



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 170

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2024

No. 186

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 16, 2024.

I hereby appoint the Honorable SCOTT FITZGERALD 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 on 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.

BIDDING FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

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

Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, today, I bid farewell to my amazing staff, some of whom are in the gallery, my wonderful colleagues on both sides of the aisle, constituents, and the myriad of unsung heroes to whom our entire Nation owes a debt of gratitude.

I thank them all from the top of my heart.

To my amazing family all around the country who has stood by me in times

of both great joy and pain: my mother, DeeDee, and my late father, Eddie; my brothers, Tyler, Jay, and Bobby; my sisters, Hutton and Lily; and my treasured daughters, Daniela and Pia, who compelled me to run for Congress in 2018: I love you all with all my heart.

I depart this august institution with a combination of deep gratitude, a little bit of attitude, and a healthy dose of American optimism.

To those who are pleased to see this affable but outspoken gadfly ride off into the sunset, I am sorry to say that my mission to restore common sense and a home for the exhausted majority of center left and center right Americans is just beginning. It is a mission whose roots were not planted here in Washington or back home in Minnesota but rather 8,000 miles away on Dragon Mountain in Pleiku, Vietnam, where my father, Captain Artie Pfefer, was killed fighting a war in which he did not believe, but for a country in which he believed very deeply.

Last year, I traveled to the very ground on which he took his last breath and where I took my first.

He died just 4 days after the Apollo 11 Moon landing, and I have often pictured him along with a half million other young soldiers looking up in awe that morning, many probably in tears, as two fellow Americans achieved the unthinkable. They got a glimpse of America at her very best up there while we were at our very worst down here.

I picture our predecessors in this very room voting to fund both that giant leap for mankind and that giant tragedy for mankind all in the same year.

On my flight home from Vietnam last year, I reflected on my father and the 1 million—yes, 1 million—Americans who have been killed in service to our country since 1776. I thought to myself they did not sacrifice their lives for Members of Congress to act like kindergartners.

They did not sacrifice their lives for Members of Congress to spend 10,000 hours per week begging for campaign cash used to eviscerate fellow Americans running for office.

They did not sacrifice their lives for Members of Congress to do nothing as 60 percent of Americans live paycheck to paycheck.

They did not sacrifice their lives for Congress to do nothing as 500,000 Americans go bankrupt every year from medical debt and 26 million go without any health insurance at all.

They did not sacrifice their lives for Congress to do nothing as 50,000 Americans die from gun violence and another 100,000 from overdoses every single year.

They did not sacrifice their lives for Congress to do nothing as wealthy industries shower millions upon millions of campaign cash on the very committee members who set the rules for their industries, and then Congress allows each party to collect dues from those committee members to fund their campaigns. It is legalized corruption, and it is unacceptable.

My father and 1 million other Americans did not sacrifice their lives for Congress to enable two private corporations, the two major parties, to maintain a virtual monopoly on our democracy, and having paid the ultimate price themselves, they surely did not sacrifice their lives for Members of Congress to prioritize their own self-protection over their principles.

However, they did sacrifice their lives because of decisions made in this very room by people just like us.

So, as I bid farewell, I humbly ask all the Members of the next Congress on both sides of the aisle to call on their better angels and act with courage, not cowardice: the courage to compete with our ideas rather than defeat one another with our ideologies, the courage to fix our problems rather than fixate on our politics, the courage to replace condemnation with invitation,

☐ 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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and the courage to replace confrontation with common sense.

In closing, I believe that we all have a choice to make—all of us. Do we wish to be a nation that metaphorically goes to the Moon together or one that goes to war against one another?

As a free people, that choice remains ours, all of ours. As Albert Einstein, a notable immigrant to the United States of America, famously said that the world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing.

I believe in us. I love you all, and I will see you down the road. Godspeed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair reminds Members that the rules do not allow references to persons in the gallery.

AMERICA MUST LEAD 5G INNOVATION

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it has never been more critical that the United States lead the way on 5G innovation.

Not only would an expanded 5G network provide critical services and opportunities for Americans living in rural areas, but it would also provide the United States with the ability to continue leading the way on the development of wireless technology.

Allowing our adversaries to advance in future generations of wireless without us would erode our privacy, compromise the security of our networks, and lead to increased foreign influence in our communications.

