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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 19, 2022.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ 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 10, 2022, 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 11:50 a.m.

AMERICA'S LUMBER CRISIS

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

Mr. HERN. Madam Speaker, over the last 2 years, the price of lumber rose at an astronomical rate. This followed prolonged shutdowns of lumber mills and production plants, despite the maintained demand for lumber for construction projects that continued as an essential activity during the pandemic. The resulting supply and demand inversion caused a nationwide lumber shortage.

Our economy struggles when businesses feel uncertainty in the market, which is why it is the government's job, in times of crisis like the COVID pandemic, to ensure stability.

In May of last year, I sent a letter to U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai urging action to prevent further disruption in the price of lumber. At the time I sent the letter, lumber prices had skyrocketed more than 300 percent over the previous year. With the support of nearly 100 bipartisan Members of Congress, Congressman BRIAN HIGGINS and I asked Ambassador Tai to resolve the crisis by resuming trade negotiations with Canada to reduce the price of softwood lumber.

While lumber prices temporarily declined following that letter, it took months for a meaningful portion of those decreases to reach the construction industry and its customers. Prices began rising again in September and have continued to increase in the months since, once again putting strain on the hardworking Americans who build our homes and communities.

In December, I once again joined Congressman HIGGINS and nearly 100 bipartisan Members of Congress to send a second letter to the Biden administration, this time to Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, voicing concerns over the Department of Commerce's decision to increase antidumping and countervailing duties on softwood lumber products from Canada. We are concerned that this will further exacerbate the lumber crisis.

The housing sector remains an integral piece of the U.S. economy. As we continue to recover from the COVID pandemic, sharp increases in the price of lumber will further harm our recovery and the costs faced by hardworking Americans.

It is our understanding that the U.S. and Canada discussed this very issue last year and expressed mutual interest in resolving the problem, but it is un-

clear if any action has yet been taken by either country.

We want to see stability and normalcy restored to the housing market. It is imperative that we do so. We want to see definitive action from the Biden administration to solve this problem.

Madam Speaker, we in Congress stand ready to help in any way we can.

ABOLISH FILIBUSTER OR LET DEMOCRACY DIE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Madam Speaker, as we come off the historic Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday, it is incumbent upon all of us not just to reflect on his legacy but to really honor it.

Honoring his legacy means really using our political strength, much of which was given to us by him and his struggle, to deliver the very voting rights protections he and countless other civil rights leaders, including our very own John Lewis, bled to secure.

We simply cannot accept empty promises anymore, Madam Speaker, in pursuit of his dream for a more equal and just America, not from Senators who have the power to live fully in those ideals today and not from Members of this very Chamber.

How can anyone, Madam Speaker, especially any Member of the Senate, celebrate this day of service, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, without standing for democracy and the rights of others?

How can they, in good faith, deliver empty words or celebrate his legacy in the shadow of this current attack on access to the ballot box when they themselves have the power to stop it?

But let me step back just a minute and put this in perspective, Madam Speaker. Just last year, Republicans introduced 440 voter suppression bills

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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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in 49 States. Nineteen States have already passed voting restrictions in 2021, with even more coming this year.

These are acts of voter suppression occurring in nearly every State of the Union, targeting Black and Brown communities, working-class and poor communities, telling them that their votes and voices shouldn't be heard, violating the sacred concept of one person, one vote.

Make no mistake, Madam Speaker: The restrictive voting laws that have passed and continue to be passed and pushed have directly targeted Black and Brown poor and working-class communities, directly targeting communities of color to make it harder for them to access the ballot box and to participate in our democracy.

As we continue to honor Dr. King and his legacy today, the Senate has a choice: Abolish the filibuster or let democracy die.

Madam Speaker, the filibuster is an arcane piece of Senate procedure that came to be by accident. It is a direct legacy to segregation and continues to hold back progress on civil rights to this very day.

Its most famous use was against the Civil Rights Act of 1964, where its opponents filibustered for nearly 60 days. But it wasn't the first time, and it won't be the last.

White southerners also invoked the filibuster to block a voting rights bill in 1891, with many of the same Senators filibustering again in the 1930s to block antilynching laws.

Imagine that. The filibuster was used to block antilynching laws.

We have a choice, Madam Speaker, between having a democracy or allowing racist systems to continue. It is simple. The filibuster is a monument to white supremacy, and we have to tear it down.

I refuse to hear any cheap excuse about why protecting the very founding principle of this Nation isn't possible because of it, not when it has been changed 161 times.

