



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 169

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2023

No. 70

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 26, 2023.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JAY OBERNOLTE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

KEVIN MCCARTHY,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 9, 2023, 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.

LET THE ADULTS TAKE THE WHEEL

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

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, I want you to imagine that you get home from work tomorrow and decide that you just don't want to pay your mortgage, so you call your bank and share the good news.

The bank, at that point, explains that if you don't, you are looking at eviction, so you propose a counteroffer because you are a clever fellow. I will

pay my mortgage, but only if my family stops using hot water and stops going to the doctor. At which point, the bank says: You, sir, are a moron.

Yet, that is what is happening in the House this week. The United States Government has already agreed to buy a house. We are already living in the house. We took out a loan to pay for the house, but the Republicans want to stop making the mortgage payments unless the American people agree to skimp on healthcare and basic services.

I would remind everybody in this body that it is Congress that has the power of the purse. Every dollar of government spending and every dollar of government revenue was approved on this floor by this body. If the expenses exceed the revenues, then we borrow to make up the difference. We made those choices.

You all may not like every dollar that we have approved. I certainly don't. I also don't agree with every dollar my wife has ever spent, and she doesn't agree with every dollar that I have ever spent, but we get by because my wife and I are functioning adults. That would appear to be too high a bar for this body.

The majority today is bringing a package to the floor that, according to Moody's Analytics, would "meaningfully increase the likelihood" of a recession; not because it is the right thing to do but because it is the only way that the Speaker can keep his job.

If Speaker MCCARTHY brought a clean debt limit bill to the floor of the House tomorrow, he would get every single Democratic vote, and I am sure a few of my colleagues across the aisle would join in. It would pass the Senate, and President Biden would sign it. That would be that. We would move on to the important work of this country.

But as all of us know who spent a long, late night here after 14 failed efforts to win the Speakership, Mr. MCCARTHY caved to the extremists in

his own party and agreed to conditions where he loses his job if he does not try to blow up the economy. He has the opportunity today to do the right thing; he simply doesn't have the ability.

The House is now preparing to vote on a bill that would be disastrous for Americans. Let's be clear: If we don't raise the debt ceiling, we will see collapses in global financial markets.

We will default on our debt, which means interest rates go up, which means everything you have that has an interest rate tied to it gets more expensive. Your mortgage, your car payment, your student loan, your credit card payments, all those things start going up.

The majority is hoping that the adults in the room will prevail and that the adults will be so frightened by that consequence that we will accept their self-destructive alternative.

The alternative is a bill that would slash nondefense discretionary spending by 22 percent. Just in my home State of Illinois, let's talk about what that means.

That means in Illinois, home of the O'Hare airport hub, eight traffic control centers shut down.

In the wake of East Palestine, the train crash, just in Illinois, we will do 420 fewer rail inspections.

2,900 students in Illinois will lose their Pell grants. Several hundred thousand will see their Pell grants cut. 10,000 kids will lose pre-K and childcare.

53,000 veterans will lose outpatient services. That is just in Illinois.

Nationally, a cleaner, cheaper future will be thrown away.

White-collar police will be defunded to make it easier for everybody to commit tax fraud, which, of course, will lower future revenues and make it necessary for us to borrow more money.

The majority would have us believe that our only choice right now is: Do we want to blow up the economy, or do

□ 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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we want to ruin the lives of millions of Americans? That is not the only choice.

We have a third option. The third option is that we can let the adults come back in the room. We can take our jobs seriously. We can pass a clean debt limit bill.

Governing is hard, but it is especially hard when you let the clowns drive the car.

Please, Mr. Speaker, let the adults take the wheel.

DEBT CEILING NEGOTIATIONS ARE NOTHING NEW

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

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, Joe Biden and House Democrats should listen to what former Speaker NANCY PELOSI had to say about debt ceiling negotiations back in 2019, according to *The Washington Post*: “Pelosi, the California Democrat, said the idea of raising the debt ceiling on its own and not in conjunction with a budget agreement was not ‘acceptable to our Caucus’ and, therefore, did not stand a chance of passage in the House of Representatives.”

Debt ceiling negotiations are nothing new. President Biden has a long history of engaging in and supporting negotiations over the debt limit, as do other House Democrats.

House Republicans are committed to a reasonable, responsible, and sensible solution to our Nation’s debt crisis that would limit Washington’s irresponsible spending, save taxpayer dollars, and grow the American economy.

President Biden and the extreme Democrats’ inflationary spending spree has worked to increase our national debt to unsustainable levels, over \$31.6 trillion, with annual deficits of \$1.5 trillion.

While Joe Biden has no plan to avoid debt default, House Republicans are committed to sensible debt ceiling negotiations.

