



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 166

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

No. 166

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 24, 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.

REMEMBERING AMARI PRESIDENT

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

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Amari President.

Amari was only 16 years young when he passed, but his wisdom was already far beyond his years. Despite being too young to vote, he knew the importance of his civic duty to hold public officials accountable and to be involved in his local community.

That involvement brought Amari into my life when he attended one of my very first townhalls and left me with a question. In my subsequent conversations with Amari, it was clear that his leadership and vibrancy were going to take him to big and wonderful places in life.

Anyone who was lucky enough to know Amari knew his dreams were big but achievable for someone as bright and determined as him. You just knew Amari would find a way to achieve every single one of them, especially living up to his name and becoming a U.S. President one day. And he would have my vote.

Beyond his ambition, his family knew Amari as compassionate, empathetic, and driven to serve others. Amari wanted to spread kindness and joy wherever he went. He went the extra mile to be a beacon of light and knew how to brighten your day by sharing his warmth through a big grin.

His 16 years have left an incredible imprint on the Lowcountry, and his legacy will be found in every heart that Amari touched, including mine.

I mourn this tragic loss with his family, his classmates, and the massive community that was blessed to know Amari and his greatness.

NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, during National Small Business Week, I join with my fellow Americans in honoring workers, entrepreneurs, and the small business community.

From farms and factories to shops and cafes, small businesses employ hardworking Americans and provide important goods and services to their

neighbors. In Pennsylvania and around the country, small businesses are not only the backbone of our economy, they are the heart of our communities.

This year, they have faced extraordinary challenges. During the coronavirus crisis, many small businesses, following Federal, State, and local mandates, have been forced to radically change the way they do business or even temporarily close their doors.

As jobs were put into jeopardy, Congress quickly acted to provide targeted relief to American families, workers, and small businesses. Under the CARES Act, the Paycheck Protection Program was enacted in record time. This unprecedented program served as a vital lifeline to millions of small businesses. Already, the Paycheck Protection Program has saved more than 50 million jobs across our country. For those workers and their families, this policy is personal.

Just last weekend, I stopped by Boyer Orchards in Bedford County. As I was waiting to buy their famous apples, I had the opportunity to speak to my fellow Penn Staters Matt and Ellen Boyer and their sons and all who work for them tirelessly to keep this family business running.

Like many farms and orchards, they had tough choices when they lost business during the coronavirus shutdown, through no fault of their own; but, thankfully, they had the support to make ends meet and, most importantly, to keep their hardworking team on the payroll.

The Boyer family attributes the Paycheck Protection Program with helping them weather the storm, and they even called this program a godsend.

Today, I am happy to report that the orchard is open and business is booming and the apples are plentiful. I can confirm that they were well worth the wait.

As we celebrate the success of the Boyer family, I also recognize that

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.

H4887

there are small businesses that are still struggling under the burdensome State and local mandates.

The deadline to apply for Paycheck Protection Program support has, unfortunately, passed, and yet too many businesses remain closed or restricted. Some small business leaders are wondering how long they can survive. And, frankly, if we do not act, we risk losing them permanently.

Most of our small businesses have been built by hardworking families over generations. Will Congress let this be their end? Will we allow families on Main Street to be used as bargaining chips in Washington?

Mr. Speaker, we cannot permit small businesses to be wiped out by a virus. This is a time for choosing, and we in Congress must put politics aside and extend a lifeline to the American small businesses.

Congressman STEVE CHABOT, the top Republican on the House Small Business Committee, has introduced commonsense legislation that would reopen the Paycheck Protection Program, free up over \$137 billion of unspent funds, and extend this program until the end of this year. This plan makes sense, and I encourage every Member of Congress to support it.

If 2020 has taught us anything, it is to plan for the unexpected. While many circumstances beyond our control remain uncertain, Congress has an opportunity now to offer small businesses security, and, most important, we have the chance to offer hope to these hard-working Americans.

As my friend Congressman CHABOT said earlier this week, our economy is depending upon America's small businesses, and American small businesses are depending on us.

This Small Business Week, there are livelihoods that are on the line. American families are counting on us. American workers are counting on us. It is time that we deliver for them.

REPUBLICANS ARE FAILING THE PEOPLE

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I am going to make some comments, but I want to just briefly remark about the gentleman from Pennsylvania's remarks about the PPP.

That program was, of course, a bipartisan program that was negotiated between Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RUBIO, and NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ, the chair of the Small Business Committee here, who played a role.

