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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 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,
September 23, 2020.

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 7, 2020, 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, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 10:50 a.m.

NEED FOR ACTIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, last week, President Trump came to California to be briefed on the horrific fires now raging in that State. Instead, he got a lecture from Governor Newsom and his staff on climate change.

Well, if Gavin Newsom actually believes that if we all just ride our bikes to work and set our thermostats to 80

degrees that these wildfires will go away, then he is completely delusional.

Excess timber comes out of the forest in only two ways: It is either carried out or it burns out. For most of the 20th century, we carried it out. It is called logging.

Every year, the U.S. Forest Service foresters would mark off excess timber, and then we auctioned it off to lumber companies that paid us to remove it, funding both local communities and the forest service. We auctioned grazing contracts on our grasslands. The result was healthy forests, fewer fires, and a thriving economy.

But beginning in the 1970s, we began imposing environmental laws that have made the management of our lands all but impossible. Draconian restrictions on logging, grazing, prescriptive burning, and herbicide use on public lands have made modern land management endlessly time consuming and, ultimately, cost prohibitive. A single tree thinning plan typically requires 4 years and more than 800 pages of analysis. The costs of this process exceed the value of timber, turning land maintenance from a revenue-generating activity to a revenue-consuming one.

Since 1980, these laws have produced an 80 percent decline in timber harvested off of the Federal forests and a concomitant increase in acreage destroyed by fire. In California, the number of sawmills has declined from 149 to just 27.

Now, these laws were passed with the promise they would improve the forests. Well, after more than four decades, I think we are entitled to ask: How are the forests doing?

An untended forest is just like an untended garden. It will grow and grow until it chokes itself to death. In a morbidly overcrowded State, stressed trees fall victim to disease, pestilence, drought, and, ultimately, catastrophic wildfire. In many regions of the Sierra, timber density is now four times greater than the land can support.

We have been trying for years to reform these laws, resume active forest management, and restore our forests to health; yet the environmental leftists have blocked us every year. Instead, politicians use the excuse of climate change.

Really? These environmental laws generally apply only to public lands. Today, you can easily tell the boundaries between private and public lands solely on the condition of the forests. How clever of the climate only to decimate the public lands.

The climate has changed much over the centuries, but the problem has not. When Juan Cabrillo dropped anchor in Santa Monica Bay in October of 1542, the height of the Santa Ana fire season, he named it the Bay of Smoke. Before western civilization, paleontologists tell us that we lost between 4 and 12 million acres a year to wildfire in California.

Modern forests and land management brought that destruction down to just a quarter of a million acres during the 20th century. That annual destruction is now back up to 3 million acres a year.

That is not a new normal; that is the old normal reasserting itself. That is not climate change; that is how nature deals with overgrown lands. And once destroyed, it can take centuries for our forests to regrow.

We began active forest management to break that cycle. We decided we wanted every generation to enjoy our forests. So we introduced scientific forest management to do a little gardening and keep our forests healthy by suppressing brush and harvesting excess timber so it couldn't crowd itself to death. And it worked, until the environmental laws abandoned science for ideology.

☐ 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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The planet has been warming and cooling for millennia. Warmer temperatures make it all the more important to match tree density to the ability of the land to support it. That means more logging, not less.

California has taken draconian measures to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, at a terrible cost for the quality of life of Californians. We now suffer some of the highest costs for energy in the country; we have destroyed our manufacturing base; and we can't guarantee enough electricity to keep our refrigerators running. Yet a single catastrophic fire makes a mockery of all of these laws and the sacrifices they impose on our people.

Governor Newsom says he has no patience for such views. Well, that is a tragedy for all Californians and for all of California's forests.

IN SUPPORT OF THE VETERAN HIGH ALTITUDE AND SUICIDE RESEARCH ACT

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

Mr. MCADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the VA High Altitude and Suicide Research Act. I introduced this bipartisan bill to combat a very serious threat to our veteran population.

After serving and protecting our country, our veterans return home only to face new threats. Studies show that veteran suicide is one-and-a-half times higher than nonveteran suicides.

We must do everything we can to understand why our Nation's heroes are taking their own lives, and we must do more to prevent more tragic deaths.

In talking with suicide prevention experts in my home State of Utah, I am told that we need to better understand the possible connection between high altitude and suicide. That is what my bill does.

The VA High Altitude and Suicide Research Act compels the VA to study the link between veteran suicide and high altitude. It also requires the VA to establish effective treatment plans that respond to the threats and to save lives.

As a nation, we have a responsibility to prevent future tragedies and provide these servicemembers with the care that they so desperately deserve.

I thank the House for taking up this important legislation, and I urge adoption.

