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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 24, 2019.

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

IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY

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

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues on both sides of the aisle know that I shy away from sharp partisanship in favor of the negotiation and compromise required for law to be made.

I marvel every day at how rarely the pragmatic common sense of the American people is given voice in this Chamber. But, Mr. Speaker, there are moments for calculation, for prudence, for

compromise, for the careful weighing of competing interests, and there are moments for clarity and conviction.

This is such a moment. The time has come, Mr. Speaker, for the House of Representatives to begin an impeachment inquiry into President Trump. From the moment of his inauguration, this President has shown contempt for the truth, has attacked our institutions, and has ignored the Constitution he swore to defend.

He has refused the oversight which is Congress' long-established right and duty. In recent weeks, he has refused to comply with subpoenas, he has ordered administration officials to refuse to testify, and he has asserted executive privilege of unprecedented scope with respect to attempts to alter the Census.

That we have not slouched closer to autocracy is due to the strength of the democratic safeguards and protections that we have built and defended for two-and-a-half centuries. Most Americans sense the danger and have reacted, most recently, by electing a House of Representatives with the power and desire to check this President. The President has persistently refused to acknowledge or acquiesce to that power.

Mr. Speaker, the Framers of the Constitution placed the power of impeachment, not in the courts, but in the Congress so that this body might consider not just the facts and the letter of the law, but the broader interests of the Republic. I have, until now, been conflicted about those interests.

Impeachment, along with the right to declare war, is the most awesome power of the Congress. The politics of impeachment are messy and uncertain and might, in the short run, serve the President's narrow political interests.

But look at where we are today. Republicans in this Chamber cheer, or justify, or stand woefully silent in the face of behavior for which they would

have impeached a Democratic President many times over. Our best and most proven ideas cannot get even a hearing in the United States Senate. Unless we restore respect for the law, respect for truth, and respect for common decency, we cannot hope to solve any of our other pressing problems.

The American people should understand that opening an impeachment inquiry is not removal of the President. Given the behavior of the United States Senate, that outcome is probably out of the question. An impeachment inquiry will be a fair consideration of the facts that the American people must understand with both sides fairly and openly represented.

Mr. Speaker, I know that I will be asked if my motive today is to pressure the Speaker of the House whose leadership of this Congress has been superb. It is not. She leads us today in the epic mission of defending our democracy. That mission requires a vigorous debate and competing ideas, but it also requires care, discipline, and a measure of deference.

I represent the people of southwestern Connecticut, the Constitution State. From my house, I can walk to the hill where General Israel Putnam made a daring escape from the British cavalry in 1779, so that Americans would never have to answer to a tyrant for their opinions, politics, or religious beliefs.

Just up the road is the town of Ridgefield where General David Wooster and 20 young patriots died in April of 1777 so that Americans would be spared ever living under a capricious and arbitrary power.

Mr. Speaker, there are moments for careful calculation, for weighing political expediency and conflicting interests, and there are moments for clarity and conviction. This is that moment.

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

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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HONORING THE LIFE OF PRIVATE
FIRST CLASS WILLIAM HOOVER
JONES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, at World Tabernacle Church in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, I had one of the highest honors in my life, to speak at the funeral service for Private First Class William Hoover Jones who served in the Korean war.

He went missing on 26 November 1950. His remains were recently returned to U.S. soil by the North Koreans. The funeral service was handled by H.D. Pope Funeral Home, and he will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery on August 22 of this year with full military rites.

Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I will read into the RECORD my remarks from the funeral:

“As Representative for North Carolina’s First Congressional District, please allow me to extend official condolences to this family on behalf of the President and Congress of the United States of America.

“PFC William Hoover Jones gave his young life on the battlefield on foreign soil in defense of our country as part of the historic 24th Infantry Regiment, a Black Army regiment first organized in 1869 following the Civil War.

“Private First Class Jones fought on the front line for the Republic of South Korea during the Korean war.

“For his service, Private First Class Jones was promoted to private first class and posthumously awarded the Purple Heart, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Korean Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Republic of Korean Presidential Unit Citation, and the Republic of Korea War Service Medal.

“This Nation is indebted to PFC Jones for his service to our country and for offering the highest sacrifice for freedom. His life.

“PFC Jones was born in Nash County in 1931 at the beginning of the Great Depression. Life in Nash County during that period was Third World. Not only did African Americans suffer from second-class citizenship, but they suffered from extreme poverty. Undoubtedly, William Hoover Jones wanted a better life.

