

the process for studying and establishing new national heritage areas. This bill could likely go by suspension and enjoy support from Members on both sides of the aisle.

Why we are called to meet on this bill with less than 2 hours' notice that could otherwise go by suspension is beyond me and is indicative of how this majority has run this body for the last 2 years.

H.R. 9640 is a supposed discussion draft, or at least described as such by my colleagues in the majority, but it was introduced today. Not last week, not a month ago, not even yesterday. It was introduced today.

The bill supposedly justifies a legislative purpose required by the Democrats' year-long crusade to weaponize the IRS to punish a political opponent. It requires the release of Presidential tax returns by the IRS and requires audits of returns submitted by such Presidents.

And that supposed discussion? Yesterday, the Ways and Means Committee met and went into executive session to meet on releasing a report on the IRS' mandatory audit program.

During the executive session, Republicans were told repeatedly that the chair would not permit any amendments to be offered on the report. Even though the committee was in executive session for approximately 5 hours, the chair abruptly reversed course and told the Members that amendments would be available about 10 minutes prior to the final vote on making these documents public. This left Members without options to draft and offer amendments with any notice.

Democrats included multiple attachments to this report, one being a discussion draft of the bill we are considering today. Democrat staff told Republican committee staff that no exception on this legislation would be considered before the end of the year. And we learned this supposed discussion draft would be coming to the floor in a statement by Speaker PELOSI.

Of course, as is this leadership's custom, this bill had no hearing and no markup. To put it generously, this process has been a disaster, but it is unfortunate how my colleagues have run this institution.

I would also note that the rule today deems an unvetted and controversial resolution that reaffirms Federal preemption of State laws regarding mail order abortion pills. This has never been mentioned, but it is in this rule. Whether this Federal preemption was ever affirmed is questionable, but whether this resolution actually speaks for the body should be debated on the floor, not snuck in through legislative smoke and mirrors.

Meanwhile, constituents in my district are struggling under the crippling effects of inflation, diesel shortages, an increasingly emboldened regulatory state, and a Democrat majority that continues to focus punishment on their political opponents instead of the needs

of Americans. This is a shameful use of our time, and I look forward to next year.

Madam Speaker, I oppose the rule and ask Members to do the same. I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1715

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I have no requests for time, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

From beginning to end, this Democratic leadership has been in disarray. It is pathetic to see them do anything they can to discuss their favorite former President one last time before losing the majority.

The bills we are debating today have gone through none of the required processes, and Republicans have been given no time to provide input. They have also added things that are highly controversial with no discussion.

This is just the death throes of the Trump-obsessed soon-to-be minority. I oppose this rule, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, as I said previously, S. 1942, the National Heritage Area Act should have been able to pass under suspension. It passed under a UC in the Senate. It is a straightforward bill. But the bottom line is that noncontroversial, bipartisan, bicameral bills that are brought under suspension oftentimes get defeated because my friends on the other side engage in some sort of a tantrum.

We have just witnessed on the floor a series of suspensions that will get overwhelming support when members of their Freedom Caucus are demanding votes where bills will pass unanimously or maybe two contrarians on their side will vote "no." A total waste of time.

So, yes, we are bringing this National Heritage Area Act to the floor under a rule because it is important, and we want to get it passed. That is why we are utilizing this process.

On H.R. 9460, the Presidential Tax Filing and Audit Transparency Act, this is about codifying something that, frankly, we all thought was happening already: the mandatory audit of Presidential taxes.

The President of the United States is the leader of the free world, the most powerful person on this planet. The people of this country deserve to know what is in his or her taxes. If you don't want people to know what is in your taxes, it is simple: Don't run for President.

This isn't about party politics. It isn't about Democrats versus Republicans, and it isn't about Donald Trump. In fact, the only person who would be audited as a result of this bill would be Joe Biden, unless of course, my colleagues plan to use their new

majority to once again try to overturn the 2020 election and reinstate Donald Trump.