The filibuster, in the last five decades, has been changed 161 times to pass trade deals, tax cuts for the rich, Supreme Court Justices, and just recently for the debt ceiling.

But that is not what we remember the filibuster for. We remember the filibuster for its racist roots, deeply embedded in Jim Crow, used to stop antilynching legislation.

Madam Speaker, history will not look fondly on those who stand in the way of progress.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF ELLEN WELCH

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of Ellen Welch, a crime scene specialist in Morgan County and founder of the Hero Tree.

Ellen has exhibited an unwavering commitment to Morgan County's law enforcement as she works as a crime scene specialist and investigator.

Each year, during the holiday season, Ellen takes on the role of lifting up the community's fallen law enforcement officers and K9s. 2021 has marked the third year that Ellen has spearheaded this service to the community, and it continues to grow.

Every year, Ellen, her mom, and her niece paint each ornament and write the name, death date, and agency of each fallen officer. Then they place the ornaments on a tree that stands in the Morgan County squad room until January.

Unfortunately, this year was especially hard on law enforcement. Ellen had to get a much larger tree as violence against police officers spiked.

Ellen has exhibited a selfless commitment to our police officers, and for that, we are very grateful. I thank Ellen for what she does and encourage her to keep it up.

RECOGNIZING AVA DORMINEY

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary student in my district, Ava Dorminey, for her work building the Students Helping Students Succeed mentorship program.

Now a senior at Savannah Arts Academy, Ava founded the SHSS mentorship program in her junior year to help struggling students.

The COVID-19 pandemic and related school closures, which proved difficult for many students, are what prompted Ava to take action. Her desire to help students' mental health and academic success culminated in the creation of the Students Helping Students Succeed mentorship program. Ava wanted to assist her fellow students while also working to instill essential qualities like confidence, teamwork, and leadership in our youth.

Her work has been instrumental in helping students through these trying times. I am extremely proud to represent a district where young people's work, like Ava's, is on display for the whole Nation to see.

She inspires me and gives me even more confidence in our future, and I want to thank her for the work she is doing in our community.

I hope Ava's story and work inspire other young people to find an avenue that can help their communities be successful as well.

CONGRATULATING RINCON, GEORGIA

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Rincon, Georgia, for being recognized as one of 24/7 Wall Street's best cities to live in, in the South.

Rincon is a gem of a town in the First District that is well deserving of this recognition. Its population growth, high median household income, and low unemployment rate are just some of the features that caught the attention of 24/7 Wall Street, an independent news organization that

ranks cities based on affordability, quality of life, economy, and community.

Incorporated as a city in 1927, Rincon has a rich history as a rail town in the 1800s. When World War II came to America, Rincon, like the rest of the First District, answered the call to arms. Due to its proximity to Savannah, Rincon citizens were instrumental in the construction of U.S. Liberty ships.

Since then, the city has continued to grow and flourish into what it is today. I know the citizens of Rincon, Georgia, and myself are proud of this recognition.

As someone whose grandparents lived in Rincon, I was in Rincon most Sundays every week as a young man. I can tell you how proud I am of the city of Rincon and Effingham County and the tremendous growth they have seen while still maintaining a great quality of life.

ENDING FILIBUSTER TO PASS VOTING RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to stand here this morning with a very solemn heart, overwhelmed, one would say, with a sense of grief. And in that grief, there is joy.

The grief, of course, is to feel the personal pain of the lack of unity around the very core of democracy, and that is the right to vote.

As has been evidenced by Members over and over again, as I listened to Senators last night, everyone acceded to the point that voting is the core of democracy. It means that the individual in pain, in frustration, in affirmation, in the understanding of policies, gets to select a person of their choosing. It is not about those who are elected or candidates or the elections. It is about the voters having that right.

□ 1015

Right now, today, in the hands of the other body is the crux of democracy. I am, frankly, undone by the usage of an insignificant procedural rule that has been used over the decades and centuries to crush democracy.

The filibuster is insignificant. It is an order. It is not a statute; it is not the Constitution; it is not the 15th Amendment or the 14th Amendment; it is not the 13th Amendment, which freed slaves. It is also the recognition that voting rights is for all persons irrespective of their race, color, creed, or religion, and their party affiliation.

Why is the other body, under the leadership of Minority Leader McCANNELL, not coming to the table of unity? I extend an olive branch.

The filibuster has been changed already over 161 times. Do we recognize that between 1866 and 1890 many landmark pieces of civil rights legislation