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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. 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,
December 17, 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 11:50 a.m.

RECOGNIZING DEDICATED SERVICE OF RETIRING MEMBERS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the dedicated service of several of my colleagues. Throughout my time in Congress, I have had the opportunity to work with many great minds on both sides of the aisle.

A life dedicated to public service isn't necessarily easy, but it is essen-

tial to ensuring the continued prosperity of our great Nation.

When I first entered Congress, I became friends with classmate Representative BILL POSEY, a gentleman from the great State of Florida. His leadership on issues like economic growth, space exploration, and government transparency has a lasting impact. As a steadfast advocate for fiscal responsibility, he has worked tirelessly to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and that the voices of everyday Americans are heard loud and clear.

We are incredibly grateful for his efforts to champion our space program and support the innovators who keep America at the forefront of exploration and discovery. His work has been instrumental in strengthening our leadership in space exploration, a source of pride for all Floridians and Americans alike.

As important is the fact that, from day one, Bill's wife, Katie, and my wife, Penny, became best friends. We wish them both all the best as they start their next chapter in sunny Florida, a chapter I am sure will include a few visits by the Thompsons.

During my first term in Congress, I had the pleasure of getting to know another classmate, BLAINE LUETKEMEYER of Missouri. His work on financial reform and advocacy for small businesses has been particularly impactful. He has championed the entrepreneurs and hardworking Americans who drive our economy forward, ensuring that they have the resources and opportunities to thrive.

Whether it was standing up for Main Street or leading efforts to cut necessary red tape, Representative LUETKEMEYER has always been a champion of commonsense legislation in Washington.

Best wishes to Blaine, his wife, Jackie, and all those grandchildren.

In addition to my previously mentioned colleagues, I have gotten to

know Representative MCMORRIS RODGERS of Washington. Her leadership is undeniable.

Representative MCMORRIS RODGERS has served as both vice chair and chair of the House Republican Conference and was the first woman to chair the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Her commitment to energy independence, innovation, and economic growth has paved the way for a stronger and more secure future. Her dedication to improving access to healthcare, particularly for those living in rural areas, has made a real difference in the lives of countless families.

I also have to say that Cathy has been a prayer warrior in Washington, D.C., both in Bible studies and, quite frankly, even just circling the Capitol in prayer.

As the 118th Congress comes to a close, I reflect on my colleagues' dedication, hard work, and the positive changes that they have helped bring about.

Madam Speaker, I thank Representatives POSEY, LUETKEMEYER, and MCMORRIS RODGERS for their years of public service and commitment to improving our country.

They all will be missed.

BIDDING FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

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

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address my colleagues here on the House floor one last time and to express my heartfelt gratitude for what has been the greatest honor of my lifetime.

Twelve years ago, I was sent here to Washington to represent the people of northeastern Pennsylvania, a region defined by its natural beauty, rich industrial heritage, and honest, hardworking residents.

□ 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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When I was elected, I vowed to be an effective legislator, somebody who would put aside party politics and work across the aisle to pass legislation meaningful to the lives not just of my constituents back home but of all Americans, and I did that.

In my 12 years here, I have had fully 16 bills, pieces of substantive legislation passed into law by the past three Presidents. These are laws that are actively protecting our Nation's veterans, preserving our environment, reducing government waste, and helping government work more efficiently.

I have also worked to restore passenger rail between Scranton, Pennsylvania, and New York City. After more than 12 years of hard work, we are finally on the cusp of seeing that come true, thanks in large part to the passage of the bipartisan infrastructure law we passed last Congress.

I seek to give credit to my outstanding staff, including former members of Team Cartwright, who are amazing people who worked so hard.

To my district staff, former State Senator John Blake, Bob Morgan, April Niver, Tammy Aita, Colleen Gerrity, Jonas Crass, Christa Mecadon, Wendy Wilson, Lee Anne Pugliese, Len Namiotka, Tyler McAlpine, Michael Marsyada, Sabrina McLaughlin, Anne Lauritzen, and Chris Garza; and to my staff here in D.C., my formidable Chief of Staff Hunter Ridgway, Rachel Cohen, Kaylee Robinson, Jeremy Marcus, Stephen Coffey, Samuel Negatu, Karina Hull, RT Rogers, Laura Masterton, Lily Fortsch, Aliza Oppenheim, Daniela Amodei, Anna Mason, Jacob Feit, and Casey Wilson, your work has directly touched the lives of so many in our district and America.

A thank-you is also in order for the outstanding staff on the Appropriations Committee who worked for me. Clerk Bob Bonner and staff members Shannon McCully, Faye Cobb, Nora Faye, and Jamie Wise have been so valuable to me during my time as chair and ranking member of the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee.

