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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 11, 2024.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CLIFF BENTZ 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, 2024, 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.

ILLICIT FENTANYL CROSSING OUR BORDER

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, in 2022, more than 100,000 Americans lost their lives due to an overdose.

Sadly, nearly 70 percent of those deaths involved some form of illicit fentanyl. These drugs, which are created in China and then manufactured, compounded in Mexico and then traf-

ficked across our open southern border, took the lives of enough Americans to fill Beaver Stadium at Penn State University.

These deaths are the result of a southern border that has been thrown open to cartels and their operations by a President who refuses to enforce our laws. By inviting mass illegal immigration, President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas has stretched our border resources too thin and allowed the cartels to move their deadly drugs with impunity.

It is time to pass a border bill that will fully fund the resources that our Border Patrol agents so desperately need. It is time to return to the remain in Mexico policy, and it is time to put a stop to the fentanyl poisonings that have taken far too many American lives.

RUNAWAY SPENDING

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last week during the State of the Union Address, the American people saw a campaign speech, not a plan to fix the economy that President Biden's failed policies has left in shambles.

In the first 2 years of his disastrous administration, President Biden passed reckless spending bills that sent inflation soaring by 17 percent.

Today, a mother visiting the grocery store will find that the price of juice is up 30 percent, the cost of beef is up 10 percent, vegetables are up 5 percent, and the price of bread is up 3 percent.

Ultimately, these costs add up. Over the course of a year, the average American family is paying an additional \$11,000 just to afford the basics that they need. Pennsylvanians cannot afford the government red tape in spending that has caused this runaway inflation. Pennsylvanians and all Americans certainly cannot afford the budget that President Biden is proposing, which would only amount to yet another year of runaway spending.

SURGING VIOLENT CRIME

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, as crimes continue to surge in cities across the U.S., it has become clear that calls to defund the police and attempts to interfere with law enforcement have put our communities and our families in danger. Across 32 major cities, car thefts have increased by 33 percent, and here in Washington, D.C., carjackings are up nearly 100 percent.

Sadly, President Biden has ignored this crime wave and has refused to address the victims who now worry about living in their own homes.

Surging violent crimes in our cities makes all Americans more vulnerable, and it is time for radical Members of this body to finally show their support of police officers.

It is time for us to send a clear message that we will always stand with the men and women in blue.

IRS'S NEW AUDITING EFFORT

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today on March 11, 35 days away from April 15, the tax filing deadline for 2024.

This is certainly not a joyful or happy event, but it is important to acknowledge that the IRS recently reported that 85 percent of Americans pay their taxes on time.

For most others, extensions are requested due to paperwork delays, illness, or other exigencies, which is proof that the vast majority of Americans understand their civic and legal duty to file a return.

Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, the IRS announced an astonishing new initiative to chase down 125,000 high-income individuals who—get this—have failed to even file a tax return since 2017.

□ 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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That is right, 125,000 cases have been opened on individuals with income over \$400,000 per year that filed no returns in the last 6 years—25,000 of those cases involved individuals with incomes of over \$1 million per year.

It is hard to believe that anyone with that level of income would have the chutzpah to refuse to file a return and think they would get away with it. In fact, the IRS has reported that in all these cases, they received third-party information, such as W-2 forms from employers and 1099 forms from financial institutions that clearly indicate these people received income in these ranges but never filed their own return, and, of course, never paid the legally required tax.

How is it possible that such flagrant, arrogant behavior went unnoticed, you might ask? It is because Congress, most notably Republican majorities in Congress, for decades have willfully starved the IRS of staff and technology to track such freeloaders.

Here is the record: From 1994 to 2021, the workforce of the IRS has been cut by Republicans in Washington by one-third. At the same time, America's population has grown by one-third.

As a result of defunding the IRS, the IRS has been able to file its nonfiler program only sporadically since 2016. Because of this, tax cheats have gotten bolder and more brazen.

The good news, as the IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel reported 2 weeks ago, because of the Inflation Reduction Act which passed in the last Democratic-controlled Congress without a single Republican vote, the IRS now has more staff and technology to pursue such blatant tax cheats.

Werfel estimates that this nonfiler initiative alone is focused on financial activity of more than \$100 billion.

Since this effort started 2 weeks ago, it is unclear exactly how much tax and penalty will be recovered, but given that the failure to file penalties of 5 percent per month on tax owed, conservative estimates are hundreds of millions of dollars will be recovered for past years and even more for future compliance.

I want to be clear. This effort is not auditing the content of taxpayer returns. These are cases of high-income earners who had the gall to not even file a return.

