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No. 18

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

January 31, 2024.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DAVID G. VALADAO 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.

GROUNDHOG DAY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today ahead of a very special day back in my district.

This Friday, February 2, is Groundhog Day.

This annual event takes place in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, located in southern Jefferson County. For years, crowds have flocked to Gobbler's Knob on the evening of February 1 to

see our weather predictor extraordinaire and hear his weather prediction firsthand.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize and thank one of the most productive, job-producing constituents in my district, Punxsutawney Phil. His hard work every year predicting the end of winter brings so much joy to Pennsylvania 15th and across the Nation.

For more than 120 years, our furry friend has been predicting our winter weather. This tradition stems from Pennsylvania's strong German heritage. Legend has it if Phil sees his shadow, it is an omen of 6 more weeks of winter. If not, we know spring is just around the corner.

Crowds begin to gather the night before and wake Phil up by chanting his name in the early hours of the morning on February 2. As our seer of seers emerges from his burrow, the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club Inner Circle president translates Phil's prediction and relays the message to the crowd.

Despite naysayers trying to replace him with an animatronic groundhog or a gold coin, Phil continues to bring a smile to so many faces. I believe in creating jobs, not eliminating them, and Punxsutawney Phil is no exception. I will always stand up for the hard-working men, women, and rodents in the 15th District of Pennsylvania.

In all seriousness, Groundhog Day brings together people of all backgrounds and reminds us of the importance of tradition. It is not only an economic stimulus in the district, but it is also a great source of pride.

Be sure to tune in on Friday morning to see Phil share his weather predictions. We could either have an earlier spring or 6 more weeks of winter. I have been told he is never wrong.

Thank you, Phil, for sharing your wisdom and weather predictions with all of us.

RELEASE ALEX DANZIG

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

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, on October 7, Alex Danzig was brutally kidnapped by Hamas terrorists from his kibbutz in Nir Oz.

I rise today to share Alex's story.

Alex is a 75-year-old father, historian, and beloved grandfather. Alex was born in Poland and spent his life dedicated to Holocaust education.

For the past 30 years, he has worked at Yad Vashem—The World Holocaust Remembrance Center. Over the past 30 years, Alex has traveled between Israel and Poland, working to facilitate dialogue between the people of both countries. He has been called “a great communicator who knows how to speak to young people and can break down barriers.”

It has been more than 100 days since his kidnapping. Alex spent International Holocaust Remembrance Day in unthinkable and inhumane conditions.

According to reports about the first wave of hostages, even while in captivity, Alex was still giving history lectures. For those who know him, it should come as no surprise.

His lifelong dedication to Holocaust education is inspiring, and it is heart-breaking that such a prolific human rights defender is now being held hostage by Hamas terrorists. He has dedicated his life to understanding how and why the Holocaust happened, only to have his life irrevocably changed by the same strain of hatred and violence that is anti-Semitism.

It is so incredibly important to make sure that the hostages are not forgotten and that their stories continue to be told until they are safely returned home.

□ 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 why I stand here today to demand that Hamas release Alex immediately, along with all the remaining hostages.

Let's be clear. Kidnapping innocent civilians like Alex is not a form of resistance. It is a cowardly, shameful act of terrorism. Likewise, October 7 was not an act of resistance but a brutal, barbaric, and calculated attack against the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

Hamas is not a resistance movement; it is a terrorist group whose mission is the destruction of Israel and the death of every single Jewish person.

If Hamas and its leaders truly cared about its people as they claim, they wouldn't continually disregard humanitarian law and the rules of war, including intentionally targeting civilians, taking hostages, using human shields, and embedding their fighters in civilian communities with utter disregard for their safety and welfare.

The United States of America remains resolute in its position. Terrorism can never be justified. Violence against civilians, particularly children and the elderly, is never acceptable.

We must dismantle Hamas and free the Israeli citizens wrongfully held hostage. Israel has proven its willingness to pause the fighting for hostages to be returned to their loved ones.

Hamas broke the first hostage deal, just as it broke the cease-fire that was in place before October 7. Unfortunately, a cease-fire today would leave Hamas with control of the Gaza Strip and allow the terrorist organization to re-arm and continue its attack against innocent civilians, including innocent children and the elderly.

I call on Qatar and other nations with ties to Hamas to increase the pressure on the terrorist group to free all Israeli hostages immediately. I stand with Alex and his family, friends, and loved ones, and I pray for his safe return.

It is time to bring Alex home. It is time to bring all of the hostages home.

