

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. STRONG) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Emmanuel, God with us, come and ransom us from all that seeks to hold us captive. Release us from our fears, attend to us in our loneliness, bring us back from our exile, and receive us once again into the certainty of Your favor.

You who are wisdom, who has ordered all things, show us the path of Your knowledge, and teach us the ways we should go.

Bright morning star, bring us Your comfort. Divine dayspring, shine down on us the promise of Your kingdom and bring us Your consolation. Light of the world, dispel the shadows of our night and turn our darkness into day.

O come, O King of kings, come and bind our hearts to Your own. Bid cease all our sad divisions. Shake all the nations so that our deepest desires for Your justice and mercy would be revealed. Fill this House and our lives with Your glory. King of peace, reign in our lives this day.

For it is in Your sovereign name we pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. CASTEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CASTEN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO OFFER RESOLUTION RAISING A QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 2(a)(1) of rule IX, I rise to

give notice of my intent to raise a question of the privileges of the House.

The form of the resolution is as follows:

House resolution directing the Committee on Ethics of the House of Representatives to release to the public the committee's report on its investigation into allegations against former Representative Matt Gaetz.

Whereas, on April 9, 2021, the Committee on Ethics of the House of Representatives announced that it had begun to investigate allegations that Representative Matt Gaetz may have engaged in sexual misconduct and/or illicit drug use, shared inappropriate images or videos on the House floor, misused State identification records, converted campaign funds for personal use, and/or accepted a bribe, improper gratuity, or impermissible gift in violation of the rules of the House, laws, or other standards of conduct;

Whereas, over 3 years, the Committee on Ethics of the House of Representatives compiled an extensive investigative record pursuant to Committee Rules 14(a)(3) and 18(a) into allegations that Representative Gaetz may have engaged in sexual misconduct and illicit drug use, accepted improper gifts, dispensed special privileges and favors to individuals with whom he had a personal relationship, and sought to obstruct government investigations of his conduct;

Whereas, on November 13, 2024, Representative Matt Gaetz announced his resignation from Congress;

Whereas, there is precedent for the Committee on Ethics of the House of Representatives to continue investigating and release reports of investigations into former Members of the House of Representatives;

Whereas, in 1987, the Committee on Ethics of the House of Representatives released a report on its investigation into allegations of the misuse of campaign funds, improper gifts, the failure to reveal business interests on his financial disclosure, and the acceptance of a bribe by former Representative Bill Boner following his resignation from Congress;

Whereas, in 1990, the Committee on Ethics of the House of Representatives released a report on its investigations of sexual misconduct allegations, which included having sexual intercourse with a minor and making sexual advances toward a congressional employee, against former Representative Don Lukens following his resignation from Congress;

Whereas, in 2006, the Committee on Ethics of the House of Representatives released a report on its investigation into sexual misconduct allegations, which included sending sexually explicit images to at least one minor, against former Representative Mark Foley following his resignation from Congress;

Whereas, in 2011, the Committee on Ethics of the House of Representatives continued its investigation into allega-

tions of sexual misconduct against former Representative Eric Massa following his resignation; and

Whereas, given the serious nature of the allegations against Representative Gaetz, a failure of the Committee on Ethics of the House of Representatives to publicly release its report on its investigation undermines the committee's credibility and impedes the safety, dignity, and integrity of the legislative proceedings of the House: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Committee on Ethics of the House of Representatives shall immediately release the latest draft of its report and a summary of its findings to the public, including any conclusions, draft reports, recommendations, attachments, exhibits and accompanying materials, with such redactions as may be necessary and appropriate to protect sensitive information, including witness identities, relating to its investigation into allegations against former Representative Matt Gaetz.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. VAN DUYNE). Under rule IX, a resolution offered from the floor by a Member other than the majority leader or the minority leader as a question of the privileges of the House has immediate precedence only at a time designated by the Chair within 2 legislative days after the resolution is properly noticed.

Pending that designation, the form of the resolution noticed by the gentleman from Illinois will appear in the RECORD at this point.

The Chair will not at this point determine whether the resolution constitutes a question of privilege. That determination will be made at the time designated for consideration of the resolution.

□ 1415

HONORING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA

(Mr. BEAN of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Madam Speaker, what do Green Cove Springs, Florida, and fine wine have in common?

They both get better with age.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Green Cove Springs, Florida, which was founded on November 2, 1874.

Green Cove Springs, my wife Abby's hometown, has been a thriving community for over 150 years. The city got its name from its beautiful mineral spring, which attracted folks who arrived by train or boat from all over the country and helped Green Cove Springs grow into the unique town it is today.

Madam Speaker, 150 years is such a milestone that the city began their anniversary celebration on Saturday, November 2, and they are planning dozens of events throughout 2025.

I invite my colleagues to join me in celebrating Green Cove Springs, Florida, its past, present, and future.

Here is to 150 more years of community spirit.

