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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 26, 2023.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE EZELL 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.

EXPANDING RURAL BROADBAND ACCESS

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, more than 500,000 Pennsylvanians lack access to fast and reliable internet service at their homes, often adding a layer of difficulty to students who are trying to learn, to businesspeople who are trying to engage in commerce from their homes, or to patients who are trying to connect

with their physicians for telehealth visits.

As I travel throughout my district, I hear from farmers who struggle to implement precision farming due to a lack of GPS signal. When I visit schools, I hear from teachers about students who struggle to complete their homework simply because they lack access to high-speed internet in their homes.

These problems are persistent, and each contributes to the larger issue: that rural communities are suffering from a lack of access to broadband internet.

To ensure that our rural communities are not left behind, it is time for Congress to commit to building out rural broadband infrastructure as part of the agriculture and rural development appropriations.

Ensuring high-speed internet connections, whether from fiber-optic cables, wireless towers, or satellite, will ensure that students are able to learn from home, that employees are able to work from home, and that patients are able to heal from home.

We as a Congress must stand committed to rural broadband development.

PROTECTING OUR FARMLAND

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, right now, nearly 400,000 acres of American farmland are owned by Chinese investors.

The increasing reach of the Chinese Communist Party is incredibly alarming, as this land is being purchased near sensitive military installations and other areas critical to our national security.

It is imperative that the Biden administration gain a better understanding of these land purchases and develop programs to halt the purchase of agricultural land by those associated with China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran.

We must ensure that the USDA is able to improve tracking of foreign

land ownership and help to ensure that our communities are protected and safe from the actions of the Chinese Communist Party.

This is a national security issue, and it is time for Congress and the Biden administration to take swift and decisive action to protect our American farmland.

POLITICAL POLARIZATION IN AMERICA

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, today, I am reflecting on a moment that occurred just after I was sworn in to this office.

My former Republican colleague Mark Kirk gave me some of the best advice I had ever received. He said: In the end, anything that gets done here that is any good gets done in the middle, through compromise.

It begs the question: Are we currently in a position to work well together? Can we effectively govern?

The fact is, right now, the occasions when we work together are few and far between. No established democracy in recent history has been as deeply polarized as the United States is now.

A study from the National Bureau of Economic Research found that polarization in the U.S. has increased more dramatically since the late 1970s than in any other country they have examined.

We are not just uniquely polarized on the world stage. We are also uniquely polarized in the context of our own history.

Here is one example. In 1960, 4 percent of Republicans and 4 percent of Democrats said they would be displeased if their son or daughter married someone of the opposite party. In 2019, that number is 45 percent of Democrats said they would be unhappy

□ 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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if their child married a Republican, and 35 percent of Republicans said they would be unhappy if their child married a Democrat.

Well, the reasons are manifold. Americans today read less print than ever before. They can now pick and choose their own news, perspectives, and facts. Cable news channels have moved further to the extremes to keep their audiences engaged. When we all read news designed to affirm our own thoughts, we lose empathy and understanding of how other people come to their decisions.

We must each take responsibility for broadening our sources. You don't have to seek out the opinions of extremists to do this. Seeking out balanced news and news sources, supporting local news, and not rewarding so-called hot takes with money and clicks can all get us closer to a return to more fact-based news.

The rise of social media has also heightened tensions and encouraged extremism to flourish. In an environment where the loudest voices rise to the top, it is all too easy for politicians and elected officials to begin believing that they, too, must be the loudest, most extreme voice.

The words of our leaders have always carried significant weight, but in today's world of heightened tensions, they have even more ability to shape the perceptions of our citizens. As leaders, we have a responsibility to cool the temperature of public discourse. Instead, many conservative speakers have chosen to ramp up the temperature and exploit the tensions that exist.

Dangerous, polarizing rhetoric is not the answer. It is poison. Ultimately, we have a responsibility to lead through example in how we address one another.

At the time of our greatest division, the President stressed the importance of leading "with malice toward none, with charity for all."

