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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. VAN ORDEN).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,  
December 11, 2023.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DERRICK VAN ORDEN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

MIKE JOHNSON,  
*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.

### TAKING STEPS TO STOP FENTANYL POISONING DEATHS

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, in 2022, we saw the highest number of opioid overdose deaths in our Nation's history. These deaths are the result of soft-on-crime policies from the Biden administration that have failed to enforce strict penalties on the traffickers who continue to deal in fentanyl-laced drugs.

Mr. Speaker, 1 year ago, I received an email from Ray Cullen, a resident of Franklin County, Pennsylvania. Ray, along with his wife, Deb, had raised their children in Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District. Ray told me a story about his son, Zach, who had been out with his friends. Zach was sold a combination of cocaine laced with fentanyl, a deadly poison that took Zach's life.

Zach was a victim of fentanyl poisoning that night. He didn't know that the drugs that he and his friends had purchased were laced with this deadly synthetic opioid.

Because of how lethal fentanyl is in small quantities, it has become the leading cause of death of Americans between the ages of 18 and 49 years.

Earlier this year, I was honored to be joined by Deb and Ray when the House passed the HALT Fentanyl Act. This legislation would permanently classify these drugs as schedule I narcotics and impose strict penalties for those who are caught trafficking these deadly poisons.

For far too long, we have seen fentanyl components manufactured in China and shipped to Mexico, where they are pressed into counterfeit pills and trafficked across our porous southern border.

Addressing these supply chains at every level must become a top priority for the Biden administration. Appealing the Chinese Communist Party with halfhearted requests to "cut back" on the production of fentanyl is doing nothing to protect families in Pennsylvania. These half measures are doing nothing to support our border towns that continue to deal with the constant threat of cartel operations moving north into the United States while Border Patrol agents are overwhelmed with illegal immigrants.

We cannot afford to wait any longer to address the opioid crisis. It is time for the Senate to pass the HALT

Fentanyl Act and finally take positive, concrete steps to stop the fentanyl poisoning deaths that have continued to occur throughout the United States.

During this holiday season, we remember families like the Cullens who have borne the brunt of these policy failures. We pray for them, and we hold them in our hearts as they prepare for another Christmas without a loved member of their family.

### THERE IS STILL TIME TO ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. NICKEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, Harry Truman famously labeled the 80th United States Congress the "do-nothing Congress."

Back then, Republicans controlled the House and Senate for the first time in a while, while Truman was in the White House.

Congress opposed all of Truman's Fair Deal bills but still saw some work on both the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. They also passed the Taft-Hartley Act over Truman's veto but generally did very little for the American people.

After that do-nothing Congress, Democrats were able to take back the House, take back the Senate, and reelect President Truman. I, of course, think of the famous photo of Truman standing with the newspaper that says: "Dewey Defeats Truman."

It turns out the American people like having a Congress working to solve problems. This is a job about results, and that Congress did very little.

That is a big reason why voters chose to send the Republican majority in the House and Senate packing back then. Now, we are in the 118th Congress, and we are on track to be one of the least productive Congresses in our Nation's history.

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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Mr. Speaker, 22 bills have been signed into law. At about this point in the last Congress, 81 bills had been signed into law. At this point in the 116th Congress, the Congress just before that, 107 bills had been signed into law.

Mr. Speaker, what have we accomplished for the American people? I will tell you what: Virtually nothing.

We have just 4 legislative days left this year, and we have very little to show for it. We have passed two CRs and raised the debt ceiling, but that is really about it.

To this date, we have been defined by the chaos and confusion in the Republican Congress and the 19 votes for the Speaker of the House so far this year. We are truly the do-nothing Congress.

We haven't passed funding for Israel or Ukraine. We haven't passed a farm bill or reauthorized the FAA. Border security and immigration reform are top-of-mind issues that need to be resolved. Yet, we will be facing another government shutdown when we come back in January.

Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking, and the American people are counting on us to do what we were sent here to do—to vote, to get things done. The world is at a critical juncture, and our inaction speaks volumes.

In Ukraine, we have heard from our diplomatic and defense leaders about the precarious situation in Ukraine and in Israel. Right now, we risk Ukraine literally running out of bullets. If we do nothing by the end of the year, Vladimir Putin will win.

The silence in this Chamber is easily mistaken around the world as support for Moscow, and we cannot let that happen.

The majority of the Republican Conference, I believe, supports standing with Ukraine, but the vocal minority in the Republican Conference has been able to block all action so far this year. It is the tail wagging the dog, and it is disgraceful.

