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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. MOLINARO).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

March 20, 2024.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MARCUS J. MOLINARO 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 11:50 a.m.

LOOKING BEYOND OIL AND GAS

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

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, the majority is once again choosing to engage in a partisan, unproductive, and unserious messaging exercise that they have dubbed energy week.

In 2023, the United States produced more oil and gas than any other country ever and exported unprecedented amounts of liquefied natural gas to our allies across the world.

Simultaneously, 2023 was a record year for combined utility-scale solar,

wind, and energy storage installations across the country. These clean energy projects can be found in nearly all congressional districts in all 50 States.

My friends on the other side of the aisle claim to be champions of an all-of-the-above energy strategy, but they are completely silent about these massive accomplishments that are not only driving significant investments to areas across the country but are producing cheap, clean, American energy.

This is probably because so many of these wins were made possible by the historic bills House Democrats passed last Congress, like the Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

I was proud to include in those bills several of my priorities, including combating methane emissions and encouraging the development of transmission infrastructure by ensuring the Federal Government has the tools it needs to step in and stop excessive permitting delays.

However, the laws we passed last Congress will not be enough. We are facing extraordinary growth in energy demand from electric vehicles, AI, data centers, and the reshoring of domestic manufacturing, again thanks to the efforts and leadership of President Biden and his administration.

However, we are lagging far behind China, which is dwarfing us in manufacturing, construction of clean energy resources, and the extraction and refining of critical minerals like nickel and cobalt.

We need an unprecedented level of clean energy development and deployment to meet our climate goals and avoid catastrophe.

If the majority is interested in talking about a long-term energy strategy to maintain affordability and reliability, we need to finally talk about transmission and the grid.

We also need to work on speed. We will still fail if we let all the money we

have set aside sit in the bank by making good energy projects wait years for permits to come through and further delays if bad actors and nervous neighbors take them to court again and again.

It is extremely frustrating that during energy week, we are actually taking the time to vote on whether strong regulations on methane emissions are even necessary or whether oil and gas producers should cover the cost of unplugged or abandoned wells.

Are you kidding me? Of course we need to regulate methane, and of course oil and gas companies should pay to clean up for the messes that they made.

How can Republicans say they support clean American energy while simultaneously fighting against commonsense regulations on methane and not even engaging on how to expand and upgrade the grid?

The bills we are considering this week take us farther away from the solutions to the problems we are facing, and I am proud to oppose every single one of them.

Our country prides itself on accomplishing big things together, whether it is winning world wars, constructing an interstate highway system, or discovering the next big medical breakthrough.

We should be voting on my FASTER Act, so transmission lines aren't stuck jumping between local, State, and Federal agencies for the permits they need.

We need to thoughtfully streamline the judicial review process for all energy projects so that developers, agencies, and petitioners aren't in limbo for years. We need certainty, not an unreliable and inefficient review process. Everything I have said about that today could and should be bipartisan.

Mr. Speaker, I will say to my Republican colleagues that we should look beyond just oil and gas and truly invest in an all-of-the-above energy

□ 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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strategy that looks to the future instead of clinging onto the past.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF BILL CURRENT

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of Gaston County's leading citizens on the occasion of his passing. He is also the individual who succeeded me in the State House when I was elected to Congress in 2004. I am here to rise in honor of the life and legacy of the honorable Bill Current.

In so many ways, his service in the State House was counterintuitive. Dr. Current was already a leading Republican stalwart in Gaston County dating back to the 1960s. He had served two terms as the county GOP chairman and was instrumental in helping the Republican Party achieve dominance in our part of the State.

In 1976, when Ronald Reagan was running for President, he drove him around Gaston County and helped him win that great primary victory that year in North Carolina.

However, politics was only a fraction of Bill Current's prolific and incredible life. After his graduation from dental school at the University of North Carolina, Bill married the love of his life, Liz, and joined the Navy Dental Corps.

After his service, Bill and Liz returned to Gaston County and began a 40-year career in dentistry. In fact, dentistry became the family business. He was joined by his brother, A.C.; nephew Darrell; and his son Will, who still carries on that wonderful tradition today.

Dr. Current was a leader in the dental community in the State of North Carolina, serving on more boards and task forces than I can mention. He was also a great civic leader as well: American Red Cross, American Heart Association, First Presbyterian Church, and 27 years of perfect attendance at Rotary Club. I could go on and on. He did it all.

It would be fair to assume that in his seventies he would be ready to slow down and enjoy his retirement, but that wasn't Bill Current. That is instead when he ran for office and served four terms in the State House where he led on healthcare issues.

