



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 169

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2023

No. 128

## House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,  
July 25, 2023.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE COLLINS 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 1:50 p.m.

### ENDING GLOBAL HUNGER

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, on July 12, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the FAO, released its annual assessment on the state of global food security.

This year's report, titled "The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023," confirmed that nearly 30 percent of humanity, or roughly 2.4 billion people, lacked access to adequate

food in 2022. A greater number, 3.1 billion, were unable to afford a healthy diet.

The report paints a world where hundreds of millions of people face more precarious circumstances, deepened by the ravages of climate change, regional turmoil, and rising food costs. It describes how the recovery from the global coronavirus pandemic has been uneven and how the war in Ukraine has affected access to food, especially nutritious food.

Last year, UNICEF reported that 148 million children under the age of 5 were stunted, meaning that their inadequate diets impaired their growth. The FAO director general called this the "new normal," where climate change, conflict, and economic instability are pushing those on the margins over the edge.

Mr. Speaker, as someone who believes food is a fundamental human right for everyone on this planet, I believe the American people can and should be proud of the leadership the United States has shown in addressing the global crisis. We have provided billions in aid to those most affected by droughts, natural disasters, violence, and conflict. We have literally saved millions of lives.

Our farmers have provided food—wheat, soy, corn, rice, beans, lentils, peas, and cooking oil—to those most in need around the world. Our peanut farmers and specialty processors have provided therapeutic foods for severely malnourished children. Our NGOs are on the ground in many of the most desperate regions of the world. They make sure that food is provided to those most in need and work with local communities to build resilience to survive future economic and extreme weather shocks. Yet, we must all do more.

I recently met with the new executive director of the World Food Programme, Cindy McCain. She took over the reins in April and is determined to

strengthen efficiency and transparency at the WFP, to stretch every dollar and every food contribution to its maximum. She needs to make those donations stretch because she is facing an impossible task, too many crises, too many people in need, and not enough money.

The WFP has already been forced to cut food rations and the number of people it serves all over the world, including in places like Syria and Haiti. Unlike the U.S., too many donors have yet to respond and too many nations like the Gulf states and the Middle East have failed to contribute their fair share.

The world cannot afford to stand by when heat waves, heavy rains, and flooding are wrecking crops and casting more uncertainty over the availability and cost of food.

I know that many fear a global migration as millions are forced to abandon their homes and livelihoods. For me, a greater concern is how massive internal displacement within countries, from rural areas to cities, might undermine agriculture, food security, and economic and social stability inside those nations and regions. The internal movement, that instability, is not in the best interest of anyone, including the United States.

I know from experience that the U.S. and the global community can respond effectively to this crisis if we have the political will to do so. Even now, we see improvements happening in Latin America and Asia, so there is hope.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I am so dismayed by efforts inside this Congress to undermine or even eliminate the very programs that contribute to alleviating the suffering of hunger, famine, and food insecurity around the world, including among children.

Like our farmers, like our NGOs, and like the WFP and countless other nations and groups, we in Congress must do our part. We must make sure these

□ 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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programs are well funded so that the United States has the resources it needs to lead the world in ending global hunger.

#### CARING FOR OUR VETERANS

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, in President Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, he called on our Nation to care for those "who shall have borne the battle."

As we debate legislation this week to support our Nation's 16.5 million veterans, we must remember that charge that was given to us by President Lincoln to care for those who have given so much of themselves, of their time, in order to keep our Nation free and our Nation safe.

It is essential that we honor our commitment to those men and women and fully fund veterans benefits and VA programs. We owe an incredible debt of gratitude to those who have worn a uniform in service of the United States.

From inpatient hospitalizations to outpatient primary care and addiction services, our veterans hospitals provide the essential services that our veterans can rely on.

While working as a doctor, I was proud to treat veterans at the James E. Van Zandt Veterans' Administration Medical Center in Blair County, Pennsylvania. These men and women have served in conflicts including World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Having the opportunity to provide care to these veterans is one of the proudest moments of my medical career.

Moving forward, we must ensure that our veterans hospitals are equipped with the latest tools, technologies, and treatments to ensure that our veterans are receiving the highest and utmost care.

#### UNBEARABLE CONDITIONS FOR FARMERS

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this summer, farmers across Pennsylvania will grow produce, milk dairy cows, till their fields, and tend to their orchards that help to feed our entire Nation.

