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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. VAN DUYNÉ).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 14, 2023.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BETH VAN DUYNÉ 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.

REMEMBERING YELLOWSTONE FLOODS

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

Mr. ROSENDALE. Madam Speaker, 1 year ago, record-breaking floods devastated much of southern Montana, shattering communities in and around Yellowstone National Park.

The destruction caused by these rushing waters was immense, washing away homes, businesses, and property that Montanans had spent generations

building. But it did not wash away their hope.

I had the chance to survey the aftermath and speak with residents who had been impacted by this tragic natural disaster. Many understood that it would take months, maybe even years to recover.

What surprised me about my conversations with those who lost so much to these historic floods was not their desperation, but their courage.

The people of Montana have always been stronger than the challenges that they face. Local leaders in Park, Stillwater, and Carbon Counties did not let the disaster destroy their communities. Instead, they came together to support their friends and neighbors when they needed it the most.

Local leaders like Sherry Weamer were instrumental in directing the rebuilding of Red Lodge when floodwaters overwhelmed the area. These efforts were also led by dedicated public servants, like Yellowstone National Park Superintendent Cam Sholly.

Communities in southern Montana rely on tourist traffic from Yellowstone to survive. When floodwaters closed two entrances to the park, Superintendent Sholly sprang into action and accelerated the opening of the Old Gardiner Road, restoring access to Yellowstone just 4 months after the floods.

I spoke with countless Montanans whose lives were turned upside down by the Yellowstone floods, and I have made it my mission to ensure leaders in Washington support them.

Although our work to restore our gateway communities is far from over, I am proud of the work that we have done so far.

I thank Sherry Weamer, Superintendent Sholly, and the countless Montanans who stepped up to help their communities during this difficult time. Their work is an example of Montana, and it is a privilege to represent them in the United States House of Representatives.

HONORING THE CAREER OF HUGO MORALES

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

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a friend and a citizen of Fresno, California, Hugo Morales, for being awarded with an honorary doctorate degree by Harvard University, the school from which he graduated. It is fitting and appropriate, for his lifelong pursuit has been in service to others throughout our valley and throughout our country, specifically focusing on Hispanic communities.

His story is the story of immigrants past and immigrants present. It is the American story. Born in Oaxaca, Mexico, Hugo and his family came to this country to pursue what so many immigrants have throughout generations, the American Dream.

As a child, he worked in the fields alongside his parents and attended public schools. Despite the challenges he faced, he persisted and was able to receive a scholarship to Harvard University, where he graduated law school in 1972.

After graduating, he came back home to Fresno and decided to start a radio station. Radio Bilingue is what they called it. Today, Radio Bilingue is the leading Spanish-language public radio in the United States, serving as a voice to empower Latinos, farmworkers, Dreamers, the undocumented, and people who are in underserved communities throughout our country.

Radio Bilingue has been a critical messenger in so many issues and challenges we have faced over the decades, from COVID-19 responses to immigration policy, to encouraging participation in the United States Census, so many different efforts of public service.

Hugo is a pioneer in public broadcasting, an inspiration to many of us, especially our young people and aspiring journalists in the valley. But,

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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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again, his reputation has spread nationwide. Therefore, it is fitting and appropriate, as I said at the outset, that Harvard University provide him with an honorary doctorate degree.

I congratulate my friend on his well-deserved honor. He is a role model and an inspiration for so many. He makes the San Joaquin Valley proud. I thank him very much.

CELEBRATING DIA DE PORTUGAL

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a special day for Americans of Portuguese descent to celebrate Dia de Portugal, a national Portuguese holiday.

The story of Portuguese Americans is part of the American story, which is about immigrants past and present—in this case, the Portuguese community.

As a proud descendant of Portuguese immigrants, the traditions and values that my family took from the Azore Islands off the coast of Portugal have never been far from my heart. It is the story of my family.

The fact is that Portugal is one of America's longest and strongest allies. It was one of the first nations to recognize the United States as an independent nation after the Revolutionary War.

As co-chairman of the Portuguese Caucus, I look forward to continuing our efforts in a bipartisan fashion to advance mutual interests and strengthen the bonds between the United States and Portugal.

We celebrate the richness and ethnic diversity of all the communities in our country. I am convinced it is the secret sauce of America. De Tocqueville wrote a book about it in the late 19th century, wondering why America could reinvent itself with every generation of immigrants that came to these shores with nothing more than the clothes on their back but a deep desire to work hard and succeed for themselves and their families. That is the secret sauce, the American Dream that we share in common.

For Dia de Portugal, Feliz Dia de Portugal.