None of my work or success would have been possible without the unending support of my family: my sons, Jack and Matty, and their partners, Dr. Tim DeVita and Dr. Celeste Pallone; the wonderful support from the whole family; and my rock, my North Star, my wonderful wife, attorney Marion Munley Cartwright. I thank her for letting me go on this 12-year junket. It has been a real party.

Madam Speaker, this is the United States Congress. When you make it here, you have made it to the major leagues of world politics.

I have seen it all here in 12 years. I have seen stupendous skullduggery and treachery, and I have observed Olympic-caliber levels of obsequiousness, but I have also served with the best people I have ever met in my life.

These are people whom you look up to, people whom you admire, and men

and women whom you would do anything for. Your only regret is that you didn't know them your entire life. It has been my honor to serve alongside them.

In the darkling predawn light of a spring day in May 1775, when Ethan Allen attacked the British garrison at Fort Ticonderoga at the beginning of the American Revolution, he demanded that the British surrender the fort in the name of the great God Jehovah and the Continental Congress.

I am here to say that I have gotten to know the latter. It has been my honor to serve in the latter and to get to know the latter, and now I am off in search of the former.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF FORMER CONGRESSMAN JIM LEACH

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

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of former Congressman Jim Leach, who recently passed away.

Jim Leach represented southeast Iowa in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1977 to 2013, the district I now represent, leaving an indelible mark on our State and Nation.

As chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, he played a key role in shaping financial regulations that promoted stability and competition.

Known for his integrity and civility, Jim worked across the aisle to build bridges and promote bipartisan solutions. He was also a principled leader, notably voting against the Iraq war, reflecting his commitment to thoughtful, measured foreign policy.

Jim's legacy of public service, grounded in his deep love for Iowa and his country, continues to inspire. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and all who had the privilege of working alongside him.

RECOGNIZING PLEASANT VALLEY SPARTAN GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL TEAM

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Pleasant Valley Spartan girls' volleyball team for their 2024 State volleyball championship. This valiant effort, spurred on by Coach Amber Hall and team captain Isabelle Kremer, led to the Spartans winning their second State title in 4 years. They finished the season with an astonishing 35-2 record.

This culture of excellence established in Pleasant Valley will serve as a springboard for these young women, compelling them to strive for that same excellence in their professional lives. The leadership imbued in them will shine through in all aspects of life.

The Pleasant Valley all-in mentality, which pushes students and teachers to give 100 percent effort in athletics and academics, was established in 2016 and has been a cornerstone of accomplish-

ment ever since. The goal of this rallying cry is to instill a growth mindset that encourages everyone to learn together and push each other to always give their best.

Congratulations to the Pleasant Valley girls' volleyball team, which made us all proud.

HOLDING PHARMACY BENEFIT MANAGERS ACCOUNTABLE

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of President Trump's call to hold pharmacy benefit managers accountable for their role in driving up prescription drug prices.

Currently, six PBMs control over 90 percent of the U.S. prescription drug market, and they are destroying independent pharmacies, especially in rural areas like Iowa. In fact, 25 independent pharmacies have closed in Iowa this year alone.

The first legislation I passed on PBM reform and transparency was as a State senator in 2019.

PBMs use tactics like spread pricing, where they charge insurers more than they reimburse pharmacies, and they pocket the difference. As a result, PBM profits have increased over 300 percent, while prescription drug prices have surged nearly 40 percent, far outpacing inflation.

That is why I introduced the DRUG Act, bipartisan legislation that bans spread pricing, patient steering, and other harmful PBM practices.

It is time for transparency and fairness in our healthcare system. Let's get started on President Trump's agenda and pass PBM reform now.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO PEOPLE OF IOWA

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, as Christmas approaches, I want to take a moment to wish the people of Iowa a very merry Christmas. This is a time of year to reflect on the blessings we have received, to show gratitude for our loved ones, and to embrace the spirit of giving.

For me, Christmas is especially meaningful because it is a time to slow down and spend quality time with my family and friends and to deliver my well-known cinnamon rolls. In our busy lives, these moments together are precious, and I am so grateful for the opportunity to share them with those I love most.

Iowa is a place where community and family are at the heart of everything we do. As we celebrate this season, I encourage everyone to share these connections and spread kindness to those around you.

To my fellow Iowans, may your homes be filled with love, joy, and peace this Christmas. I am truly grateful for each of you. Merry Christmas and happy new year.

WARM WISHES DURING HANUKKAH

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, as Hanukkah begins, I want to wish the Jewish community in Iowa and across the country a happy and meaningful holiday.