20 other Cubans in search of a future.

"One of my two brothers followed me to the United States, also in a raft, nearly dying of thirst and hunger during the journey. My other brother is still awaiting the visa I filed for him. . . .

"After arriving in the United States, I worked as an international sales manager, owned a restaurant, hosted a radio program and authored two books. Today, I work for a Member of Congress. None of those opportunities would have been possible for me in socialist Cuba.

"I wish that one day I might have a conversation with some of these young American socialists who have no experience with actually existing socialism. They like to think they can have democracy and a socialist economy. But everywhere it's been implemented, public ownership of the means of production has led to political repression.

"Not least in my native Cuba, with its promises of 'free' cradle-to-grave services.

"I chose so much more than the promise of 'free.' I chose freedom."

Mr. Speaker, Enrique Padron has shared his firsthand experience with the suffering, depravity, and evils of socialism in Cuba. Americans should heed his words.

Free enterprise is about liberty and freedom. Socialism is about poverty and slavery through the ruling class.

PROTECTING INDIVIDUALS WITH PREEXISTING CONDITIONS

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about healthcare and to ask that my colleagues join me in support of protecting individuals in America who have preexisting conditions.

We can, and we must do a better job in reducing costs and improving access to healthcare in America. Since the Affordable Care Act was signed into law in 2010, no provision has had a more significant impact on the health of Americans than protecting those with preexisting conditions.

In my district in 2010 in San Joaquin Valley in California, almost 25 percent of my constituents had no healthcare insurance whatsoever, and 17 percent were uninsured. Today, 9 years later, 10 percent of my constituents do not have healthcare insurance, and the ability to provide insurance for those who were underinsured has much improved.

Before the ACA, insurers could deny health coverage to many health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or cancer.

How many of our families have preexisting conditions in those areas?

I submit most of us do. These denials often force families into decisions between paying for a loved one's treatment or keeping the lights on in their house. No family should be faced with such a choice.

Protections for preexisting conditions remain one of the popular parts of the ACA. These protections should not be weakened due to partisan politics. Working together in a bipartisan fashion is the only way we are going to get something enacted that will work for all Americans.

We can do better for the American people, and we should. That is what the folks in my 16th Congressional District in the San Joaquin Valley want me to do. They want me to help improve their healthcare.

WILDFIRE AWARENESS

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss the importance of wildfire awareness. No State knows more about how important the subject is than California.

There is no longer a fire season in California. It suffers from fires, sadly, year-round resulting from many factors, including climate change.

Just last year California saw the deadliest wildfire in its history. The town of Paradise was decimated with more than 14,000 homes destroyed, and 85 people lost their lives. God bless them and their families.

There have been other fires in Santa Barbara, Mendocino, and the Yosemite Rim fire right in my own district's backyard.