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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 12, 2022.

I hereby appoint the Honorable LORI TRAHAN 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.

TAKING ON PANDEMIC AND WAR PROFITEERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CICILLINE. Madam Speaker, our economy is still recovering from 2 years of a once-in-a-generation pandemic that basically shut down our economy.

As Americans stopped going out and spending money, companies slowed production not only to meet this change in demand but also to allow for social

distancing and COVID safety protocols for workers.

Now, as Americans have started to resume their normal lives, companies are struggling to keep up with the increased demand for goods. These supply chain issues and a worker shortage has resulted in higher prices across the economy.

These issues do not fully explain some of the skyrocketing prices that we are seeing. The pandemic, and the ensuing recovery, have laid bare systemic problems in our economy, including market consolidation and price gouging.

As our economy works to recover from the pandemic and the shocks to our supply chain, and as the world responds to Putin's reckless invasion of Ukraine, food and energy costs have skyrocketed for people around the world, including here in America and including in my district in Rhode Island.

While President Biden has taken a number of steps to tackle costs for Americans, including releasing millions of barrels of petroleum from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, expanding access to gasoline with 15 percent ethanol, and additional investments in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program to help those most in need, systemic imbalances in our economy are enabling companies to further drive up costs.

Put simply, they are taking advantage of hardworking Americans and raising prices just because they can, all for the sake of extraordinary profits.

As Americans are working to recover from 2 years of an unprecedented health crisis and the economic downturn it caused, companies are reporting record profits as worker pay remains stagnant and families feel the squeeze on their pocketbooks.

This is especially true in the case of gas prices. Exxon, for example, is reporting that in the first quarter of 2022,

its net profits have more than doubled, to \$5.5 billion, compared to last year. Chevron has reported its highest quarterly profit in nearly a decade.

These record profits are a direct result of record gas prices. If these prices were solely based on inflation or supply chain issues, these companies wouldn't be seeing these obscene increases in profits.

To make matters worse, these record profits aren't being invested in new drilling sites to help us deal with energy shortages brought on by Putin's invasion of Ukraine but, instead, are going to massive company stock buybacks, shareholder dividends, and salary bonuses. This is pandemic war profiteering.

In grocery stores across America, the cost of food continues to rise as prices for goods like pork, chicken, and beef have spiked dramatically. While some may point solely to inflation for these increased prices, there is, once again, a larger systemic problem.

In the meatpacking industry, for example, the top four companies are estimated to control up to 85 percent of the industry. In industries all across the economy, the story is the same.

Three firms control 93 percent of the soft drink industry. Three firms control 85 percent of the baby formula industry. Three firms control 93 percent of the baby food industry. Four firms control 79 percent of the beer industry. Three firms control 79 percent of the dry pasta industry. And three firms control 73 percent of the cereal industry.

If history has taught us anything, this kind of market consolidation hurts product quality, market competition, and worker safety, all the things we need to have an equitable economy.

As simply put by President Biden: "Capitalism without competition is exploitation."

So, as we look to recover from this pandemic, and in a way that creates an

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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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economy that works for everyone, for the people of this country, we need to hold these monopolistic giants accountable.

To start, Congress must pass the Big Oil windfall profits tax. Companies that have taken advantage of this moment and taken advantage of the American people in a time of crisis shouldn't be raking in record profits. Those profits should be returned to the consumers that they gouged.

We also should pass H.R. 7688 to be sure that we are taking on, in a serious way, price gouging in the energy sector. I am working with Congresswoman SCHAKOWSKY on an economywide anti-price gouging bill.

We need to be sure that we are funding the FTC to do this work so it can conduct rigorous investigations and look carefully at this kind of market consolidation.

But look, this is about corporate greed, about people taking advantage of this moment. As the American people are recovering from a very difficult couple of years, we should not, in addition to that, allow them to be victims of this kind of price gouging. We have the ability to do something about it.

We have bills that I hope we will bring to the floor. Return what was improperly taken from consumers at the gas pump. Return it back to them.

I also thank President Biden for the work that he is doing to bring down gas prices, to focus relentlessly on inflation, both for food and gas. This is the number one concern of my constituents in Rhode Island, and it will remain the number one concern in the weeks ahead as we do something to be sure that we are taking on these profiteers, the pandemic profiteers and war profiteers.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL NURSES WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TONY GONZALES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate National Nurses Week. We all know a nurse who has helped us throughout our time in life, and I am no different.

