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No. 36

House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 28, 2024.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MARIANNETTE MILLER-MEEKS 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.

PUBLIC TELEVISION IS IMPORTANT

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, this week we are having a public media summit in our Nation's Capital, with representatives from independent television stations from across the country.

Thirteen years ago, the prospects were not particularly encouraging. We had just had a takeover in the House of

Representatives with people intent on reducing government spending, and public media was in the crosshairs. Today, 13 years later, the Federal funding is still flowing at record levels to America's public broadcasters. We noted the retirement of the head of America's Public Television Stations, Pat Butler, who helped guide us through these difficult times.

Congress has enacted a new infrastructure investment program for public media nearly three times as large as the one it replaced. When COVID struck, the economy imploded. Congress provided \$250 million in emergency financial assistance to America's public media. Our partnership for public radio and television includes our State governments, as well, who will commit a record \$365 million to support public media.

There are hundreds of advocates who will hit Capitol Hill to share the strong positive message of public broadcasting. In a way, this should be the easiest of lobbying assignments. Public broadcasting is the most trusted name in media; 180 million people watch or listen to it every week.

The Senate passed the appropriation out of committee 24-2, at a funding level overwhelmingly approved last spring by Congress with the agreement with the President to avert a shutdown. It included 149 Republicans. The benefits are powerful and almost universally supported, and it is not just news, but most point out that PBS and NPR are where even the critics go when they need to know what is actually going on.

Part of our challenge now is that there are a handful of people who are holding the budget hostage, which is unfortunate, because there is overwhelming support in the House and the Senate if we are able to see our way clear. It is perplexing because funding for public media is overwhelmingly supported by rural and small-town America.

There is always going to be public broadcasting in New York, San Francisco, Boston, or even Portland, Oregon, but there will not be as much and the programming won't be as good, but it will be there. However, that is not the case for rural and small-town America, in the mountain States, in the rural Midwest, in Alaska.

That is why the late Republican dean of the House, Don Young, was such a fierce champion for public broadcasting in his State and nationally. He knew that it was more important in rural America where there are fewer choices, and it is more expensive. Federal support was critical.

News, entertainment, culture, think of where we would be during COVID without the public educational component. It is also increasingly important for public safety. The network supplied by public broadcasting is the emergency communications for natural disasters, for efforts in terms of fires and floods. It is a system that we depend upon, and it is public broadcasting that provides the backbone. People literally depend on it for their lives.

Let's hope, as the visitors from the public television stations visit Capitol Hill, meeting with our staff, providing this information, that people are receptive because this is an opportunity for us on a bipartisan basis to strengthen the ability of Americans to be able to learn, to be able to promote culture, education, and public safety. It is the best bargain for the taxpayer dollar, and I hope that we will be supportive.

STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS SCAM

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, last week, President Biden announced a plan to cancel \$1.2 billion

☐ 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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in Federal student loans for 150,000 borrowers.

As Americans, we have always followed a simple rule: If you take out a loan, you pay back the loan. It is time to call a spade a spade. This student loan scam isn't forgiveness; it is an election-year handout to President Biden's far-left voters to transfer debt to the American taxpayer. This gimmick transfers the burden of the loans from the students who took the loans onto every American taxpayer.

Repaying these loans certainly has no personal benefit to 87 percent of taxpayers who don't have student loans and to the 100 million Americans who never attended college.

This program takes advantage of Americans who are already struggling to support their families under the weight of President Biden's inflation. It is time to send a message to President Biden and his administration that we cannot allow hardworking Americans, who have kept their word and repaid their personal loans, to be ripped off by yet another pandering scheme to the far left.

RARE DISEASE WEEK

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Rare Disease Week.

Right now, more than 25 million Americans and their loved ones are impacted by over 7,000 conditions which are classified as rare diseases.

Since the Orphan Drug Act was enacted in 1983, more than 600 drugs have been developed to combat these illnesses and ultimately save lives. Now, because of President Biden's so-called Inflation Reduction Act, the environment that has allowed these treatments to develop is being threatened.

This week, I am proud to be working alongside my colleagues to advance bipartisan legislation, the ORPHAN Cures Act, which would expand the orphan drug exemption for medicines with multiple indications involving rare diseases and cancers.

It is critical that Congress acts to support research and development into treatments and therapies that address rare diseases and further work to ensure that patients have access to the care and treatment that they need.

