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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. STEEL).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 10, 2023.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MICHELLE STEEL 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.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

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

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Madam Speaker, enough is enough. How many more times must public officials stand here before our colleagues demanding commonsense gun reform?

Malls are not safe. Schools are not safe. Places of worship are not safe. We should not be afraid to step outside our own homes for the fear of losing our lives at the mercy of an assault weapon.

We should not be afraid that we may never see our child again when we drop them off at school. We should not be afraid to attend a place of worship with loved ones.

Madam Speaker, it has been 19 years since the Federal assault weapons ban expired, 19 years since Congress has acknowledged the lives lost because of assault weapons.

In this year alone, there have been 203 mass shootings. That is 203 in 5 months. Over the past 10 years, this has resulted in 14,798 deaths, 617 of which were children and teens.

In my home State of Texas, there have been 17 mass shootings resulting in 29 deaths and 61 injured. Texas accounts for 8 percent of nationwide mass shootings. It is very troubling.

In my home county, 11 people have already died as a result of gun violence. Just this weekend, eight were killed and seven injured in Allen, Texas, at the hands of a gunman, killed for simply shopping at a mall, something we all do.

How many more victims must die before we decide that enough is enough? Instead of being concerned about human lives, House Republicans are choosing to focus on beating up on Social Security and banning books.

Our own Texas State leadership prioritizes political points over lives, politics over people. How long can leadership in Austin fail to do a single, meaningful action to take weapons of war out of the hands of violent extremists, domestic abusers, or even teenagers?

Except for the Santa Fe shooting, all of the Texas shootings have been with an assault weapon.

When five people, including a child, were shot and killed in Cleveland, Texas, our Governor tried to deflect the situation by talking about and blaming undocumented immigrants who were the victims. This is ridiculous. Immigration status has nothing

to do with it. It is irrelevant. It is about people. It is about making sure we put people over politics, about making sure we put people's lives over the NRA.

I call upon my Republican colleagues to enact commonsense gun reform legislation now. We must stop making excuses. The only path toward fewer deaths as a result of gun violence is commonsense gun reform.

I call on the Supreme Court, as they approach a case that could strike down State and local laws banning AR-15s in all 50 States, to please look at precedent. Please look at the true meaning of the Second Amendment.

We must protect our children. We must protect our lives. My hope is that no more needless deaths will occur before Congress can unite against mass shootings. No more deaths. No more grief. No more waiting on legislation. It is time to put people over politics. It is time to put people over the NRA. It is time for change, and the time is now.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

IN SUPPORT OF THE SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS CONNECTOR

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

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of a project that has been decades in the making: the Southwest Illinois Connector.

This proposed expansion of Illinois State Highways 127, 154, and 3 to four lanes would create a rural expressway

□ 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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between St. Louis, Missouri, and Carbondale, Illinois.

The latest push for the Southwest Illinois Connector began in 2017 when officials in my district from Jackson, Perry, Randolph, and Monroe Counties formed the Four County Highway Coalition.

In 2019, this group partnered with the Illinois Department of Transportation to do a report and the project that would indicate exactly what this would affect. What they discovered was that it would create thousands of construction jobs. It would reduce auto accidents. It would boost economic development. It would benefit national security, and it would improve public health.

Now, I can't overstate how much of a difference this would make. The planned route of the Southwest Illinois Connector includes a stretch that is currently in the top 5 percent for traffic fatalities and injuries on two-lane highways. The Southwest Illinois Connector would also have an important impact on helping grow the economy and spur new investments in the region. It would also prove timely in the delivery of aid and assistance following a natural disaster and help address patient transport issues from rural areas for their healthcare needs.

In closing, I thank Murphysboro Mayor Will Stephens and Marc Kiehna, the Randolph County board chair, for their leadership in building a coalition of support for this long-sought-after project. This project would be the difference maker for southern Illinois.

“JOAQUIN'S FIRST SCHOOL SHOOTING”

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

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, today, I rise with a heavy heart, a heart of grief. I grieve for a Nation where 111 Americans are shot and killed every single day. I grieve for a generation of kids growing up surrounded by violence. I think of William Cho, 6 years old, who lost his parents and his younger brother, not living in a war zone but going to a shopping mall in our country.

I grieve for the parents who have suffered the inconceivable pain of losing a child, a beloved family member, parents like Patricia and Manny Oliver, who are here with us today, whose son, Joaquin, was murdered alongside 16 classmates and staff in Parkland, Florida.

