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Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, February 16, 2024, at 3:30 p.m.

House of Representatives

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. GREENE of Georgia).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 14, 2024.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE 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.

CONGRESS NEEDS TO LEGISLATE ON IMMIGRATION ISSUES

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

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address a matter of great concern to all Americans.

Yesterday, House Republicans recklessly voted to impeach Secretary Mayorkas. They engaged in a sham exercise that not only degrades the value and the importance of this democratic institution, but last week they went through the effort to engage in an exercise to publicly lay at the doorstep of one person, Secretary Mayorkas, the crisis of migration and immigration which has been permanent in the United States of America for decades upon decades upon decades.

House Republicans blame a single man for a perennial immigration crisis caused by Congress' decades-long failure to pass immigration law.

During the Reagan administration, we saw how President Reagan addressed comprehensive immigration reform. In fact, alluding to the great lady at the New York Harbor, he said: "It is that lady who gives us our great and special place in the world."

George Bush addressed the immigration crisis.

George W. Bush addressed the immigration crisis.

This crisis has been before us for decades upon decades upon decades. Yet, yesterday, after a failed vote last week by one vote, the Republicans recklessly voted to impeach Secretary Mayorkas in a sham process that, as I said earlier, degrades the value of this great democratic institution.

Even conservative scholars will note that Secretary Mayorkas has done a strong job in advancing solutions with-

in the confines of our existing immigration laws, which we all agree are broken. Yet, instead of working with us to actually improve our laws, the Republican leadership pursued a bogus impeachment trial, fueled purely by their desire to win votes and by fanning the flames of xenophobia. We saw that play out in New York during the past weeks, and we saw the results last night.

New Yorkers rejected that attitude. New Yorkers rejected that effort to divide us. Instead, Republicans must join Members of their caucus in critical efforts to actually pass legislation on immigration.

This can be achieved by passing the bipartisan—and let me say this again, Madam Speaker—the bipartisan Dignity Act, which I stand in support of today.

H.R. 3599, the Dignity Act, represents Congress' best chances in 37 years to finally fix our broken immigration system, and is supported by Republicans and Democrats.

This bipartisan bill contains immigration fixes in four key areas that both Democrats and Republicans should fall behind. One, of course, is border safety. We all agree that something should be done about the border.

The other one is immigration reform. Components of immigration reform that we know are critical and important, as Ronald Reagan said, for the future of our Nation. A third bucket is jobs and the economy. We must inject more energy in jobs and our economy. Of course, the fourth bucket is the root causes of migration in our hemisphere.

□ 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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So for border security, we can do a lot by providing substantial funding to combat fentanyl smuggling and for border technologies that will modernize our ports of entry. Fentanyl is coming in through our ports of entry by wheels. Vehicles are bringing it in. Let's modernize our ports of entry to ensure that we stop that crisis.

Madam Speaker, again, we have a solution. It is called the Dignity Act.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF GREGGORY JACKSON HUGHEY

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

Mr. KUSTOFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart but also with pride, to pay tribute to Gregory Jackson Hughey from Tipton County, Tennessee.

Jackson Hughey is a former Covington High School football player who recently lost his 7-year battle with cancer.

Jackson had bravely fought neuroblastoma cancer since 2017. That cancer should not define Jackson, but it is certainly part of his story.

Jackson was a brave young man. In fact, Jason Hughey, Jackson's father, said that Jackson defined his cancer and defined his life.

Jackson never ever discussed his cancer diagnosis unless he was receiving treatment or getting a checkup at St. Jude Children's Hospital in Memphis. Jason and Deanne Hughey are so appreciative of all the care and support they received from the healthcare providers at St. Jude Children's Hospital.

Jackson found comfort through his faith. His family said that Jackson did not allow the cancer to control him or bother him because, in their words, he knew where he was going.

Jackson is remembered for his passion for all sports, specifically football. It was through football that I first met Jackson a number of years ago. Jackson's love for life and for sports truly shined through, and I think this photo here clearly shows that.

Along with his childhood friends, Jackson started H+H Podcast, a weekly show to discuss the latest news and sports and to preview upcoming games. Now whether the topic was football, basketball, baseball, or any other sport, Jackson and his friend, Tanner, covered the bases over their 70 episodes.