Recently, I spent time at Richards Farm in Fulton County, Pennsylvania, and met with the owner, Ryan Richards, to talk about the challenges that are faced by dairy producers who work to provide the nutritional products that Pennsylvanians and all Americans rely on.

Sadly, the failed policies of the Biden administration have made conditions unbearable for family farmers. It is time to stop the handouts to liberal special interests and reinvest in the policies and programs that enable our American farmers to succeed. It is time to rescind the \$1 billion allocated for Green New Deal programs in President Biden's so-called Inflation Reduction

Act. It is time to put an end to runaway spending and finally support our great American farmers.

#### DEADLINE FOR BACKDATED HONORING OUR PACT ACT BENEFITS

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, almost exactly a year ago, on August 10, 2022, President Joe Biden signed into law the Honoring our PACT Act, which has been correctly described as the largest healthcare and benefits expansion in the history of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

This was the result of a 5-year effort by veterans service organizations, from The American Legion to the Iraq and Afghan Veterans of America, and many others, to bring external pressure on Congress to pass a measure which will knock down barriers so that people who are suffering the ill effects of toxic exposure will actually have the care they earned by wearing the uniform of this country and serving in some of the most difficult parts of the world.

After that measure was signed and had to overcome a last-minute filibuster by Senate Republicans, which resulted in a 5-day sleep-in on the steps of the Capitol when they finally relented and allowed a bipartisan vote to move forward and the bill to the President's desk, there was a lot of concern as to whether or not the VA would actually move quickly to enact and implement these measures.

A year into the law, I am happy to report that over 300,000 PACT Act claims have been approved; over 100,000 new veterans have been enrolled in VA healthcare from the PACT Act planning population; and over 4 million toxic exposure screenings have been provided.

The toxic exposure screening is a quick 10- to 15-minute review to find people who may be eligible for PACT Act benefits. It is open to all veterans, if anyone is listening, not just veterans who are enrolled in the VA. All veterans are entitled to have a toxic exposure screening.

The questions asked are whether or not you were exposed to open burn pits in the Middle East, Gulf war-related exposures, Agent Orange during the Vietnam war, radiation, contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, or other exposures.

In my district, the Second Congressional District, over 1,000 veterans have filed PACT Act claims, and many have been successful in terms of getting their claims approved.

One gentleman who served during the Vietnam war was in Thailand and had Agent Orange illnesses, but because the law prior to the Honoring our PACT Act only covered people who were actually in-country in Vietnam, he was denied coverage. He was successful in getting a 100 percent disability approved.

Another gentleman who served in Guam, another new country that was added to the law because of the Honoring our PACT Act, was also able to get a 100 percent disability with a backpay award.

This is real. It is happening in real time. Ten days ago, we held a PACT Act claims clinic where staff from the local veterans department showed up to screen and also present claims. It was supposed to be only 3 hours. It went way over time. Two hundred veterans were screened, and 75 claims were submitted right there on the spot.

I will end, Mr. Speaker, by saying people should be aware of the fact that, on August 9, which is just days away, if someone files an intent for a claim or a claim, you are going to be entitled to a backpay award to the date that President Biden signed this measure into law. Any claims filed after August 9 will not be entitled to that backpay award.

Claims will still be open and can be approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs, but in terms of getting that backpay award from the date of enactment, it is critical that people file either an intent to file a claim or a claim itself to be eligible for those benefits.

If people have questions, they can go to VA.gov/PACT to answer any of those questions.

This was a great effort that was the result of a grassroots push by veterans all across our country. We must make sure that every single veteran gets the benefits that the law opened the door to.

#### FUNDING THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, this week, House Republicans will introduce H.R. 4366, the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024, to fully fund our Department of Veterans Affairs.

As a 24-year Army veteran and chairwoman of the Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health, I understand how crucial it is to have a fully funded VA Department. These appropriations bills will ensure that the VA has the resources needed to continue their vital operations.

Current armed services members will also see a more than \$17 billion investment that will go entirely toward improving the quality of life in their barracks and family housing.

These commonsense policies will help improve the VA and the military as a whole, and I urge all of my colleagues to support them.

#### LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, Iowans are experiencing one of the hottest summers in history. In weather