As we recognize Rare Disease Week, let's commit to standing with patients who are living with rare diseases, including pediatric cancers and diseases like cystic fibrosis, classified as rare, but they are not rare to the families and the patients who are suffering with them.

Let's commit to working together to ensure that every patient, regardless of the rarity of the condition, receives the support, the care, and the treatment that they need.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF LARRY MAKOBEN

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

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and celebrate the life of Larry Makoben of Bettendorf, Iowa.

Larry's remarkable work in the Quad Cities was transformative. Over the years, Larry was president of the Bettendorf Jaycees and the Bettendorf Chamber of Commerce, where he served for many years as an Ambassador. He was also a member of the Bettendorf and Quad Cities Morning Optimist Club, the Bettendorf Kiwanis Club, and Larry served as the district chairman for the Boy Scouts of America. His unwavering dedication, leadership, and passion for excellence set a standard that will continue to inspire us all.

As we reflect on Larry's achievements, his military service, and his service to our community, let us remember the positive influence he had on those around him.

I offer my deepest condolences to Larry's wife, Carolyn, and his family during this difficult time. May we honor Larry by carrying forward his spirit of resilience, creativity, and commitment to making a difference.

ZACH BOTT NAMED IOWA WINE GROWERS ASSOCIATION WINEMAKER OF THE YEAR

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the extraordinary achievements of Zach Bott, a winemaker at Fireside Winery in Marengo and Ackerman Winery in Amana for being named the 2024 Iowa Wine Growers Association Winemaker of the Year.

In a region known for its rich agricultural history, Zach's dedication and passion for winemaking have truly set him apart. Zach Bott has not only mastered the art of winemaking but has also become a symbol of excellence in the industry. His commitment to producing high-quality wine reflects the spirit of innovation and hard work that defines Iowa's winemaking industry.

Congratulations to Zach Bott on this well-deserved honor. May his success inspire a new generation of winemakers and continue to elevate Iowa's presence in the world of wines. Cheers.

PERMANENT UNIVERSITY OF IOWA ATHLETICS DIRECTOR BETH GOETZ

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate Beth Goetz, who was recently named the permanent athletics director for the University of Iowa. She is now the first woman to oversee the university's entire athletics program since Christine Grant led the then-separate women's athletic department from 1973 to 2000.

Beth's groundbreaking appointment not only marks a significant milestone for women working in athletics, but the promotion also reflects Iowa's commitment to excellence and diversity in leadership. With an impressive track record and a visionary approach, Beth is ready to lead Iowa athletics to new heights. Congratulations, Beth, and Go Hawks.

HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Iowa Department of Transportation, the city crews, the county crews, and all the volunteers who worked tirelessly during the recent winter storm in Iowa's First Congressional District.

With another storm coming in today, their work has been so helpful to all Iowans, and to those who are crossing the country on Interstate 80 or Interstate 35. Their unwavering commitment and dedication ensured that our roads were cleared, our sidewalks were usable, our communities remained safe, and ensured that our essential services continued uninterrupted. It was a challenging and dangerous job to do.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the women and men who, through their hard work, kept our cities running smoothly and our roads safe. Their efforts have not gone unnoticed.

PRESIDENT BIDEN'S BORDER BRUTALITY

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

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, last week our country lost yet another innocent soul to President Biden's administration's inexcusable and shameful open-border policy when 22-year-old Laken Hope Riley was brutally murdered by a Venezuelan citizen who illegally entered our country in September 2022.

Laken Riley was a nursing student at Augusta University's Athens campus who was out on a morning run near the intramural fields at the University of Georgia. May her soul rest in peace.

Unfortunately, this is what Americans across the country have come to expect since President Biden took office. His administration has enacted and implemented numerous open-border policies which directly and inevitably result in these sorts of tragedies.

In addition to this terrible tragedy that occurred in Georgia, local authorities in Virginia arrested a 32-year-old Venezuelan migrant in connection with the sexual assault of a minor. Just like the murderer who allegedly killed Laken Riley, this individual also entered the country in September of 2022 after being detained and released by U.S. Customs and Border Patrol in El Paso, Texas.

In our Nation's Capital, Washington, D.C., a man accused of shooting three District of Columbia police officers was found to be in our country illegally with an active deportation order with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. All three of these terrible, completely avoidable tragedies occurred in the same calendar month, just a week apart.

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Mr. ROSE. Madam Speaker, pure and simple, these are the consequences of