PIES OF THANKS

(Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, while many of us joined our families and friends for Thanksgiving, first responders and 911 telecommunicators reported for duty to keep our communities safe.

During our second annual Pies of Thanks, we traveled and extended Thanksgiving greetings to them in all 19 counties in North Carolina's First Congressional District on the same day.

We delivered pies to those working to show our unyielding appreciation for all of the fantastic work they do.

We must always join in demonstrating our genuine gratitude to the unsung heroes of our communities.

Thank you to our first responders and 911 telecommunicators, who are often the first responders of our first responders, across eastern North Carolina.

TRUMP REDUCES REGULATIONS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, small businesses are vital to America. In fact, more than 99 percent of American businesses are considered small, employing nearly 62 million people across the United States. Last year, in South Carolina alone, there were 479,000 small businesses employing over 840,000 people.

To promote existing rules to protect small businesses for jobs, this week House Republicans will consider the Prove It Act.

This bill requires transparency from agencies on regulatory decisions and empowers small businesses to petition the Small Business Administration to review proposed regulations. To actually promote decentralized democracy, President Trump, in his first term, deleted eight regulations for any new regulation, with real power to the people.

President-elect Trump and Republicans are committed to putting small businesses before red tape.

In conclusion, God bless our troops as the global war on terrorism continues. Open borders for dictators put all Americans at risk of more 9/11 attacks imminent as warned by the FBI. Trump will reinstitute existing laws to protect American families with peace through strength.

HOUSTON FREEDMEN'S TOWN CONSERVANCY

(Mrs. LEE CARTER asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LEE CARTER. Madam Speaker, today I rise to highlight the Houston Freedmen's Town Conservancy, an organization dedicated to preserving the legacy of Freedmen's Town in the Fourth Ward of Houston, Texas, one of the most historic African-American communities in our Nation.

On June 19, 1865, the day now known as Juneteenth, when General Granger enforced the Emancipation Proclamation in Galveston, many formerly enslaved people made their way to Houston, where they built a thriving community against incredible odds.

The Houston Freedmen's Town Conservancy, established in 2018, plays a crucial role in preserving this nationally registered historical site. I acknowledge its leadership, President Eileen Lawal, and Vice President Harry Johnson, who continue to protect this community's history.

I encourage Americans to visit the Freedmen's Town Museums Houston, founded in 1996, which continues to educate the public about the community's rich legacy, inspired by the vision of Olee Yates McCullough and her father, Rutherford B.H. Yates.

Thanks to these organizations, Freedmen's Town has been designated as Houston's first heritage district and has earned recognition in UNESCO's Routes of Enslaved Peoples Project.

Preserving Freedmen's Town is essential not just to honor the past, but to ensure that all generations understand the sacrifices and achievements of the formerly enslaved.

DESIGNATION OF INDIVIDUAL AS CO-CHAIR TO THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF THE NAVY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces, on behalf of the Speaker and the Republican Leader of the Senate, their joint designation, pursuant to 1092(b)(2) of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2023 (Public Law 117-263), and the order of the House of January 9, 2023, of the following individual to serve as Co-Chair of the Commission on the Future of the Navy:

Ms. Mackenzie Eaglen, Arlington, Virginia

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

GOOD FAITH EXCEPTION TO THE IMPOSITION OF CERTAIN FINES

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S.

3960) to amend title 35, United States Code, to provide a good faith exception to the imposition of fines for false assertions and certifications, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3960

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. GOOD FAITH EXCEPTION TO THE IMPOSITION OF CERTAIN FINES.

Title 35, United States Code, is amended—
(1) in section 41(j), by inserting “; unless the entity shows that the assertion was made in good faith,” before “be subject”; and
(2) in section 123(f), by inserting “; unless the entity shows that the certification was made in good faith,” before “be subject”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on S. 3960.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, this bill is a win for small businesses and small inventors.

Small businesses may qualify for reduced application fees when applying at the United States Patent and Trademark Office. However, under 35 U.S.C. sections 41 and 123, a small business may claim small-entity or micro-entity status. For example, the standard cost of filing a utility patent is \$320. A small entity, however, pays just one-half of that, \$128; and a micro entity is charged only \$64.

When Congress passed the Unleashing American Innovators Act in 2023, the law required the United States Patent and Trademark Office director to impose punitive fines on entities falsely asserting or certifying entitlement to these reduced fees. This was intended to deter unscrupulous actors from claiming the benefit for which they did not qualify.

However, in that bill, we granted no exceptions under existing laws for those who made an honest error in good faith. For example, if an employee is mistakenly categorized as a contractor rather than an employee, a good-faith mistake could cause them to claim the wrong status. Or if there is a mistake in information provided by another company that is a licensee, that could also result in that.

The impact of these punitive fines would be disproportionate to the honest mistake. These harsh fines may deter entities from seeking the benefit of small- or micro-entity status since