To the Current family, to Bill and Liz's children and grandchildren and extended family, I extend my condolences and gratitude for having known such a remarkable man.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF LEROY LAIL

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life and legacy of Leroy Lail.

Mr. Speaker, Catawba County and all of North Carolina recently lost a legend with the passing of Leroy Lail, a legend in the business community and in the civic community of Catawba County in North Carolina. I was honored to count Leroy as a mentor during my service in Congress.

Leroy was a native of Catawba County, a Navy officer, and a graduate of his beloved University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

It was during his time in the business world that he made his greatest impact. In the 1960s, Leroy and his wife, Lynn, opened the Hickory Furniture Mart, building an economic engine for the region. This, in turn, led to his involvement in the tourism and hospitality sectors, growing the family business substantially. Leroy later was a driving force behind the creation of the Hickory Metro Convention Center.

Education was also a cause near and dear to Leroy's heart. He spent 13 years on the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina system. In fact, it was through Leroy's persistence that Appalachian State University established a campus in Hickory just last year.

To his beloved wife, Lynn, and the entire Lail family, I extend my condolences and gratitude for all of Leroy's contributions.

WE ARE SLEEPING WHILE UKRAINE IS BURNING

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, time is wasting. Time is running out. We are sleeping while Ukraine is burning, the victim of an international criminal.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today, as I have too many times before, just 72 hours before Members return to their districts for weeks despite failing to secure aid for our allies in Ukraine and Israel. The men and women of Ukraine on the front lines will not sleep for those 2 weeks.

This past weekend, Vladimir Putin reminded the world that he isn't going anywhere. He celebrated "victory" in Russia's Presidential election, imposing his power until at least 2030.

Mr. Speaker, Putin knew that there was only one possible outcome of that election. He would like the world to think that Russian victory in Ukraine is inevitable as well.

Every day, however, Mr. Speaker, the brave men and women of Ukraine prove him wrong. Our NATO allies, who continue to supply Ukraine with vital military assistance, prove him wrong.

Now, this House, this week, in the next 72 hours, needs to stand up and give Ukraine the aid they desperately need. We must reject aggression and terror.

For 447 days, we have signaled reluctance over resolve, doubt over determination, and division over decisiveness. We have emboldened freedom's enemies while leaving its protectors defenseless. How sad for America to be in that position. How sad for the leadership of this House to leave us in that position.

We have failed to aid Ukraine in 447 days and Israel in 165.

Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks back in our districts may feel short for us, but that

will be a very long time for our Ukrainian friends. They already must contend with the consequences of our inaction.

Thus far, Ukrainian air defenses have tried to shoot down four of every five Russian missiles fired at their cities. Hear that: four out of every five. Now, because of our negligence, because of our reluctance and ammunition shortages, they will soon be able to target only one in every five.

In Bakhmut, a Ukrainian artillery squad explained they are only shooting an average of 15 shells a week. My colleagues, they are shooting 15 shells a week to confront the Russian bear. Before American aid dried up, they were shooting 400 shells per week.

One Ukrainian soldier, shivering in his foxhole on the northern front line, recently said that because of these shortages: We are losing so many people. There are so many bodies we can't even bring them back.

How demoralizing is the inaction of this Congress. How irresponsible is the lack of action of this Congress to watch the Russian invader receive aid from North Korea, Iran, China, and the rest of the axis of evil while we fail to act. Have we lost our courage, our commitment to freedom?

Putin is a Russian invader who massacres civilians in Bucha, a dictator whose greatest political opponent is found dead in a Russian gulag, and a tyrant who forces occupied Ukrainians to vote at gunpoint in an election with but one choice: Vladimir Putin.

Putin wants this House to think his victory is inevitable because he knows that his victory is impossible if America stands with Ukraine.

□ 1015

Let us stand with Ukraine, not in 2 weeks but today. Let us stand with Israel in its effort to defeat Hamas and recover the 134 remaining hostages in Gaza.

Speaker Johnson says he is looking for a path forward to work with the Democrats on Ukraine and Israel.

Take it today. We will work with you in that path.

Mr. Speaker, the path has been clear for quite some time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, we should not shut people up who are trying to defend freedom across this world.

Let us stop sleeping in this Congress.

Over 300 Members of this body have consistently voted to aid Ukraine. Even more wish to aid Israel.

Put the national security bill that received 70 votes in the Senate on the floor.

Give us a vote.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SAM LOIZZO

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

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of an amazing teacher, Sam Loizzo.