This is about upholding the simple idea that no person is above the law and that the American people have a right to know whether or not their leaders are telling the truth on their taxes.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this rule and on the underlying bills.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on adoption of the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. After consultation among the Speaker and the majority and minority leaders, and with their consent, the Chair announces that, when the two Houses meet in joint meeting to hear an address by His Excellency Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine, only the doors immediately opposite the Speaker and those immediately to her left and right will be open.

No one will be allowed on the floor of the House who does not have the privilege of the floor of the House. Due to the large attendance that is anticipated, the rule regarding the privilege of the floor must be strictly enforced. Children of Members will not be permitted on the floor. The cooperation of all Members is requested.

The practice of reserving seats prior to the joint meeting by placard will not be allowed. Members may reserve their seats by physical presence only following the security sweep of the Chamber.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1913

JOINT MEETING TO HEAR AN ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY, PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE

During the recess, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 7 o'clock and 13 minutes p.m.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms, Ms. Kathleen Joyce, announced the Vice President and Members of the U.S. Senate, who entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, the Vice President taking the chair at the right of the Speaker, and the Members of the Senate the seats reserved for them.

The SPEAKER. The joint meeting will come to order.

The Chair appoints as members of the committee on the part of the House to escort His Excellency Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine, into the Chamber:

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER);

The gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK);

The gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES);

The gentleman from California (Mr. AGUILAR);

The gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS);

The gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR);

The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY);

The gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY);

The gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT);

The gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER);

The gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS);

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL);

The gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL);

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK); and

The gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. SPARTZ).

The VICE PRESIDENT. The President of the Senate, at the direction of that body, appoints the following Senators as members of the committee on the part of the Senate to escort His Excellency Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine, into the House Chamber:

The Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER);

The Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN);

The Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY);

The Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW);

The Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR);

The Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ);

The Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN);

The Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL);

The Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE);

The Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST);

The Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT);

The Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER);

The Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH); and

The Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN).

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced the Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Her Excellency Floreta Faber, the Ambassador of Albania.

The Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seat reserved for her.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced the Cabinet of the President of the United States.

The members of the Cabinet of the President of the United States entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

At 7 o'clock and 36 minutes p.m., the Sergeant at Arms, William J. Walker, announced His Excellency Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine.

The President of Ukraine, escorted by the committee of Senators and Representatives, entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and stood at the Clerk's desk.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

The SPEAKER. Members of Congress, I have the high privilege and the distinct honor of presenting to you His Excellency Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

President ZELENSKY. Thank you so much. Thank you. It is too much for me. All this for our great people. Thank you so much.

Dear Americans, in all States, cities, and communities, all those who value freedom and justice, who cherish it as strongly as we Ukrainians in all our cities, in each and every family, I hope my words of respect and gratitude resonate in each American heart.

Madam Vice President, I thank you for your efforts in helping Ukraine.

Madam Speaker, you bravely visited Ukraine during the full-fledged war. Thank you very much.

It is a great honor—thank you—a great privilege to be here.

Dear Members of the Congress, representatives of both parties who also visited Kyiv, esteemed Congressmen and Senators from both parties who will visit Ukraine, I am sure, in the future; dear representatives of our diaspora present in this Chamber and spread across the country; dear journalists; it is a great honor for me to be in the U.S. Congress and speak to you and all Americans.

Against all odds and doom and gloom scenarios, Ukraine did not fall. Ukraine is alive and kicking. Thank you.

And it gives me good reason to share with you our first joint victory. We defeated Russia in the battle for minds of the world.

We have no fear, nor should anyone in the world have it.

Ukrainians gained this victory, and it gives us courage, which inspires the entire world.

Americans gained this victory, and that is why you have succeeded in unit-

ing the global community to protect freedom and international law.

Europeans gained this victory, and that is why Europe is now stronger and more independent than ever.

The Russian tyranny has lost control over us, and it will never influence our minds again.

Yet, we have to do whatever it takes to ensure that countries of the global south also gain such victory.