Ahead of Mother's Day weekend, Patricia and Manny published a children's book, a book that illustrates the horror of America's gun epidemic from the perspective of its youngest victims.

Madam Speaker, I would like to read from “Joaquin's First School Shooting.” May it give some pause to all of us, especially my colleagues who continue to prioritize guns over our children.

“Joaquin's First School Shooting.”

The end of the day, was also my own.
Bled out on the floor, and never got home.
We heard a loud bang!
Then off went the alarm.
My classmates freaked out, but I tried to keep calm.

Out in the hall, a killer had a gun.
He shot into a class, then came right for us.
He took aim and fired—again, and again, and again.

One life at a time, my friends met their end.
He came up the stairs, hunting for more.
That's when we all panicked, and ran for the door.

We tried to get clear, but it was a bit late.
It was his machine gun, that decided our fates.

Our country is numb, to violence like this.
Politicians don't care. They still keep their seats.

We must not forget, or I've died in vain!
Enough is enough. Please . . . never again!

Let us remember all of the victims and remember that this is a choice. We have solutions. We can end gun violence in this country.

THE SOUTHERN BORDER IS NOT SECURE

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

Mr. KUSTOFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of H.R. 2, which is the Secure the Border Act.

Everyone knows that the southern border is not secure. At the start of his Presidency, Joe Biden halted construction of the border wall, essentially prevented Immigration and Customs Enforcement from doing its job to keep our country safe.

And took steps to end the Migrant Protection Protocols as well as other enforcement policies.

President Biden's open border policies have led to the humanitarian and national security crisis at our southern border today. Since Joe Biden took office, there have been over 5 million illegal border crossings at the southern border. Customs and Border Protection officers have seized over 14,000 pounds of deadly fentanyl that have come across our southern border. For perspective, that is enough fentanyl to kill every single American.

Furthermore, in just the first 6 months of this fiscal year, 2023, the names of 80 people who appear on the terrorist watch list were stopped trying to cross the southern border.

It is about to get much worse, because tomorrow, title 42, one of our most powerful tools to quickly expel illegal immigrants, will expire. Again, that happens tomorrow.

Title 42 is a public health order that allows migrants, who would otherwise be held in processing facilities, to be quickly expelled due to a risk of COVID-19 transmission.

The end of title 42 is expected to incentivize a worsening influx of illegal migrants. Border Patrol officials at our border are already seeing an unprecedented surge at our southern border with over 26,000 migrant apprehensions in just 72 hours.

For more than 2 years, President Biden and his administration have ignored the crisis. I can tell you that House Republicans have listened to the concerns of Americans and are working on solutions to the crisis. In our Commitment to America, we promised to create a Nation that is safe.

We are going to vote soon on the Secure the Border Act, to make sure that our southern border is, in fact, secure and to combat illegal immigration.

Just a few things that our Secure the Border Act will do:

Number 1, it will force the administration to restart construction of the border wall.

□ 1015

It will deploy technology to the southern and northern border. It will increase the number of Border Patrol agents, and it will increase their pay. It will require transparency regarding illegal crossings from the Department of Homeland Security. It will strengthen our current law to protect unaccompanied children from human trafficking. It will end catch and release. It will end the abuse of executive immigration authority. It will strengthen and streamline the asylum process.

This bill, the Secure the Border Act, fulfills our promise to the American people to offer solutions to a crisis that affects not just cities and States along the border but every city and every State in this Nation.

Madam Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation.

CREATE A LEGAL PATHWAY TO CITIZENSHIP

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

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I rise today as the daughter of immigrants to urge my colleagues to please vote “no” on an even more dehumanizing bill. It dehumanizes our immigrant neighbors. H.R. 2, which is known better as the child deportation act, is fueled with hateful rhetoric that I think is very dangerous for our country.

I am honestly not sure if the goal with this bill is to worsen our broken immigration system or to simply keep as many Black and Brown immigrants out of our country as they can. I know bringing back family and child deportation is immoral. Prohibiting funds to organizations providing lifesaving humanitarian aid to migrants is simply cruel.

This bill dehumanizes and is incredibly painful to see our colleagues pushing forward. Many have called it racist and inhumane, that it is fear-mongering, and that it is failed policies that will continue to worsen our broken immigration system.

We must in this Chamber protect all of our neighbors. We also must work toward protecting those who are fleeing horrific violence. We need to continue to be leaders in creating a safe haven for those who seek asylum.