Let's talk about the cost. If we gift wrap Ukraine for Vladimir Putin this holiday season, we will spend 100 times more money down the road containing an aggressive Russia all over the world.

This is a national security issue for the American people. Support for Ukraine is in our national interest.

Let's talk about Israel. Like Russia, Hamas poses an existential threat to democracy. It is our duty to firmly stand with our democratic allies.

The majority of the Members of this Chamber support a clean security and humanitarian aid package to Israel, yet nothing has happened. It is shameful that our new Speaker has chosen to play partisan political games with support for Israel.

Listen, Mr. Speaker. Something has got to give in this Congress. Democrats have a narrow majority in the Senate; Republicans have a very narrow—soon to be even more narrow—majority in the House; and Democrats have the White House. We have to work together if we are going to get anything done.

Until the Republican Conference begins to understand that, we will continue to accomplish nothing for the American people.

I believe we can work together. I believe we can pass a bill to support Israel and Ukraine, strengthen our southern border, and pass immigration reform, but only if we do it together.

That is the challenge we have, Mr. Speaker. There is still time to act. There is still time to vote. There is still time to come back next week to pass support for Israel and Ukraine. We need to do it. We need to get things done. We do not want to be defined as the do-nothing Congress.

I am here to get to work, and I encourage all of my colleagues to join me in reaching across the aisle and working together to get these things done.

#### HONORING CORDELL WALKER

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

Mr. KUSTOFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Cordell Walker for his work caring for veterans in the Memphis area.

I first met Cordell probably more than 20 years ago through current Memphis Mayor Jim Strickland. Mr. Walker is retiring as executive director of Alpha Omega Veterans Services later this month after several decades of service to our community and to our veterans.

Cordell Walker said that after seeing his friends return home from Vietnam a shell of who they were, he decided that he wanted to dedicate his life to serving our Nation's veterans, and he has done exactly that.

This past Veterans Day, just a month or so ago, Cordell Walker was honored in a ceremony to open the new Cordell Walker Veterans Center in Memphis.

I believe—I think we probably all believe—that answering the call to service in the United States military is about the most admirable thing that a person can do.

Cordell Walker recognized that our veterans sacrificed so much for all of our freedom and that they deserve the best care after they retire from our military.

I thank Cordell Walker for his service caring for veterans in the Memphis area and throughout west Tennessee.

I am really proud to know Cordell, and I congratulate Cordell Walker on a job well done. Roberta and I wish him the best in his future endeavors.

#### HONORING JUSTIN HUNTER

Mr. KUSTOFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a good friend, Justin Hunter, who left us way too soon on September 16 of this year, 2023.

Originally from the bootheel of Missouri, just north of my district in west Tennessee, Justin Hunter had a big impact in west Tennessee. He served our community many years ago by working for former Congressman Ed Bryant.

It was in west Tennessee that Justin met his wife, Caroline. Together, they

attended law school at the University of Memphis.

Later, while working for Encompass Health, Justin put his experience to work to help improve access to rehabilitation hospital care.

Justin Hunter was a really strong and passionate advocate for rehabilitation hospitals. Justin used his understanding of the laws governing Medicare programs to help improve the quality of healthcare available to Americans across our Nation.

I know I just used the word "passion," but Justin was very passionate about everything he did and believed in. If he was in, he was in 100 percent on everything.

Justin Hunter will be remembered not only for his dedication to healthcare and to the law but also as an avid hunter and barbecue master and for his tremendous devotion to his family.

For both Roberta and me, our thoughts are with Justin's wife, Caroline, and with their two daughters, Helena and Vivian.

Justin is truly and sorely missed by so many, and I will always have good and fond memories of our friendship together.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 14 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. VALADAO) at 2 p.m.

#### PRAYER

Rear Admiral Gregory Todd, Chief of Chaplains, United States Navy, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

Eternal Father, ruler of wind and wave, You establish the heavens and order all of creation.

Behold Your humble people, seeking only to serve and not to be served. Grant all who labor in this House a heart of humble service.

Lord, in Your wisdom, You led the predecessor to this Congress, the Continental Congress of 1775, out of concern for the souls of sailors serving in the Continental Navy, to mandate that divine services be held on all Navy ships, thus giving rise 248 years ago to the Navy Chaplain Corps.

Inspired by the insight of our forebears, we seek Your divine hand to raise up more religious ministry professionals to serve as United States Navy chaplains.

In our day, Lord, grant us an increase of Navy chaplains to care for the souls