Jackson was a big fan of the University of Memphis Tigers. One morning just before Christmas, a couple of months ago, Jackson and his father headed to St. Jude Children's Hospital for a transfusion of platelets. When it was clear that they were not going to be ready for the treatment before they needed to leave for the Memphis Tigers basketball game versus Vanderbilt, Jackson told his St. Jude nurse that he had to wait to get his platelets until after the basketball game, and that is what he did.

Jackson went to the game and then he returned to the hospital for his transfusion. Jackson simply was not going to allow his sickness to stop him from doing the things that he loved.

In the years following his diagnosis, it was moving to see the entire Tipton County community rally in support of him. Even the rival fans started wearing Covington High School colors in honor of Jackson.

Jackson taught all of us that life is precious, and he showed us what it is like to be brave and to fight hard. Jackson showed us how to fully embrace life and how to overcome fear.

As a testament to his courage and to his life, Jackson was awarded the Commercial Appeal's Courage Award in 2021. Jackson passed away on January 28, just a couple of weeks ago.

Yesterday would have been Jackson's 21st birthday. Jackson Hughey is the pride of Covington and Tipton County. Today our prayers go out to Jason and Deanne, as well as Jackson's brother and sister, Jake and Jan Claire, as they mourn their beloved son and brother. Jackson's story and his strength are an inspiration to us all.

REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS OF MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK) for 5 minutes.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, last month, I joined my colleague JARED MOSKOWITZ on a tour of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

The school is frozen in time. It is just as it was 6 years ago today when a gunman stole the lives of 17 people. There was a box of chocolates left in a classroom on a stack of textbooks, a stuffed animal with a Valentine's Day balloon sitting on a chair, writing assignments left unfinished, whiteboards covered in lesson plans.

It was so ordinary, so hauntingly familiar. It is what you would see today if you walked into any high school on Valentine's Day.

And then there was the horror—the broken glass, the bullet holes, the blood stains, the outlines left by children's murdered bodies, two of them right next to the teacher's desk where their classmates and teacher were hiding inches away.

Three dads joined us that day. One by one, each of them led us to a spot where his child had been shot to death. One told us of how his daughter had run for safety in a stairwell, how she had missed safety by a split second, and how a single bullet ended her life before it had even begun. Her blood and the blood of her classmates mark the floors of that hallway, and they mark the soul of a country that could have saved them but chose not to.

The collective failures to prevent this tragedy permeates every corner of

that building and every corner of this building: the failure of the good guys with guns to respond quickly and without hesitation; the sheriff's failure to act on a warning of a school shooter in the making; the FBI's failure to investigate a tip about an angry, unstable teenager who wanted to kill people; and Congress' failure to keep an AR-15 rifle out of his hands.

The men and women in this building could have prevented him from acquiring a weapon designed to kill and kill fast, but no. Nothing. There were no red flag laws, no universal background checks, no crackdown on high-capacity magazines, no assault weapons ban, no safe storage requirements. All of it was rejected by those, Madam Speaker, who perversely define freedom as unfettered access to weapons of war.

Madam Speaker, there was no freedom for the students and staff gunned down that day. There is no freedom in violence, in terror, and death. There is no freedom in being forced to wonder if your child will come home from school. Will they live to see graduation? And there is no freedom from the grief of those parents whose worst fears had been realized.

□ 1015

Along one of those hallways there is a quote painted on the wall: "Never live in the past but always learn from it."

Madam Speaker, that building is just as it was 6 years ago, and so is this country. Our gun laws are frozen in the past as if nothing has happened. In refusing to act, Republicans not only ignore the past, they condemn the children to future violent death.

Madam Speaker, let us honor our past by changing our future. Let us honor the murdered by honoring the right of the living to be free from fear.

MOUNTAIN GATEWAY OFFICIALS WRONGFULLY IMPRISONED

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 13 Mountain Gateway officials who have been separated from their families and wrongly imprisoned in Nicaragua.

Our Founding Fathers in America established our First Amendment, which guarantees the freedom of religion. While we are blessed that the United States ensures these rights, other countries and governments do not offer these same liberties. Mountain Gateway is an evangelical ministry based in Texas that desires to make Jesus Christ's name known to all nations.

The organization has had relations with Nicaragua since 2013, establishing churches, humanitarian relief projects, and a fair trade coffee farm that provides income to rural residents. This past year, Mountain Gateway held a series of mass religious worship services