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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 5, 2024.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JERRY L. CARL 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.

IMMIGRATION PLAN WOULD DO IRREPARABLE HARM

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last night, the Senate released the text of legislation that would do irreparable harm to our border security.

By announcing a plan that permits thousands of illegal immigrants to enter the United States and creates new avenues for asylum, this is a bill

that will only make our Nation more dangerous.

Incentivizing more illegal immigration will not address the crisis that has been created in border communities like Eagle Pass, Texas, or major cities like New York, where schools have been forced to close in order to house undocumented migrants.

Since Joe Biden took office, there have been more than 8 million illegal border crossings and 1.7 million known got-aways that have evaded our Border Patrol agents.

This massive surge has led to Border Patrol agents being forced to suspend vehicle inspections and patrols in order to handle the influx, leading to more opportunities for cartels to bring dangerous drugs like heroin, methamphetamine, and fentanyl into the United States.

It is clear that these issues are not being addressed by Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas and that his policies have contributed to a national security crisis.

Despite clear evidence that his refusal to comply with the law has led to unprecedented levels of illegal immigration, Secretary Mayorkas has implemented a catch-and-release scheme, violating detention requirements and misusing parole authority.

It is clear that the House must act to impeach Secretary Mayorkas and finally hold the Biden administration accountable for putting American lives at risk by allowing an open southern border.

STOP PLAYING POLITICS WITH STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, during his first year in office, President Biden canceled the Keystone XL pipeline, a decision that caused oil prices to rise and cost over 16,000 American jobs.

This decision was only the beginning of a sustained attack on American energy producers that the Biden adminis-

tration has continued to carry out each and every day.

During his time in office, President Biden has ordered our Strategic Petroleum Reserve drained by over 40 percent. This reserve is meant to be used in case of a national security crisis, not to score cheap political points ahead of an election.

It is time to stop playing politics with our Nation's energy.

This week, the House will vote on H. Res. 987, which condemns the harmful and anti-American energy policies that have become the hallmark of Joe Biden's Presidency.

It is time to put an end to the failed energy policies that have led to higher prices at the gas pump across the entire United States.

It is time for Joe Biden to focus on returning to American energy dominance instead of continuing to dismantle our energy infrastructure—an infrastructure that is so vital to the strength of America.

SOCIAL SECURITY IS UNDER SIEGE

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

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to talk about America's number one anti-poverty program for the elderly and the number one antipoverty program for children. That program is Social Security, our Nation's number one insurance plan. Currently, it is under siege.

Both Senator WYDEN and President Biden have, I think rightly, said that what this amounts to is a buzzword for cuts to Social Security: a fiscal commission that is designed to have backroom meetings without hearings, unamendable, yet bring to both floors of the House and Senate an up-or-down vote.

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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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This is put together by 16 people—4 who have no vote, 6 from the Senate, and 6 from the House—with only 7 votes required to pass a bill that goes directly to the floor for a vote. That is an abomination and dereliction of duty on behalf of the House and the Senate. I strongly oppose it.

It has been 53 years since Congress has enhanced Social Security. These are your brothers, sisters, family members, neighbors, and the people you go to church with. This money comes directly back to every single congressional district and your community, and it goes to help people.

The average Social Security check is \$18,000 for a male and \$14,000 for a female. There are 5 million of our fellow Americans who get below-poverty-level checks from the government because Congress hasn't taken responsibility.

We have a plan to change that. We put our plan out on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, contrast that with a behind-closed-door study. How about we do something for the American people like vote, vote on something that is essential to their livelihood?

As you know, Mr. Speaker, Social Security isn't just a pension plan. More veterans rely on Social Security disability than they do on the VA, and spousal and dependent coverage, as well, that we are providing.

Even President Trump has gone so far as to criticize Nikki Haley, and say, hey, listen, this idea of raising the age, which the Republican Study Committee calls for, is cutting benefits in Social Security. You listen to Donald Trump on everything else. Let us hope that you understand what he is talking about here in terms of gutting Social Security and causing across-the-board cuts to a vital program that every single American needs.

Mr. Speaker, there are also more than 28 million Americans who the only benefit that they have in retirement will be Social Security. It is an outrage that this body, in the House and the Senate, has not taken up Social Security both to improve its solvency and also to enhance its benefits.

We have a program that does that—a 2 percent across-the-board increase for everyone. It lifts 5 million Americans out of poverty who have paid into a system all their lives and get below-poverty-level checks from the government because of Congress' inaction.