PHILOSOPHICAL CONSISTENCY

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

Mr. MCCORMICK. Madam Speaker, I wanted to take this time to explain to my constituents why consistency in political thought is important.

Many people were excited and encouraged when I voted against lifting the deficit cap recently. The reason I did this was that I did not want an unidentified amount of debt accumulation while we shaved a small portion of 11 percent off the budget. Meanwhile, we did not address executive power and bureaucracies that were out of control and that could cost us far more than we could save. In short, I wanted the REINS Act in exchange for raising the debt ceiling.

Ironically, I have made unpopular votes that are consistent with the same philosophy. For example, I voted against keeping a fee for all VA loans, that all veterans have to pay for every loan. The fee is taken in order to pay for IT training for a small number of veterans. I did not think it was fair that every veteran would pay for the education of just a few veterans that would otherwise be paid for by the GI Bill already. Just because the name "veteran" is attached to a bill does not make it the right thing to do.

Likewise, I voted against creating more government oversight on the Abraham Accords. The Abraham Accords are working great. It has created some of the most innovative peace-keeping processes in modern history. However, creating more government, especially in the form of another executive appointee, to a process that is already working well did not make sense to me. Well-intended bureaucracy and increasing executive power is the greater part of what I have been fighting against since I arrived in D.C.

We are already out of balance. The REINS Act was meant to bring back into control executive power and bureaucracies. Why would I vote for something that would increase more bureaucracy and more executive power?

No one should doubt my support for Israel or my admiration of the Abraham Accords. In April of this year, I voted in favor of H. Res. 311, a resolution encouraging the expansion and strengthening of the Abraham Accords, a resolution urging nations throughout the region to improve their relationships with Israel and strengthen the U.S.-Israel alliance.

With that said, whether it is about government spending, debt, increasing fees on an entire veteran population for the sake of a few, or increasing executive power and bureaucracy, I will remain politically consistent and thoughtful. That is my promise. I believe in the individual, not more government.

We need to bring back the balance of power that was designed by the Constitution for a purpose. More government, more debt, and more fees are seldom the answer. I remain semper fidelis to this philosophy, and to the people.

CRACKING DOWN ON WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE

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

Ms. PORTER. Madam Speaker, beware when Washington says it is getting fiscally responsible. Too often that is code for cutting programs that families rely on while throwing more money at defense contractors.

This year, my Republican colleagues want most government programs to tighten their belts while defense spending increases without accountability.

Nowhere is this more evident than the F-35 program.

The Department of Defense expects to spend \$1.7 trillion over the life of the F-35 program, including the countless spare parts contractors are losing. In fact, since May 2018, under the watch of just one company, over 1 million parts have been lost, damaged, or destroyed.

I came to Washington to protect taxpayer dollars, not flush them into the Pentagon's black hole. As Congress considers the National Defense Authorization Act, I encourage my colleagues to join me in cracking down on waste, fraud, and abuse.

ORANGE COUNTY EVICTION DIVERSION COLLABORATIVE

Ms. PORTER. Madam Speaker, higher inflation and housing costs harm us all, especially our most vulnerable neighbors who are on the brink of losing their homes. Low-income families are struggling to make do, falling behind on rent, and unable to find affordable housing.

One unexpected medical emergency or job layoff can be all it takes to doom a family into eviction. Evictions are not momentary inconveniences. They are long-term setbacks that make it harder to find a new home, driving families deeper into poverty. Single moms and women of color are disproportionately at risk of being evicted. Seventy-eight percent of Orange County households that are behind on rent are headed by females.

Thankfully, the Orange County Eviction Diversion Collaborative is stepping in to help. By advocating for rental assistance and landlord mediation services, they are saving tenants and families from the destabilizing damage of an eviction. As a single mom myself, I am grateful Orange County is looking out for women and children. Our community is stronger, healthier, and safer when we take care of one another.

SILICON VALLEY BANK COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENT

Ms. PORTER. Madam Speaker, when banks make promises to the public, we should expect that they are upheld. Disappointingly, First Citizens Bank is falling short of this standard.

After purchasing Silicon Valley Bank's assets at a whopping \$16.5 billion discount, First Citizens has been silent on whether it will uphold Silicon Valley Bank's promise to invest \$9 billion in California's low-income communities. This investment promised to expand affordable housing, small business loans, and other needed services in underserved areas.

I led 15 of my California colleagues in a letter last month calling on First Citizens Bank to honor this commitment. They have not responded.

It is an injustice that communities of color and low-income households stand to lose out more from First Citizens' purchase than all of Silicon Valley Bank's billionaire depositors.

First Citizens has a responsibility to make sure that neighborhoods with the least financial resources are not left behind.