My story starts with my grandfather. He had an eighth-grade education. He was a rancher. When his country called, he proudly served in World War II. He came home and became a civil servant at Kelly Air Force Base.

He went off to raise seven beautiful children. One of those was my aunt, who became a nurse. And I have two cousins, Natalie and Sandy, who are nurses.

But the story for me is much more personal than that. Ten days from now will be my 3-year anniversary of life. I went into BAMC medical facility for a routine procedure. I was intubated incorrectly. I coded. I had brain trauma. I had kidney failure. I was in a coma

for 3 days. I was in the hospital for 23 days.

I praise God that those nurses at BAMC brought me back to life. In particular, there were three nurses: Monica, Alyssa, and Jenna. Alyssa was my day nurse. She is the one who kept me alive in the daytime. Jenna kept me alive at night. Without nurses, I wouldn't be here.

Many of us have similar stories. Many of us know of similar stories.

In this institution, we lose sight sometimes of the everyday people who roll up their sleeves and go to work and make this country better. This partisanship that divides this country does not happen in the nursing world. Nurses don't care who you voted for. They don't care about the color of your skin. They don't care who you pray to. They care about life and protecting life, all the opportunities for a great quality of life.

I am grateful to all the nurses out there, particularly those serving at BAMC.

RECOGNIZING CODY ROUGE COMMUNITY ACTION ALLIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB) for 5 minutes.

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Cody Rouge Community Action Alliance for their outstanding service on behalf of our communities across Michigan's 13th District. They are celebrating their 15-year anniversary.

The Cody Rouge Community Action Alliance was founded to serve the needs and goals of the neighborhood residents, businesses, and community-based organizations. They have worked so tirelessly to create pathways to greater community engagement, to build future leaders through its youth programming, and to create a better quality of life for all of our residents.

Cody Rouge Community Action Alliance has been able to successfully connect thousands of residents to critical resources, especially during this pandemic. We have super supported this organization and continue to welcome them as they continue to expand to do more.

The alliance, as many know, includes a multitude of instrumental churches and various faith leaders, as well as neighborhood organizations and associations.

Please join me in recognizing the numerous contributions of the Cody Rouge Community Action Alliance on behalf of Michigan's 13th District Strong.

HONORING ROSA PARKS

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I stand here today to celebrate the passage in this Chamber, the House of Representatives, of our bill, H.R. 6614, to honor the mother of the civil rights movement and the beloved resident of the 13th Congressional District, Rosa Parks.

I am proud to lead this effort, in partnership with her family, to rename a United States Post Office near her Detroit home after this incredible leader. This comes at a time when the radical love and beautiful strength embodied in leaders like Rosa Louise Parks and so many others whose footsteps we march in today, like Dr. King, Malcolm X, Fred Hampton, Congressmen Cummings and John Lewis, is really under extreme attack. We can't allow any of our beloved civil rights leaders to be erased.

We know our struggle against racism is a lifelong pursuit. As mother Rosa Parks would say, and she wrote: "Freedom fighters never retire." As her memory continues to guide us, I will add that the spirit of freedom fighters never dies.

I urge my colleagues in the Senate to please pass this bill, H.R. 6614.

THEY WILL NOT SILENCE US

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition of the simply draconian efforts to overturn the historic, landmark decision of Roe v. Wade and express disappointment in the failure of the Senate to codify Roe.

Without widespread access to abortion care, millions of women in our communities all across our country will be deprived of their human rights, especially those pertaining to privacy.

By no means is an abortion an easy choice, but it should be a guaranteed right within our healthcare system to prevent unnecessary trauma for our women across our country.

It is truly disappointing to see efforts of those that claim they are pro-life but do not pass the child tax credit expansion, or don't support the End Child Poverty Act, or don't address the infant mortality crisis in our country. If they truly cared, they would be working on those issues.

No matter how much others want to silence us, I remind women across the country that we will not be silent. We will continue to fight, from the streets of our communities in our districts, to keep voicing our opposition, to right here in the Halls of Congress.

We are with you. We are going to continue to fight. Again, they will not silence us.

CONGRATULATING JOHNSON KNIGHTS BOYS SOCCER TEAM

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

Mr. CLYDE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the 2022 Georgia High School Association 5A State champions, the Johnson Knights boys soccer team.

Last week, the Knights appeared in their fifth finals since 2014 and earned their second State championship.

After having a player sustain an injury that took him out of the game, and then trailing behind in the second half, the Knights focused on the remaining time they had and turned the game around.