It repeals WEP and GPO for teachers, firefighters, and municipal employees. It will provide a tax break for more than 23 million Americans. It does so by simply lifting the cap on people over \$400,000.

What does that do? It pays for all of these benefits and also extends solvency well into the future.

That is what we should be doing as a body. We don't need to study Social Security. We know what this program does.

If my colleagues can honestly go home and look any fellow citizen in the eye and tell them that we don't need to

improve Social Security, that we need to study it, God bless them.

What we need here is a vote on Social Security 2100 to make sure that we are enhancing benefits for the citizens we are sworn to serve.

WAR ON AMERICAN ENERGY PRODUCERS

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

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to shed light on the ongoing war against American energy producers.

The Biden administration recently announced a pause on all pending non-free trade agreement export permit applications for liquefied natural gas export projects. This policy will no doubt have a negative impact on job growth, economic development, and energy exploration, but it will also empower America's adversaries.

By curtailing our energy dominance in the natural gas sector, we are making our economy and the world more dependent on countries like Russia and Iran for energy production. For obvious reasons, we should want to do everything within our power to hinder, not help, their cash flow.

This is more than a strategic failure. It is also contrary to the goal of reducing carbon emissions.

We know that American natural gas is cleaner than that of many other producers, especially Russia. In fact, our natural gas is 41 percent cleaner. The benefit of exporting more, not less, energy would remove hundreds of tons of emissions from entering the atmosphere. It would also pose an economic benefit here at home.

This isn't a problem just for the natural gas industry. All of America's energy producers, putting aside the renewable sector, have taken negative regulatory hits from the Biden administration. We have seen energy prices soar as a result.

On the campaign trail in 2019, then-candidate Biden vowed to end fossil fuels. This helps explain why he killed the Keystone XL pipeline on his first day in office. It also explains why he went on to put a moratorium on new oil and gas leases on public lands and raise taxes by nearly \$150 billion on oil and gas producers. For those who don't remember, this anti-energy agenda resulted in the President of the United States begging OPEC to increase their supply.

It is important to note that we were not just energy independent during the Trump administration, Mr. Speaker. We were energy dominant and a net oil exporter.

Gas prices averaged \$2.39 per gallon the day President Biden was inaugurated. Today, the average price per gallon of gas is \$3.15. Let's not forget, as a direct result of this anti-American energy agenda, gas prices reached an all-time high of \$5 per gallon in June 2022.

The President is also responsible for the largest-ever drawdown from our Strategic Petroleum Reserve, 180 million barrels of oil over 6 months. Our reserve is supposed to be used for adverse events like weather or national security emergencies, not to combat bad policy and harmful regulations from a misguided White House. That reserve, which is now depleted by more than 40 percent, is at its lowest level since the early 1980s, when I was in high school.

In addition to the pause on natural gas permits during his administration, the President announced he would no longer hold court-ordered offshore oil and gas lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska. This assault on domestic energy producers destroys any incentive for investment and growth and is going to continue to lead to price volatility at home and around the world.

House Republicans see the pinch this causes working families, like the families in my home district in Tennessee, which is why one of the first things we did after taking the majority in 2023 was to pass H.R. 1, the Lower Energy Cost Act.

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H.R. 1 makes sense to most people. It is not radical or extreme. It would unleash American energy and get government out of the way by reforming our permitting system and removing red tape. It fosters more economic growth and job creation while lowering prices for American families.

Yet this administration seems committed to doing the opposite. Since President Biden's inauguration, his administration has finalized 812 new regulations costing the U.S. economy about \$451 billion in compliance costs annually and requiring 283 million hours of additional compliance paperwork by American workers.

I continue to support an all-of-the-above energy approach to fueling our economy. In a time when prices are still hurting families and despots around the world are looking for our weak spots, we should be unleashing, not overregulating and kneecapping, American energy production.

CONGRATULATING DAVID ALCORN

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

Mr. MOYLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the 2023 Guam Business Magazine's Executive of the Year, Mr. David Alcorn.

In 1975, Dave Alcorn moved from Hawaii to Guam to help launch King's Restaurant. Ten years later, Alcorn and his wife, Lucy, bought the restaurant and became the owners of what is today one of the most successful local restaurant chains and food and beverage icons in Guam.

After his success with King's, Dave and his wife incorporated Global Food