



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2019

No. 182

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 14, 2019.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY CUELLAR 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.

NAFTA ANNIVERSARY AND USMCA

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this coming Sunday marks the 26th anniversary of the House of Representatives passing the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA.

This agreement with our two closest trading partners, Canada and Mexico, has become outdated as time has passed, markets have diversified, and

economies have flourished. We are in desperate need of updating NAFTA to meet modern-day economic demands.

I know many of us have staff who are younger than NAFTA, and we can all agree that the world has changed an awful lot in the last three decades. Congress needs to bring the United States-Mexico-Canada trade agreement, or USMCA, to a vote immediately to keep trade free and fair. A vote on USMCA is long overdue.

It has been more than 400 days since President Trump announced this historic agreement, and Mexico and Canada have already given USMCA the green light. For farmers, ranchers, manufacturers, and everyone in between, we must follow suit. So many different industries can benefit from a modern trade agreement.

In Pennsylvania, nearly 43,000 jobs depend on manufacturing exports to Canada and Mexico. Last year alone, Pennsylvania exported \$15 billion worth of products to Canada and Mexico.

There is no telling what economic potential lies ahead with a new revamped trade agreement.

In Pennsylvania, agriculture—and dairy, in particular—is the backbone of the Commonwealth's economy. USMCA's elimination of Canada's Class 6 and Class 7 dairy pricing programs would be a big win for dairy farm families. These programs have unfairly limited our export potential over the years.

The signing of USMCA into law will also signal to other major trade partners, like China and Japan, that we are serious about these kinds of deals and we are committed to a bright future for American exports.

There is no reason why we cannot pass USMCA before the end of the year. USMCA will create more jobs, boost wages, and spur the Nation's economy.

What are we waiting for? Each day that passes without a vote is a missed

opportunity. Let's get to work and hold a vote immediately.

WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, we are involved in a very serious process to determine whether the President of the United States has committed high crimes and misdemeanors.

The Constitution provides for the removal of high officials who violate their oath of office, who violate the powers of their office, and who commit bribery or treason, or high crimes and misdemeanors.

In the course of that process, we have been involved with numerous people asking for the whistleblower to testify. I will not speak to the substance of the consideration that is ongoing with respect to the impeachment of the President of the United States, but I do want to speak pointedly to the calls from so many that the whistleblower be identified.

The whistleblower, of course, has no direct evidence to offer. What the whistleblower is is somebody who responded to "if you see something, say something."

We have witnesses to wrongdoing all over this country and all over the world, and our police departments have a line that is called an anonymous tip line so that somebody who sees something will say something. It is anonymous so that we do not intimidate those people or expose them to danger for coming forward to out criminal behavior.

The President of the United States has made an analogy to this information coming forward as the result of spying, treason, which, as we all know, according to the President, can subject someone to capital punishment.

Why do we have a whistleblower statute? We have a whistleblower statute,

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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H8829

Mr. Speaker, because we want to encourage people, and we want to not expose them to danger or intimidation—including from the most powerful person on Earth, the President of the United States—or retaliation. Yet we continue to hear: Tell us who the whistleblower is. Let us throw the whistleblower into the lion's den.

In fact, of course, what we do know is the whistleblower, the information that was brought forward, A, led to the release of funds to the Ukrainians just shortly thereafter and, in addition, has led to substantive testimony corroborating the information that the whistleblower either saw or heard.

If you see something, say something.

It is irresponsible, it is wrong, and, in fact, in almost every jurisdiction, there are criminal penalties for threatening a witness, for impeding justice.

So, Mr. Speaker, when people say, "Show me the whistleblower," what they are doing is not only trying to intimidate that whistleblower, they are trying to intimidate every other whistleblower who might deign to come forward because they saw something or heard something.

I would hope all of my colleagues would think to themselves: Why do we have a whistleblower statute?

I represent 62,000 Federal employees, and, very frankly, I want them to have the confidence to come forward if they see wrongdoing in the Federal Government, even if it is about the President of the United States, and even if the President of the United States wants to make an analogy to a capital offense—despicable—undermining the very essence of why the Congress of the United States enacted a whistleblower statute and the essence of why police departments all over the United States have anonymous tip lines and why almost every State has a statute which imposes a criminal penalty for the intimidation of witnesses.

We are a nation of laws, not of men. We are proud of that. But if we are to be a nation whose top leaders try to intimidate those who would come forward if they see something or hear something and they say something, then we will be a lesser nation, less focused on a nation of laws.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that Members on both sides of the aisle, political pundits, commentators, and, yes, the President of the United States would cease and desist from trying to intimidate this whistleblower and all of those who may be whistleblowers.