SUPPORT FOR A SUSTAINABLE, CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMY

Mr. MCADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of two of my bills included in the Clean Economy and Jobs Innovation Act. This legislative package takes bold and important steps toward a sustainable, clean energy economy. It is not only good for our health and for our environment, but it is good for our economy.

I am particularly pleased to see my legislation included in the package, the

Solar Energy Research and Development Act. This bill authorizes solar energy research, development, and deployment within the Department of Energy.

Utah is a national leader in solar technology and is projected to produce over 1,000 megawatts of solar power in the next 5 years. My bill addresses the very serious threat of climate change, while supporting clean energy jobs.

I am also pleased to see my air quality bill included. The Background Ozone Research Study Act directs the EPA and the National Academies of Science to study the sources of background ozone pollution and to provide actionable steps for cleaning our air.

Mr. Speaker, this bill supports our clean energy economy and addresses our very serious need to address the climate crisis.

IN SUPPORT OF THE FAITH IN CONGRESS ACT

Mr. MCADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the FAITH in Congress Act. This bipartisan legislation, introduced by my colleague STEPHANIE MURPHY, seeks to restore trust and faith in Congress as an institution.

As I travel throughout my district and talk with Utahns, there is a common theme that I hear from people of all political walks. That is that our political system is broken, and we need to change the way Washington does business. So this bill takes common-sense, concrete steps to restore that faith through five central pillars:

No automatic pay increases for Members of Congress, which I have fought against since I was first sworn in;

No budget, no pay;

No first-class Member travel at taxpayer expense;

A lifetime ban on lobbying by former Members of Congress; and

Prioritizing bipartisan bills over partisan bills.

That is it. Five simple steps that we should all be able to rally behind.

Mr. Speaker, this is common sense, and I urge the House to take up and pass this legislation without delay.

HONORING STAFF ASSISTANTS, LEGISLATIVE CORRESPONDENTS, AND LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANTS

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to thank those young men and women who have served the people of Illinois and the country as staff assistants, legislative correspondents, and legislative assistants.

I include in the RECORD a list of their names.

Blanford, Thomas; Blanford, Meredith; Boyer, Davis; Cardon, Flavio (Amaya); Chang, Albert; Chiang, Alex; Clanahan, Chase; Culp, Grant; Daulby, Jen; Davidsmeyer, CD; DeWitt, Bret; Esposito, Tony; Flanagan, Matt; Goldenstein, Jim; Hatzis, Luke; Haverly, Jordan; Jamison, Reno; Johnson, Matt.

Kirsh, Ari; Lange, Kelly (Childress); Lloyd, Amy (Mathews); Madden, Steve; Mateer,

Mike; Mesack, Michelle (Yahng); Miniati, Charlie; Nordquist, Matt; Olson, Bill; Olson, Richard; Pfister, Sam; Reinhard, Courtney (Anderson); Rislute, Scott; Sarley, Chris; Schonert, Neil; Tvrdy, Joe; Uram, Steve; Wolf, Saralyn (Tucker); Youssefiani, Darius.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, staff assistants are the first person a visitor sees or hears in my D.C. office. First impressions are lasting impressions, so even though they are the lowest on the totem pole, they are very important.

Staff assistants welcome visitors from the district. They help direct them and, many times, conduct tours of the Capitol. They help constituents with hotel information and lists of other tourist venues.

Flags flown over the Capitol are highly sought after. These flags are requested for memorial events and thank-yous. Many times they are needed in a timely manner and, most times, have a specific date that the flag should be flown. Staff assistants ensure that this is done.

The tough part of the job is answering the phones. Sometimes these calls are overwhelming and will get rolled to another staff member. Many times the callers are just plain mean and nasty. Just like in baseball, if the caller says the magic words, they are gone. There is no need to put my staff in that position. It is sad that adults act this way and young adults have to put up with it.

The next position in my office is the legislative correspondent. For me, these folks are concerned with writing and mailing letters in response to inquiries. Since I do not do bulk mailings, this job is even more important in that individual letters received by my office receive an individual response by me. Most of the time, I have constituents thanking me for responding. Very few times did we drop the ball, and if we did, I would circle back with my staff and we would get a letter out.

The legislative correspondent has the legislative assistant's help with the letter, which will be reviewed by my legislative director and the chief of staff. The legislative correspondent gets an idea of the width and the breadth and the depth of policy issues that constituents are concerned with. It is a great place to start.

Sometimes, on a very contentious issue, I will draft the letter myself. These letters have to come from the heart.

Legislative correspondents usually move to the legislative assistant position. Legislative assistants start specializing in specific policy areas. They may have some background in these areas, or they can be totally foreign to them. This is where a college degree based upon research, analysis, and writing pays off.

As a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, my subcommittees have to be covered. But it is not uncommon for staff members to carry a diversified portfolio of issues that they have to follow.