We passed the HEROES Act. We are 4 months-plus from passing the HEROES Act, and the Senate has taken no action.

Now, one could say, well, the Senate hasn't taken action because they can't get the votes of the Democrats for a bill that we believe is woefully inadequate. I didn't hear the gentleman

talking about those people in food lines or the families who need that payment of \$1,200 and dollars for children. I didn't hear him say anything about the testing capability so we can stop this virus.

I do not criticize him for mentioning the Chabot bill. I will tell my friends on the Republican side, I am hopeful that they are going to get the opportunity to vote either for an agreement between Secretary Mnuchin and Speaker PELOSI and Senator SCHUMER and others who choose to participate in the negotiations.

I am very hopeful that we will have either an agreement or a bill that we can pass that I hope everybody on this floor votes for, which will deal with the problems I mentioned, with the challenges the gentleman from Pennsylvania mentioned. But, of course, the response to HEROES was, from the Republican leader in the Senate: Let the States go bankrupt.

I don't know whether anybody has any thoughts on, if the States go bankrupt, the impact that that will have on the fight against COVID-19. I think it would be substantial, including cities and localities and counties.

So we have some time to go before we are leaving here, and we have time to address not only the challenge that Mr. JOYCE brings up, but the challenges of families and children, of people who are sick.

All of us ought to be motivated by the fact that 200,000 of our fellow citizens have died as a result of COVID-19. I am going to speak to that now.

Mr. Speaker, this week, Democrats are coming to the floor to highlight the work we have been doing over the past 2 years governing for the people, in sharp contrast with the way President Trump and Republicans have failed the people.

First and foremost, they have failed our country by responding inadequately to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now, we started out with bipartisan action, and that was good, overwhelming bipartisan action, Republicans and Democrats responding to a crisis that was killing our people; and then, unfortunately, that bipartisan process fell apart.

First and foremost, our Republican colleagues have failed our country by responding inadequately to the COVID-19 pandemic by not having the Senate respond to our bill and come to a conference and try to get an agreement. In addition, when we tried to have negotiations, as we had successfully had four times, they refused to come to the table.

In February, President Trump told the American people that the virus, like a miracle, would disappear. He called criticism of his response to the virus a hoax. More than 200,000 Americans have now died from that hoax.

There has been no miracle. Criticism of that failure is no hoax. Other nations' governments have figured out how to slow the spread of the virus, yet

this administration keeps failing and keeps contradicting our health providers and our experts.

Based on our population, Mr. Speaker, if we had the same fatality rate for COVID-19 as Australia—listen, my friends, to this figure. If we had the same fatality rate for COVID-19 as Australia, fewer than 11,000 Americans would have died, if we had had the same success rate. And if we had had the same rate as Japan, fewer than 5,000 Americans would have lost their lives.

Yet our President says we have handled it the best of anybody in the world. The facts, of course, do not interfere with his conclusions.

The Democratic-led House passed the HEROES Act in May—May 15, to be exact—more than 4 months ago. More than 110,000 Americans have died of COVID-19 during the 4 months that President Trump and the Republicans blocked the HEROES Act from helping us defeat this pandemic.

In that same period, President Trump, who in 2011 criticized President Obama for playing golf, in that same period, President Trump left the White House to play golf as many as 30 times—fiddling while Rome burned. That is eight times per month on average.

What did President Trump say when asked in August about the rising fatalities? "It is what it is."

How recklessly irresponsible, how callous and dismissive of people's pain, and how indicative of a lack of decency and leadership.

At the same time, President Trump and congressional Republicans have been working hard to eliminate access to affordable healthcare for millions of Americans and remove protections for more than 133 million people with pre-existing conditions. And they say, of course: Oh, no. We are for preexisting conditions. We are just trying to get rid of the law that gives protection for preexisting conditions.

Their lawsuit to overturn the Affordable Care Act comes amid a deadly pandemic worsened by their own failures.

For 4 years, President Trump and Republicans have been promising to unveil a secret plan that they say covers everybody. The President says: I am going to cover everybody—lower cost, higher quality.

We have seen no such plan in 3 years and 8 months of this Presidency. That is because there is no Republican healthcare plan. They tried one early on. It failed. It failed because they couldn't get a Republican vote—John McCain, who thought it wasn't a real bill.

As a matter of fact, the President, who hailed the bill at the White House as the most wonderful thing in the world, 2 weeks later, said: It was a mean bill.

□ 0915

There is only the unyielding drive to get rid of the Affordable Care Act and