Mr. Speaker, this behavior is an insult to hardworking fellow Americans who obey the law and fulfill their civic duty, and at the end of the day bear the financial costs of this despicable misconduct.

Speaking of the middle class, Werfel made it clear that this new auditing effort on nonfilers is aimed at high-income tax cheats. That is in accordance with a Treasury directive by Secretary Janet Yellen that there would be no new enhanced IRS auditing on middle-class Americans. That makes sense.

The National Bureau of Economic Research estimates that audits aimed at the top 10 percent of Americans gen-

erate \$12 of revenue for every \$1 spent. That proportion declines dramatically with lower income filers.

It is a good thing that the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act is now at least partially restoring IRS's capacity to ensure that all of the rich actually file their returns and pay their fair share of taxes. It is a good thing that Democrats have blocked Republicans' efforts to once again cripple IRS's funding over the last year and a half.

Independent analysts such as the Congressional Budget Office have confirmed that this effort to track down scofflaws will actually cut the deficit. Indeed, the IRS announced that the Inflation Reduction Act effort will bring in 561 billion new dollars from 2024 to 2034.

For the 85 percent of Americans who work hard and play by the rules—teachers, cops, nurses, factory workers, office workers, retirees, military servicemembers, to name just a few—who pay their taxes with each paycheck, making sure that the wealthy file their returns and pay, too, is fundamental to a fair and just society.

The Inflation Reduction Act is doing exactly that.

Mr. Speaker, so as this April 15 approaches, the message is now clear for the well-to-do delinquents: The free ride is over. You have to obey the law and file your return just like everyone else. This is not too much to ask. No more freeloaders.

BROKEN IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

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

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, since President Biden took office there have been 8.7 illegal crossings nationwide. There have been over 7.2 million illegal crossings of our southern border.

The total number of illegal immigrants who have entered through our southern border is greater than the population of 36 States, including Iowa.

Last week, the Republican-led House took a stand and passed the Laken Riley Act, legislation introduced by Representative MIKE COLLINS.

This is in addition to having passed H.R. 2, a border security and immigration bill.

This legislation honors the life and memory of Laken Riley and other victims of the Biden administration's open-border policies and endorses immigration laws.

The legislation also requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged with theft in the United States.

I voted for the Laken Riley Act to honor Laken Riley and protect our communities. I also voted in honor of the countless victims of the border crisis, the angel families, like Mollie Tibbetts, a 20-year-old University of Iowa

student who was killed by an illegal immigrant from Mexico, who lived in the United States for several years before murdering Mollie. Like Laken Riley, Mollie was out for a jog.

These heartbreaking stories of both Laken and Mollie are a constant reminder that our immigration system is broken and that the Biden border crisis is worsening by the minute.

Remember, it was President Obama's Secretary of Homeland Security, Jeh Johnson, who said more than a thousand immigrants crossing the border is a crisis.

In Iowa, according to the last CDC "Drug Overdose Mortality by State" report, in 2021 we had a record high of 475 overdose deaths. Across the Nation, overdose deaths cost the U.S. \$1 trillion per year. In San Francisco, during COVID, there were more deaths from overdose in the 18- to 45-year-old age group than deaths from COVID.

Yet, during the President's State of the Union Address last week, he delivered a lackluster campaign speech masked as a State of the Union Address that was divisive, touted empty policies, and swept the chaos at our southern border under the rug, all while putting blame on somebody else instead of where it resides, and that is with President Biden and his administration.

I am not surprised that the President failed to mention the decline of our Nation during his State of the Union Address, but I am disappointed. I am disappointed at the President's prized appearances—the appearance of a strong Nation, the appearance of a strong economy—over the harsh realities that many Americans face.

We cannot continue to ignore this aggressive overreach of the Biden administration and the mounting border crisis due to his overturning of policies and not enforcing immigration laws.

I will not ignore the mounting crisis, and I urge my colleagues to join me and work to keep our communities safe from the Biden border crisis and the fentanyl and illegal drugs that are crossing our border.

CONGRATULATING UNIVERSITY OF IOWA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the University of Iowa's women's basketball team.

Yesterday, the incredible team won their third consecutive Big Ten Tournament title.

Led by Coach Bluder, the Hawkeyes beat Nebraska in overtime. The team did an outstanding job.

Hannah Stuelke had 9 rebounds, Sydney Affolter registered her third straight 10-point performance and second career double-double with 11 points and a team-best 11 rebounds. Gabby Marshall and Kate Martin were instrumental in getting us to overtime, and Caitlin Clark was named the Big Ten Tournament MVP for the third consecutive tournament.

Caitlin is only the second player since 1995 to earn MVP honors in three consecutive State tournaments.