As John Adams said: "I fear that in every [elected office,] members will obtain an influence by noise, not sense; by meanness, not greatness; by ignorance, not learning. . . . There must be a decency and respect."

There must be decency and respect on both sides.

Gerrymandering has also played a role in our national polarization. Let's look at it. Between our two parties, only about 60 of the 435 seats in this House are truly contested in general elections. A lack of true swing districts means that candidates are driven to the polls to win their primaries and that fewer are concerned about appealing to the center in a general election. As a result, items that were once non-partisan have become bitterly so, issues like funding the government, violence prevention, trade, and even raising the debt ceiling.

Now, finding common ground on core issues can be nearly impossible. Dis-mantling gerrymandered districts can

help put our country on the path of depolarization and produce a Congress and State legislatures that are more reflective of the majority of Americans' views.

Our country has faced deep, polarizing challenges before. To put our current moment in perspective, let's look back at the words of the President who guided our country through the most divided of times.

In a January 1838 speech in Springfield, Illinois, Lincoln said: "At what point, then, is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach us, it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher."

We must heed the call to action from these words. We must change how we address our country, how we are elected, how we speak to each other, and how we learn and get informed. We must all learn that empathy and compromise should be commended, not condemned. Our success or failure will determine if "any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure."

TREATING AND REDUCING OBESITY

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

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, as a physician, I believe that we must support and utilize available medical breakthroughs. That is why I am proud to co-lead the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act, legislation that would provide a direct line to chronic weight management medications for Medicare recipients struggling with obesity.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, obesity is prevalent in over 40 percent of adults aged 60 and older. The National Institutes of Health attributes obesity to an increased risk for health problems such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, liver disease, and certain cancers.

This bill would assist those struggling to lose weight and would help decrease comorbidities associated with obesity. I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

ACCELERATING ACCESS TO CARE FOR CHILDREN

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Accelerating Kids' Access to Care Act.

Iowa's First District is blessed to have the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital, and this bill would allow out-of-State children to access our top-tier clinical trials, specialists, and care teams.

Currently, children enrolled in Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program must have an out-of-State care team be screened by their home State's Medicaid program, even though the providers have already been screened and enrolled in their own State program. This causes delays and

can cause a child's condition to worsen, putting their lives at risk.

This legislation would streamline the process by allowing providers who treat children and are in good standing to enroll in multiple State Medicaid programs for a period of 5 years.

As a mother, physician, former director of the Iowa Department of Public Health, and a Congresswoman, I understand the duty to care for our children's health, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

REMEMBERING BURLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT K9 OFFICER PACO

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember Burlington Police Department's K9 Paco.

K9 Paco served with the Burlington Police Department for nearly 2 months and was in the process of being trained for assignment as our second K9 unit with K9 Handler Officer Gallegos.

K9s are specifically trained to help members of our law enforcement, and their keen sense of tracking and detection are invaluable for officers.

This is a sad day for the Burlington Police Department, and I will continue to keep the Burlington Police Department and Paco in my prayers.

HONORING THE LIFE OF GLORIA MOLINA

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

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Gloria Molina, a trailblazer for Latino politicians.

Gloria fiercely served and advocated for the communities she represented, for the city of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles, and the State of California. She passed away in her home, surrounded by her loving family, on May 14, at the age of 74.

Gloria was raised in an immigrant household with her nine siblings. Her father, Leonardo, was a construction worker born in Los Angeles but raised in Casas Grandes, Mexico. Her mother, Concepcion, was a homemaker from Mexico. Together, her parents immigrated to the U.S. in the 1940s. Gloria was the oldest of 10 children. As she did everything in life, she led by example and helped wherever and whenever she could.

Gloria's commitment to public service began during President Jimmy Carter's administration, where she served as a deputy for Presidential Personnel and soon after that with the San Francisco Department of Health and Human Services.

Gloria's activism was sparked by the Chicano movement, as she was a woman of firsts. Gloria was first elected to office in 1982, when she became the first Latina elected to the California State Assembly. Some people made the mistake of underestimating Gloria's commitment to her community and her tenacity. She beat the establishment candidate.