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Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 30, 2024, at 3 p.m.

House of Representatives

MONDAY, APRIL 29, 2024

The House met at noon 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,
April 29, 2024.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE EZELL 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.

EPA DELIVERED A DEVASTATING BLOW TO AMERICAN ENERGY GENERATORS

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last week, the EPA delivered a devastating blow to American energy generators with the decision to impose severe regulations that are designed to close the power plants that Pennsylvania communities rely on each and every day.

This heavy-handed approach to regulation is the clearest sign yet that President Biden is more interested in catering to the far left than supporting American families.

Instead of investing in the resources that are underneath the feet of my constituents in Pennsylvania, President Biden has chosen to placate his far-left base by attempting to close the coal-powered plants that generate nearly 20 percent of our electricity.

It is time to send a clear message that this administration cannot gamble away our energy stability by relying on inconsistent Green New Deal technologies like windmills and solar panels.

Risking blackouts during the heat of summer, when the loss of power can ultimately be deadly, is too high a price to pay in order to score political points. The EPA must immediately reverse its course of action and allow American energy producers to continue to lead the way on reliable production of energy.

SECURE OUR BORDER AND PUT AN END TO THE OPIOID CRISIS

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, California announced that it had seized 1.1 million fentanyl pills as well as 523 pounds of methamphetamine in just 7 days.

The active components of fentanyl are shipped from China with the consent of the Chinese Communist Party, manufactured by cartels in Mexico, and then shipped into the United States. This process has fueled the opioid crisis that continues to make each and every State a border State.

We have seen the devastating consequences that these drugs have on our area. Right now, more than 40 percent of Americans know someone who has been killed by an overdose. Furthermore, I feel that each and every Member of Congress knows multiple individuals who have died from fentanyl poisoning.

Sadly, these deaths are preventable, and it is time for President Biden to take the necessary steps to secure our southern border. A border crisis that allows millions of fentanyl pills to enter our Nation endangers the lives of each and every American.

By ending the remain in Mexico policy and by reinstating catch and release, President Biden has sent a clear message to the Mexican cartels that they can continue to break American laws. It is time to secure our border. It is time to put an end to this crisis.

CONDEMNING ANTI-JEWISH DEMONSTRATORS ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

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

☐ 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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Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn the anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish, pro-Hamas demonstrators who, amidst Passover, are wreaking havoc on campuses around the country and threatening violence against local Jewish communities and students.

Such violence is unacceptable anywhere, but to witness this at our universities is truly painful. Places of education are supposed to be of discourse and of learning and rising above, and all those who choose to attend deserve peace and respect.

My heart goes out to all of the Jewish students who no longer feel safe at American universities. They deserve better than this.

Mr. Speaker, the purveyors of anti-Semitism must be stopped. I ask my colleagues to join me in condemning these anti-Semitic protesters and continue the push to combat anti-Semitism and stand with our Jewish friends and neighbors.

RECOGNIZING ELIVIA PAPCUN'S EQUESTRIAN ABILITIES

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend Elivia Papcun, an Iowa native, who overcame a severe injury to become a top-ranked NCAA equestrian recruit.

Just a short while ago, Elivia had an accident that shook her to her core. As she rode her beloved horse, a moment of misfortune turned into a nightmare as her horse stumbled, leaving Elivia critically injured. The severity of her injuries left her unable to move, her very future hanging in the balance.

However, Elivia refused to give up. With each passing day, she fought tirelessly to reclaim her strength and through grueling rehabilitation and unwavering determination, she defied the odds and emerged stronger than ever before.

Elivia has recently reentered and committed to Texas Christian University. This commitment is akin to being recruited to play football at Alabama or Georgia in the equestrian world. It underscores not only Elivia's remarkable talent and dedication, but also the recognition of her potential by one of the top programs in the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, let us commend Elivia Papcun for her remarkable journey and wish her continued success as she embarks on this exciting new chapter.

RECOGNIZING 911 OPERATORS AMY KEMNER AND KRIS DECKER

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Warren County 911 dispatchers Amy Kemner and Kris Decker for their 30 years of service to their community.

