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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,
December 10, 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.

CONGRATULATING CONGRESSIONAL WRITING COMPETITION WINNERS

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

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the winners of our first ever congressional writing competition. I asked students from around Iowa's First Congressional District, elementary, middle, and high school, to submit an essay about what makes Iowa special. Given that the

University of Iowa has the Writers' Workshop, writing in Iowa is a known quantity.

I was moved by the quality of writing our students in Iowa possess and their unwavering love for Iowa.

The winners are: Katelyn Cope, sixth grader from Newton; Adele Decker, sixth grader from Newton; Sawyer Rhoades, sixth grader from Keokuk; Georgia Clark, eighth grader from West Liberty; Gwenavie Spalding, ninth grader from Anamosa; Kayden Wherry, ninth grader from Anamosa; Yuchen Gong, 11th grader from Iowa City; and Justin Chapman, 12th grader from Williamsburg.

The winners will receive a certificate of achievement as well as a flag flown over the Capitol building.

I congratulate these dedicated students. I look forward to seeing all of their contributions to Iowa in the future.

CONGRATULATING THE IOWA HAWKEYES FOOTBALL TEAM

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Iowa Hawkeyes football team on another winning season. Led by the breakout running back Kaleb Johnson, who finished the regular season with 1,537 yards and 21 touchdowns, the Hawkeyes finished 8–4, with key wins coming against Washington, Nebraska, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

This season was a historical one for our longtime coach, Kirk Ferentz. Coach Ferentz clinched his 204th career win on November 29 and is now only one win away from the all-time record for wins in the Big 10.

While the regular season may be over, there is still more football to be played. On December 30, the Iowa Hawkeyes will be taking on the number 19 in the country, the Missouri Tigers, in the Music City Bowl in Nashville.

I once again congratulate the Hawkeyes on a great season and wish them all the best in their bowl game.

Go Hawks.

GIVING VETERANS TOOLS TO THRIVE

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Veterans SPORT Act, legislation I introduced to ensure that our Nation's veterans have access to adaptive prostheses and terminal devices for sports and recreational activities as part of their medical benefits.

Currently, veterans eligible for VA medical services can receive artificial limbs, but those wishing to engage in sports and recreation lack access to specialized equipment. This bill amends title 38 of the United States Code to include these critical devices, allowing veterans to pursue activities that support their physical and mental well-being.

Sports and recreation are vital components to rehabilitation, promoting fitness, social interaction, a sense of accomplishment, and the sense of being a whole person once again.

The Veterans SPORT Act empowers veterans to regain independence and participate fully in activities they love. I urge my colleagues to support this bill and ensure our veterans have the tools they need to thrive.

MISGUIDED EV MANDATES

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of President Trump's commitment to ending the misguided EV mandates set by the Biden-Harris administration.

While our country and our automakers need to make EVs to combat the Chinese Communist Party and electric vehicles have their place in the market, the American people should not be forced into adopting them.

Hundreds of millions of Americans rely on combustion engine vehicles in their daily lives, and these mandates are driving up the cost for families who can least afford it.

In just 2 years, the Biden administration allocated \$7.5 billion in taxpayer funds for EV chargers, yet only eight

□ 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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stations have been completed. This failure highlights the need for a more thoughtful approach, one that assesses cost and benefit and one that respects consumer choice and avoids unnecessary government intervention.

President Trump understands that a thriving economy is built on freedom and choice, not top-down mandates. Under his leadership, the American people will have the freedom to make their own decisions without the overreach of Washington.

MERRIAM-WEBSTER'S WORD OF THE YEAR

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, Merriam-Webster has named "polarization" the word of year. While that may reflect current times, it should also serve as a reminder that we must work harder to bridge the growing divide in our Nation.

Too often, political discourse has become hostile, with one side labeling their opponents as extremists for advocating commonsense solutions like securing our borders, lowering costs, or commonsense solutions that are helping hardworking families and ensuring fairness in women's sports.

I am optimistic that we can begin to heal these divisions and put America back on track. We must come together to prioritize policies that promote economic growth, strengthen national security, and restore the American Dream.

As we move into a new year, let us focus on the values that unite us and work for the betterment of all Americans.

WITH GRATITUDE TO NORTH CAROLINA'S SIXTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. MANNING) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with deep gratitude for the people of North Carolina's Sixth Congressional District for trusting me to represent them in the U.S. House of Representatives.

I have been proud to stand with House Democrats to pass historic legislation to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure, lower the cost of prescription drugs, strengthen domestic manufacturing, protect our future with the development of clean energy, address gun violence, and provide vital support for our veterans.