I know one more, I think, very important thing. The Russians will stand a chance to be free only when they defeat the Kremlin in their minds.

Yet, the battle continues, and we have to defeat the Kremlin on the battlefield.

Yes, this battle is not only for the territory, for this or that part of Europe. The battle is not only for life, freedom, and security of Ukrainians or any other nation which Russia attempts to conquer.

This struggle will define in what world our children and grandchildren will live and then their children and grandchildren. It will define whether it will be a democracy for Ukrainians and for Americans, for all.

This battle cannot be frozen or postponed. It cannot be ignored, hoping that the ocean or something else will provide a protection.

From the United States to China, from Europe to Latin America, and from Africa to Australia, the world is too interconnected and interdependent to allow someone to stay aside and, at the same time, to feel safe when such a battle continues.

□ 1945

Our two nations are allies in this battle.

Next year will be a turning point. I know it. The point when Ukrainian courage and American resolve must guarantee the future of our common freedom, the freedom of people who stand for their values.

Ladies and gentlemen, Americans, yesterday, before coming here to Washington, D.C., I was at the front line in our Bakhmut, in our stronghold in the east of Ukraine, in the Donbas. The Russian military and mercenaries have been attacking Bakhmut nonstop since May. They have been attacking it day and night. But Bakhmut stands.

Last year, 70,000 people lived there in Bakhmut, in this city, and now only few civilians stay. Every inch of that land is soaked in blood. Roaring guns sound every hour. Trenches in the Donbas change hands several times a day in fierce combat and even hand fighting. But the Ukrainian Donbas stands.

Russians use everything they have against Bakhmut and our other beautiful cities. The occupiers have a significant advantage in artillery. They have an advantage in ammunition. They have much more missiles and planes than we ever had. It is true. But our defense forces stand. We all are proud of them.

The Russian tactic is primitive. They burn down and destroy everything they see. They sent thugs to the front lines. They sent convicts to the war. They threw everything against us—similar to the other tyranny, which is in the Battle of the Bulge. They threw everything it had against the free world, just like the brave American soldiers which held their lines and fought back Hitler's forces during the Christmas of 1944. Brave Ukrainian soldiers are doing the same to Putin's forces this Christmas. Ukraine holds its lines and will never surrender.

Here is the front line, the tyranny, which has no lack of cruelty against the lives of free people. Your support is crucial, not just to stand in such fights, but to get to the turning point; to win on the battlefield.

We have artillery. Yes. Thank you. We have it. Is it enough? Honestly, not really. To ensure Bakhmut is not just a stronghold that holds back the Russian Army, but for the Russian Army to completely pull out, more cannons and shells are needed. If so, just like the Battle of Saratoga, the fight for Bakhmut will change the trajectory of our war for independence and for freedom.

If your patriots stop the Russian terror against our cities, it will let Ukrainian patriots work to the full to defend our freedom. When Russia cannot reach our cities by its artillery, it tries to destroy them with missile attacks. More than that, Russia found an ally in its genocidal policy—Iran.

Iranian deadly drones, sent to Russia in hundreds, became a threat to our critical infrastructure. That is how one terrorist found the other. It is just a matter of time when they will strike against your other allies if we do not stop them now. We must do it.

I believe there should be no taboos between us in our alliance. Ukraine never asked the American soldiers to fight on our land instead of us. I assure you that Ukrainian soldiers can perfectly operate American tanks and planes themselves.

Financial assistance is also critically important. I would like to thank you—thank you very much—thank you for both financial packages you have already provided us with and the ones you may be willing to decide on. Your money is not charity. It is an investment in the global security and democracy that we handle in the most responsible way.

Russia could stop its aggression if it wanted to, but you can speed up our victory. I know it. And it will prove to any potential aggressor that no one can succeed in breaking national borders—no one—committing atrocities, and reigning over people against their will. It would be naive to wait for steps towards peace from Russia, which enjoys being a terrorist state. Russians are still poisoned by the Kremlin.