HONORING THE TRUNG SISTERS' LEGACY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. STEEL) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. STEEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy of two Vietnamese legends. Nearly everyone is familiar with the story of Joan of Arc, but not as many Americans are familiar with the story of the Trung sisters.

Trung Trac and Trung Nhi were born under the Han dynasty in what is modern Vietnam. These sisters were very dedicated to education. They were committed to bringing honor to their family, and they were champions of their people. They are best known for their military exceptionalism.

With their help, the Vietnamese people threw off the Han occupation. Today, they are national heroines.

They represent the dignity of the Vietnamese people and the fierce spirit of

independence that resides in their hearts and in the hearts of all Americans.

On March 3, the Vietnamese community in Orange County will honor these two brave sisters.

Today, I am grateful to be able to enter their names into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD so Americans may remember their courage and learn from their example.

HAMAS HOSTAGE NOA ARGAMANI

Mrs. STEEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the story of 26-year-old Noa Argamani.

Like many 26-year-olds, Noa loves to dance, she loves music, and she loves her family.

That family includes her mother, Liora, who has stage 4 brain cancer. Liora's one wish is to be with her daughter in her final days, but she is running out of time. That is because on October 7, Noa was one of more than 240 men, women, children, and elderly kidnapped by Hamas. The barbaric behavior of Hamas has caused devastation for real people like Noa and Liora.

I implore all of my colleagues and my fellow Americans to remember them. We must have absolute moral clarity, and we must have resolve.

Hamas must be eliminated. The hostages must be returned. We must stand with the families and victims of this attack, and we must stand with Israel. We owe it to Noa, to Liora, to our ally, Israel, and to the American people.

WISHING LAURA PARK HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Mrs. STEEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish a very happy birthday to a great South Californian and friend, Laura Park. Laura is a brilliant designer and the owner of LeeHwa Wedding and Hanbok.

For over 30 years, she has used her business to bring the traditional Korean hanbok to Americans. Her work is the product of four generations of hanbok makers, going all the way back to her great-grandparents in North Korea.

Now she represents what it looks like when Koreans achieve the American Dream, as her business has become the largest hanbok house in the United States.

As a first-generation Korean American myself, I am so appreciative of her work to preserve the traditions of Korea, while embracing the greatness of America at the same time. Her exceptional work is something all Californians and all Americans can be proud of.

Laura, thank you for all you do, and have a very happy birthday.

□ 1015

HONORING "PAT" DEON, SR., ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM SEPTA

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

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor someone who has made

a huge difference for Philadelphia and southeast Pennsylvania, Pat Deon, Sr. He recently retired after 29 years serving on the board of our transit agency, SEPTA, including 25 years as chairman of the board.

While Pat and I are from different political parties, we have always worked together to get things done. We could use much more of this around here.

When Pat was appointed to the SEPTA board in 1995, the agency was in a very different shape. It had a reputation for waste and was facing a \$75 million deficit. He has brought the eyes of a businessperson to SEPTA, and he was instrumental in achieving legislative successes in Harrisburg. I know that because I was a legislative leader there during most of his time as chair.

The Philadelphia region is the largest economic engine in Pennsylvania, and SEPTA is vital for making it work. Even the people who don't ride SEPTA benefit from less traffic on the roads and from the air being cleaner.

Pat has led SEPTA through several difficult periods, including the Great Recession and the great pandemic. I want to thank him for all that he has done and for the leadership that he has provided and the fact that he realized that we must do things together. We honored him in the city of Philadelphia for his work and the dedication. He is truly an asset that we will really value.

I thank Pat for all that he has done.

ARTICLES OF IMPEACHMENT AGAINST SECRETARY ALEJANDRO MAYORKAS

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

Mr. BENTZ. Mr. Speaker, this morning the House Committee on Homeland Security passed two Articles of Impeachment accusing Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas of high crimes and misdemeanors.

I have thought, and with the information developed by the committee, have come to believe that Secretary Mayorkas should be impeached for his clear violation of the law, and when this matter comes to the floor, I intend to vote in favor of his impeachment.

That said, today I wish to remark upon the importance and merit, when it comes to most things, and certainly impeachment, of the value of carefully following proper process.

Impeachment is a constitutional function of the highest order, and when considering its use, we must transcend passions and politics. If impeachment is to remain what the Founders intended, and that is something greater than a political tool deployed whenever the mood suits, then it must be used as originally designed: as a means of holding people who have political power accountable when they violate the high crimes and misdemeanors standard.

If we fail to follow best practices in this effort, then impeachment will soon