Thanks to these efforts, 80,000 households in my district have gained access to affordable high-speed internet, 39,000 residents are saving hundreds of dollars annually on their prescription drugs, and more than 4,700 veterans exposed to toxins during their service have filed claims to access benefits they have earned.

I have also been proud to secure nearly \$60 million in Federal funding for community projects across the Sixth District. From improved transportation to new equipment for our police

and firefighters, public safety initiatives, expanding education and job training, incentivizing economic development and public health, these projects are making a real difference.

I have also been proud to fight against the terrible loss of women's rights. Two years ago, the Supreme Court overturned 50 years of judicial precedent with its decision to strike down *Roe v. Wade*. This terrible ruling stripped millions of women of their right to obtain an abortion, has placed devastating hurdles in obtaining care for miscarriages, and has unleashed a wave of rightwing attacks on the full range of women's reproductive healthcare, including birth control.

That is why I introduced my Right to Contraception Act, to protect access to all FDA-approved birth control, which passed through the House in the last Congress. Sadly, my bill was blocked by Republicans, first in the Senate and again this term by Republicans in the House. It is shameful.

As policy co-chair of the Democratic Women's Caucus, I have been proud to fight for all women to make decisions about their own bodies and to have the ability to succeed in the workplace while still caring for their children and their family members.

In addition to fighting for North Carolinians' basic freedoms, I have worked to advance America's values and interests on the world stage. As the vice ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, I have advocated for rebuilding and expanding strong relationships with our allies, including unwavering support for Ukraine and Israel in the face of unprecedented attacks.

After Hamas' brutal October 7 invasion of Israel, I have stood up against the alarming rise in anti-Semitism here at home and around the globe as the co-chair of the House Bipartisan Task Force for Combating Antisemitism. This includes introducing my Countering Antisemitism Act, the most comprehensive legislation aimed at addressing the disturbing increase in anti-Semitism in our country's history.

This bill must be passed if we are serious about eradicating the scourge of the world's oldest hatred and protecting the fundamentals of our democracy. What begins with hatred against the Jews never ends there but spreads to other vulnerable groups.

As a member of the Education and the Workforce Committee, I have championed investments in our students and schools and worked to address the youth mental health crisis, introducing the Improving Mental Health and Wellness in Schools Act to expand resources for our students.

As chair of the New Democrat Coalition Workforce Development Task Force, I have fought to address ongoing labor shortages and prepare workers for the jobs of the future.

While I would love to continue this important work on behalf of my con-

stituents, the blatantly gerrymandered congressional districts passed by the Republican-led North Carolina General Assembly make it impossible for me to do so. These maps are a deliberate distortion of the will of the people, designed with surgical precision to split communities of interest and deny real representation to North Carolinians. These maps force me to depart Congress, but I recognize that I am doing so at a time of great division within our country.

Now, more than ever, it is our duty in this Chamber to reaffirm the fundamental values that unite us as Americans: freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and the belief that all people are created equal.

While I will not be here to witness the next chapters of history written in this Chamber, I will keep using my voice to defend these values and trust in their enduring power to make our Union more perfect.

I will close by thanking my extraordinary staff members who work every day to get things done for the people we represent. I thank everyone who supported me in getting to Congress and all the colleagues with whom I have worked to develop friendships on both sides of the aisle.

RECOGNIZING FARMERS, RANCHERS, AND OTHER PRODUCERS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize our Nation's hardworking and dedicated farmers, ranchers, and other producers.

In 1978, radio broadcaster Paul Harvey addressed the Future Farmers of America at their annual convention and delivered a powerful message that highlighted the importance of our Nation's farmers.

He said:

And on the 8th day, God looked down on his planned paradise and said: I need a caretaker.

So God made a farmer.

God said: I need somebody willing to get up before dawn, milk cows, work all day in the fields, milk cows again, eat supper, then go to town and stay past midnight at a meeting of the school board.

So God made a farmer.

God said: I need somebody with arms strong enough to rustle a calf and yet gentle enough to deliver his own grandchild; somebody to call hogs, tame cantankerous machinery, come home hungry, have to wait lunch until his wife is done feeding visiting ladies, then tell the ladies to be sure and come back real soon and mean it.

So God made a farmer.

God said: I need somebody willing to sit up all night with a newborn colt and watch it die, then dry his eyes and say: Maybe next year. I need somebody who can shape an ax handle from a persimmon sprout, shoe a horse with a hunk of car tire, who can make a harness out of haywire, feed sacks, and shoe scraps; who, planting time and