The restoration of international legal order is our joint task. We need peace. Yes, Ukraine has already offered pro-

posals, which I just discussed with President Biden, our peace formula; ten points, which should and must be implemented for our joint security, guaranteed for decades ahead, and the summit, which can be held.

I am glad to say that President Biden supported our peace initiative today. Each of you, ladies and gentlemen, can assist in the implementation to ensure that America's leadership remains solid, bicameral, and bipartisan. Thank you.

You can strengthen sanctions to make Russia feel how ruinous its aggression truly is. It is in your power to help us bring to justice everyone who started this unprovoked and criminal war. Let's do it.

Let the terrorist state be held responsible for its terror and aggression, and compensate all losses done by this war. Let the world see that the United States are here.

Ladies and gentlemen, Americans, in 2 days we will celebrate Christmas. Maybe candlelit, not because it is more romantic, no, but because there will be no electricity. Millions won't have either heating or running water. All of this will be the result of Russian missile and drone attacks on our energy infrastructure. But we do not complain.

We do not judge and compare whose life is easier. Your well-being is the product of your national security, the result of your struggle for independence and your many victories. We, Ukrainians, will also go through our war of independence and freedom with dignity and success.

We will celebrate Christmas, and even if there is no electricity, the light of our faith in ourselves will not be put out. If Russian missiles attack us, we will do our best to protect ourselves. If they attack us with Iranian drones and our people will have to go to bomb shelters on Christmas Eve, Ukrainians will still sit down at the holiday table and cheer up each other. And we don't have to know everyone's wish as we know that all of us, millions of Ukrainians wish the same—victory. Only victory.

We have already built a strong Ukraine with strong people, strong Army, and strong institutions, together with you. We develop strong security guarantees for our country and for entire Europe and the world together with you. Also, together with you, we will put in place everyone who will defy freedom. "Put in." This will be the basis to protect democracy in Europe and the world over.

Now, at Christmastime, I want to thank you, all of you. I thank every American family which cherishes the warmth of its home and wishes the same warmth to other people.

I thank President Biden and both parties at the Senate and the House for your invaluable assistance.

I thank your cities and your citizens who supported Ukraine this year, who hosted our Ukrainians, our people who

waved our national flags, who acted to help us.

Thank you all from everyone who is now at the front line and from everyone who is awaiting victory.

Standing here today, I recall the words of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, which I think is so good for this moment: "The American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory."

□ 2000

The Ukrainian people will win, too. Absolutely. I know that everything depends on us, on Ukrainian Armed Forces. Yet, so much depends on the world. So much in the world depends on you.

When I was in Bakhmut yesterday, our heroes gave me the flag, the battle flag, the flag of those who defend Ukraine, Europe, and the world at the cost of their lives. They asked me to bring this flag to you, to the U.S. Congress, to Members of the House of Representatives and Senators, whose decisions can save millions of people.

So, let these decisions be taken. Let this flag stay with you, ladies and gentlemen. This flag is a symbol of our victory in this war. We stand, we fight, and we will win because we are united; Ukraine, America, and the entire free world.

Just one thing, if I can, the last thing—thank you so much—may God protect our brave troops and citizens. May God forever bless the United States of America. Merry Christmas and happy victorious New Year.

"Sláva Ukraini!" "Glory to Ukraine!"

Thank you so much.

The SPEAKER. This flag was flown over the Capitol today in honor of the President's visit.

JOINT MEETING DISSOLVED

The SPEAKER. The purpose of the joint meeting having been completed, the Chair declares the joint meeting of the two Houses now dissolved.

Accordingly, (at 8 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.), the joint meeting of the two Houses was dissolved.

The Members of the Senate retired to their Chamber.

The SPEAKER. The House will continue in recess subject to the call of the chair.

□ 2035

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CARSON) at 8 o'clock and 35 minutes p.m.

PRINTING OF PROCEEDINGS HAD DURING RECESS

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the proceedings had during the recess be printed in the RECORD.