Despite the long shifts, difficult calls, and extended time away from family, Amy and Kris have remained dedicated to their work of ensuring the safety of Warren County residents.

While the average tenure of a dispatcher is only 7 years, Amy and Kris have taken pride in serving Warren County. Their long tenures, while an anomaly in their field, are a reminder

of the worthwhile pursuit of community service.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating Amy and Kris for their ever-present service to their community and thank them for being the front line of defense when emergency calls.

HONORING FIRE CHIEF GREG CHIA ON HIS RETIREMENT

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished career of Indianola Fire Chief Greg Chia, who recently announced his retirement, which is set to take effect on December 31, 2024.

Chief Chia originally began his career in 1985 as a firefighter in Des Moines, and throughout his tenure worked up the ranks to reach chief officer.

In May 2015, Chief Chia was appointed to become the first fire chief for Indianola and has since led the response to multiple crises with poise and gravitas.

Under his leadership, the Indianola Fire Department has served as an illustrative example of top-notch community safety, and his absence will be felt by many.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues today to join me in celebrating Chief Chia's incredible career and his commitment to safety and in wishing him the best on a well-deserved retirement.

IOWA CITY FARMERS MARKET

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the return of the Iowa City Farmers Market for its 52nd year on May 4, and to congratulate Bill Lane on being appointed director of the Iowa City Farmers Market.

In recent years, the Iowa City Farmers Market has become a cultural staple in town with the market welcoming tens of thousands of residents yearly. The market puts Iowa's rich agricultural history on display for everyone with countless local vendors, serving a wide variety of Iowa's best agricultural products.

With live music and activities for everyone to enjoy as well, the Iowa City Farmers Market is sure to enjoy another amazing year as a preeminent venue for residents to shop, dine, and enjoy time with friends and family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating this phenomenal Iowa City staple and, once again, congratulate director Bill Lane on what is sure to be another great year for the Iowa City Farmers Market.

AMERICA'S SOUTHERN BORDER IS NOT A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Speaker, America's southern border is not a social construct.

On a trip to the U.S.-Mexico border this past weekend, an academic from a

prestigious institution shocked our bipartisan group by stating that he teaches students the border is a social construct to facilitate the free flow of people and ideas.

What the heck, Mr. Speaker?

It is appalling, but it sheds light on the ideology guiding President Biden's border policy decisions. These decisions include: halting border wall construction, implementing a mass parole system, and failing to promptly expel noncitizens who illegally cross in between ports of entry.

This mindset ignores the fundamental importance of border security and the rule of law. By dismissing the border as a mere social construct, it undermines the legitimate efforts to protect our Nation's sovereignty and ensure the safety of our citizens.

We must reject such dangerous rhetoric and work toward policies that prioritize border security.

ACCESSIBLE FEDERAL CONTRACTING FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Speaker, the hurdles facing America's small businesses in obtaining Federal contracts are unjustifiably high.

These businesses, the lifeblood of our economy, shouldn't require a legal team or extensive compliance infrastructure just to compete for Federal contracts. That is why I have introduced H.R. 7987, the Plain Language in Contracting Act, aimed at simplifying the process for small businesses to secure government contracts.

I extend my gratitude to my colleague, Representative THANEDAR of Michigan, for co-leading this crucial legislation across party lines.

With over 33 million small businesses in America, only a small fraction secure Federal prime contracts. Many entrepreneurs cite the complexity of government procurement processes as a major deterrent. The language used in contract solicitations is often ambiguous and unnecessarily complex, deterring small businesses from even attempting to bid.

A study by the Naval Postgraduate School revealed that less than 3 percent of DOD contract solicitations are written in plain English. This complexity drives small businesses away from Federal contracting, eroding competition, and harming our economy.

My bill mandates Federal agencies to use clear language in contract solicitations, fostering greater accessibility to contracts for small businesses.

I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation, recognizing the pivotal role small businesses play in our Nation's economy.

Let's pave the way for a more accessible Federal contracting process for all businesses. Doing so benefits small businesses, the Federal Government, and its taxpayers.