CONGRATULATING STUARTS DRAFT FFA TEAM

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Stuarts Draft High School team for winning the Virginia State Future Farmers of America forestry championship at the Mountain Gateway Community College in Clifton Forge. These outstanding students exemplify leadership and are model representatives of the organization.

The forestry competition included being able to identify tree types and disorders, pinpoint wood products, as well as pass a knowledge exam and identify and navigate maps.

Led by Coach William Monroe, as well as advised by agriculture teacher Lindsey Baber, these champions include freshman Kelli Weaver and seniors Anna Grace Henderson, Will Monroe, and Steven Ramsey.

As Virginia’s Sixth District is the number one agriculture district in the Commonwealth, I am always proud to

see the next generation of agriculture leaders participating, excelling, and winning in competitions like this one.

Congratulations to the Stuarts Draft students, Coach Monroe, parents, and staff on this well-deserved victory.

RECOGNIZING CLARKE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS’ BASKETBALL TEAM

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Clarke County High School girls’ basketball team for their Virginia Class 2 State championship victory. These impressive young ladies stepped up big and beat the defending State champs, Central High School of Wise County, 45-41, for their second State title in the program’s history.

Junior guard Selene Good cemented the Eagles’ lead by nailing a dramatic 3-pointer to put the team up by 5. In the final minutes, the Eagles knocked down 10 of 12 free throws that helped seal the victory.

These champions include: Selene Good, Kayia Williams, Emma Nelson, Devin Simmons-McDonald, Keira Rohrbach, Willow Oliver, Alainah McKavish, Bailey Beard, Hailey Evans, and Emily Emmart, led by head Coach Regina Downing and assistant Shadd McCaw.

Congratulations to all of these talented athletes, coaches, staff, and parents on this well-deserved State championship.

FIX AMERICA’S GUN PROBLEM

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

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because we have a gun problem in the United States. This problem has been ongoing for years, but the continued events make this reality all the more stark.

Kaylin Gillis was shot and killed for turning around in a driveway, something so many of us have done.

Heather Roth and Payton Washington, two cheerleaders, were shot for mistakenly getting into a car they thought was theirs, something so many of us have done.

Kinsley White and her parents were shot for retrieving a basketball in a neighbor’s yard, something so many of us have done.

Ralph Yarl was shot for ringing the wrong doorbell when picking up his siblings, something so many of us have done.

All of this violence, not to mention the mass shootings in Dadeville, Louisville, and Nashville this month, reminds us that going about your daily life can quickly turn deadly in this country.

Death should not be a consequence for simply living our lives. We cannot continue to look away from the thousands of lives taken by gun violence every year that barely register in the headlines.

This past weekend, 17 people were shot in Chicago, including a 3-year-old from Calumet Heights and a 6-year-old

from Woodlawn. The weekend before, 10 were killed and 26 wounded. Four were killed and 21 injured the weekend before that.

Whether it is from a fight gone too far, an accidental discharge, a stray bullet, or death by suicide, guns make our communities more dangerous and restrict other people’s freedoms. Walking down the street or playing with your kids on the front porch shouldn’t be dangerous activities.

I am sick and tired of gun violence only being acknowledged in Chicago to say that gun laws don’t work. This is simply not true.

According to trace data from the ATF, only 49 percent of crime guns used in Illinois are from Illinois. Illegal gun trafficking from States with fewer gun protections makes my constituents less safe.

Whether it is background checks, consumer safety laws, community violence intervention, or cracking down on gun trafficking, gun safety laws work. States that have fewer gun laws have higher gun deaths.

Already in 2023, 13,000 people have died because of a gun, and another 10,000 have been wounded. These numbers include homicides, suicides, mass shootings, and daily gun violence.

One thing these incidents all have in common is that access to a firearm made them more deadly.

This is a public health crisis that is painfully American. Unlike our peer countries, life expectancy in this country is not rising after the worst of the pandemic has abated. Life expectancy continues to decline because our young people are dying, and too many of those deaths are from guns.

The data shows that violence begets violence. More violence means fewer job opportunities, fewer education opportunities, and fewer opportunities to build a healthy family.

The solution is not cutting Social Security, not cutting Medicaid, not adding onerous work requirements, not cutting school funding. The solution is better gun safety laws, and we must invest in our communities to stop the cycle of violence.

We must dispense with the false choice between better gun safety measures and what some dare to call freedom. A constant, slow-motion massacre is not the price of freedom. This is a farce.

What about our freedom to go to the grocery store and church, to go to school, to ride on the bus, to play in the park, to come out of choir practice, to get coffee from a coffee shop without fear of getting shot?

No matter who they are or where they grew up, someone being shot to death is not an inevitability. They died because we failed them. We failed their family. We failed their community.

I am tired of failing. We have the tools to stop this senseless violence. We just need the courage to use them.

I have been fighting for stronger gun safety laws since my first day in Congress, and I am not going to stop. I