The Promoting United States Wireless Leadership Act would help the U.S. take the necessary steps to safeguard our technological advantages. By bringing key leaders and stakeholders to the table, this bill would encourage a unified approach to set standards for all 5G networks.

By standardizing our approach, we can help ensure a greater certainty for both the provider and consumer.

As we look ahead, reliable high-speed connectivity will be vital for students who are doing their homework, for businesses connecting with their customers, for farmers in the fields, and for patients using telemedicine to heal from home.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation and help ensure that our wireless technologies continue to expand and serve the needs of the American people.

CONGRATULATING JUNIATA COLLEGE EAGLES
WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL TEAM

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate the Juniata College women's volleyball team on once again winning the NCAA Division III national championship and on their incredible achievement of winning 97 matches in a row.

This record number of consecutive wins is the result of determination.

Under the leadership of Coach Heather Pavlik, the Juniata Eagles once again completed their season with a perfect 35-0 record.

Equally as important as the team's success in volleyball is their success in the classroom.

Juniata's commitment to academic excellence is an example of how student athletes can make incredible achievements both on and off the court.

On behalf of everyone in Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I am proud to once again congratulate the women's volleyball team at Juniata on another outstanding season, and I look forward to their continued success.

EXECUTIVE OVERREACH DURING PRESIDENTIAL
TRANSITION

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, as the Biden administration comes to an end, we have seen continued attempts by the far left to enact major regulatory policies just as this administration is on its way out the door.

The American people have spoken and elected President Donald J. Trump to return to the White House. This is not the time for President Biden to take executive actions that provide student loan bailouts or implement Green New Deal policies.

If President Biden takes these executive actions at a time when the voters have made it clear that they are ready for change, we need to ensure that these rules are not permanent.

The Midnight Rules Relief Act would ensure that the American people are heard during a Presidential transition by allowing the Congressional Review Act to be used to overturn multiple Federal Rules in a single resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support the Midnight Rules Relief Act to put a stop to President Biden's executive overreach.

SENATE MUST REJECT RJK JR. FOR HHS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. ROBERT GARCIA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on our colleagues in the Senate to reject Donald Trump's nomination of RFK Jr. as Secretary of Health and Human Services.

RFK Jr. has proven himself for decades to be a conspiracy theorist, and we cannot allow the critical work done by HHS and the doctors and medical professionals there to be undermined by someone with his record.

For those not familiar, RJK Jr. first has no scientific or medical credentials. Instead, he has spent his career fueling anti-vaccine movements around the world, including one in Samoa that contributed to a measles outbreak that killed dozens of people and made almost 6,000 sick, most of them children and infants.

RFK Jr. has falsely claimed vaccines cause autism and suggested that COVID health measures were worse than the Holocaust. He has also peddled conspiracy theories that chemicals in water are making children transgender and gay.

This is someone who has threatened to gut the National Institutes of Health, the Federal agency responsible for medical and public health research. They, along with the rest of HHS, do vital, nonpartisan work that impacts every American and every community, from pandemic preparedness to cancer research to resources for mental health and substance abuse.

There are real lives at stake. We just went through a pandemic that cost the lives of 1.3 million Americans, the single largest loss of life event in the modern era in our country and around the world.

We cannot allow at this moment to hand over the keys of public health to an extreme, unqualified, and dangerous nominee. The Senate must reject RJK Jr. for HHS.

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SOCIETY IS LOSING ITS MORAL COMPASS

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

Mr. LOPEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the decay of the moral compass that our Nation is facing. The moral compass of faith, family, and self-resilience that this Nation was founded on is being treated as if it is a cheap suit or an old pair of shoes that needs to be discarded and replaced.

There is a national movement today that is focused on distorting the foundational values on which our great Nation was founded, values such as faith, family, and self-reliance. This movement is found in our schools; our military; our Federal, State, and local government; our churches; and in the public square.

Our Nation's values have been distorted to merely hollow words and are no longer seen as a foundational bedrock of our Nation.

When our educational system focuses on teaching our children that gender identity is more important than learning to read, write, or to do math, that is a sign that society is losing its moral compass.

When society and medical professionals promote the concept that God can make a mistake when it comes to gender and that only science can correctly assign the two genders of our adult brothers and sisters and to our children, that is a sign that society is losing its moral compass.

When society openly allows the labeling of the killing of babies as women's health or body autonomy, that is a sign of society losing its moral compass.

When man believes he has the ultimate authority to redefine marriage