The intent of that legislation, the intent of those protections, the intent of witness protection statutes and intimidation of witnesses is so that we will get at the truth and that our government of the people, by the people, and for the people will be more honest, will be more safe, will be more just.

TRACED ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUDD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss an issue that has afflicted nearly every American, including me, and it is the influx of annoying and deceptive robocalls. These seemingly endless automated calls disrupt every part of our daily lives, constitute a serious form of harassment, and expose millions of Americans to dangerous financial scams.

A prime example of the insidious nature of these calls occurred last year in New York when scammers pretended to be from the Chinese consulate and demanded money from people with what they considered to be Chinese-sounding last names. As a result, 21 Chinese immigrants lost a total of \$2.5 million.

In another instance, scammers attempted to phish personal information by calling people and threatening them with fines unless they signed up for health insurance.

These incidences are financially devastating and are happening to far too many people across our country. If there is one thing Republicans and Democrats should be able to agree on is that Congress can no longer sit back and ignore this problem. Our efforts must be focused on adding teeth to the Federal Government's ability to detect and punish individuals and organizations that abuse automated dialing technology.

With that in mind, I am proud to be a cosponsor of the TRACED Act, introduced by my friend, DAVID KUSTOFF. This legislation expands the penalties and the timeframes under which the Federal Communications Commission can identify robocallers and pursue civil action. This is entirely bipartisan, and it passed the Senate, last May, 97-1.

Under the TRACED Act, the FCC will be able to impose fines of up to \$10,000 for each individual scam call. Currently, telemarketing scammers face a maximum fine of only \$1,500. I am confident that increasing the maximum penalty up to \$10,000 will deter many scammers by making the cost of getting caught simply too expensive.

To make these harsher penalties the norm and not the exception, the FCC needs to be given more time to find the perpetrators of illegal robocalls. If the TRACED Act becomes law, the period in which the source of a robocall can be investigated and found liable will be tripled from 1 year to 3 years.

This important provision will work in lockstep with the increased fines. The FCC has told Congress that extending the statute of limitations in this way would improve the Commission's enforcement efforts.

During my time in office, I have heard frustration from countless constituents on this issue. Robocalls frequently interrupt our daily lives, ringing our phones during important work-hours, and distracting us from time spent at home with our families.

The TRACED Act is an important bipartisan bill that is supported by attor-

neys general in all 50 States, along with FCC Chairman Ajit Pai.

As scammers adjust the way they perpetrate fraud on the American people, it seems like common sense that our laws should be updated to fight back. No matter which side of the aisle we find ourselves on, we should all be able to agree that it is time for these illegal robocalls to be stopped once and for all.

□ 1015

HONORING THE LIFE OF THADDEUS SEYMOUR, SR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MURPHY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Thaddeus Seymour, Sr., who passed away recently at the age of 91.

In the obituary that appeared in our local, hometown paper, the Orlando Sentinel, Thad was described by one of his many admirers as a community treasure, and I think that sums up his life and legacy perfectly.

Thad moved with his beloved wife, Polly, and their children to the Orlando area over 40 years ago when Thad was named the 12th president of Rollins College, where I had the privilege to teach before being elected to Congress.

Thad served for a dozen years as the president of Rollins, from 1978 to 1990, and although he had long left by the time I arrived, his name was spoken on campus with respect and affection.

Thad was recognized as a popular and effective leader of the institution, helping make this gem of a school shine even brighter.

One decision Thad made during his tenure may seem modest, but it was meaningful to people who know Rollins best. In the 1950s, one of Thad's predecessors established Fox Day. Each spring, as finals loomed and on a day considered too beautiful to sit in a classroom, the school's president would cancel classes and provide students with a surprise day off.

The tradition was ended during the Vietnam war, but Thad brought it back. As Thad would recall years later: "The world had grown so grim, I thought we needed to cheer ourselves up." It is a choice that underscores both Thad's love of life and his belief that, at core, a college should be a close-knit community where young men and women live together; learn together; and, in many cases, become lifelong friends. Because Fox Day helped foster a sense of community and shared experience, Thad believed it mattered.

Thad left Rollins in 1990, but he never left central Florida, and he never stopped caring about our community. In fact, he literally helped build it, co-founding a chapter of Habitat for Humanity in Winter Park and in Maitland.