“On 31 May 1950, at the tender age of 18, Hoover enlisted to serve for 3 years in the Army, recognizing that he would be deployed to Korea to engage in a deadly war. I am confident that he volunteered not only to defend our Nation and our Nation’s interests, but to seek a better future for himself.

“The record reflects that Private Jones was poorly trained as an infantryman. History reveals that most Black soldiers of that era were poorly trained. Though his training was incomplete, Private Jones was deployed to Korea, placed in an all-Black unit, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 24th Infan-

try Regiment of the 25th Infantry Division. President Truman had ordered that unit integrated in 1948, but as of 1950, integration in the unit had not occurred.

“The Black soldiers of the 24th Infantry fought valiantly, but the North Koreans and the Chinese were too fierce and greatly outnumbered our soldiers.

“The only African American officer serving the 24th Infantry was Lieutenant Leon Gilbert of York, Pennsylvania. Lieutenant Gilbert led his soldiers into fierce battles with the enemy near the 38th parallel. On 1 September 1950, recognizing that the 24th Infantry was literally on a suicide mission, Lieutenant Gilbert ordered his soldiers off of a deadly hill. The division’s commanding officer directed Lieutenant Gilbert to return his soldiers to the fight, but he refused.

“Gilbert was court-martialed for his refusal. He was given a death sentence. After widespread outrage from Black Americans, President Harry Truman commuted the sentence to 20 years of imprisonment. He served 5 of those 20 years.

“Because of these events, the 24th Infantry Regiment was disbanded, but the division was desperately in need of infantry soldiers. Therefore, the 24th Infantry was reactivated and forced back to the front line. It was there that PFC Jones went missing on 26 November 1950 at the age of 19 years old.

“He was recovered by the North Koreans, and his remains have been sequestered for the past 68 years. They were returned to American soil just a few weeks ago. That is the record of PFC Jones and the story of the 24th Infantry Regiment in the Korean war.

“PFC Jones represents a generation of young African American men who stood for this country when this country didn’t stand for them.

“I thank the Department of Defense for its efforts in recovering and transporting these remains and enabling this ceremony as we salute an American hero.

“Finally, I pray solace will be found in knowing that a loved-one’s remains are home. His soul is in Heaven, and he died on the battlefield with integrity. God bless each of the members of his family.”

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to honor and recognize the life and work of Private First Class William Hoover Jones.

CONCERNS OVER WAIVER
PROCESS

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

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, this Wednesday, June 26, marks the 1-year anniversary of the Supreme Court upholding President Trump’s travel ban which suspended the issuance of immigrant and nonimmigrant visas to applicants from five Muslim-majority countries: Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria, and

Yemen; plus Venezuela and North Korea.

In upholding the travel ban, the court indicated that by including North Korea and Venezuela, the administration was not targeting only Muslim countries. In addition, the administration was creating a mechanism by which foreign nationals from those banned countries could be issued a waiver to enter the United States if one, the applicant did not represent a security threat with their entry; or, two, if denying entry would cause undue hardship.

One year later, we can evaluate whether the Trump administration has honored the court ruling.

Mr. Speaker, from my experience with my constituents in Sacramento County, the resounding answer is “no.” In my district, a young girl named Omnia, who was born in Libya to an American mother and a Libyan father, was separated from her family for 2 years because of the travel ban.

Her mother, an American citizen, took Omnia, who was then 2 years old, to the immigrant visa interview at the Embassy in Tunis, where the interview was only minutes long with no questions. Instead, the consular officer said the Embassy had all of the documents and everything was in order, but they could not issue the visa for the 2-year-old. The consular officer told the mother, who was 7 months pregnant at the time, to go back to the U.S. and have her baby, and then come back when the travel ban was over.

The consular office did not reference the undue hardship exception which was stipulated in the visa waiver process. I don’t believe this 2-year-old was a security risk and separating a 2-year-old from their mother clearly causes undue hardship, so I am not sure what that process was.

There is also the disturbing case last year of a Yemeni mother who fought to obtain a visa waiver to travel to California to see her terminally ill son. It was only after widespread media coverage that she was finally granted a visa waiver to visit the United States to see her son just days before he passed away.

This story takes place over and over again in districts all across this country. Thus, I have serious concerns about the waiver process, how it is being implemented unevenly and with little guidance, and that waivers granted are not leading to the issuance of visas for cleared individuals.

□ 1215

My concern is further heightened due to the cases of constituents in my district and across the country who are being negatively impacted by confusing and uneven processes.

Now, in my role as chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations for the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I am aiming to shed light on how the visa waiver process is being implemented. We have asked—and the