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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. EZELL).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 6, 2024.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE EZELL 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.

CELEBRATING CONTRIBUTIONS OF BLACK WOMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of Women's History Month and specifically in celebration of the Black women who have shaped the fabric of our Nation, often without much acknowledgment or praise.

As co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Black Women and Girls, I am deeply committed to correcting these

historical injustices and ensuring that Black women and girls are given the recognition and the resources that they deserve. Black women and girls deserve every possible chance to thrive in school, at work, and in all phases of life.

For centuries, Black women have been the hidden figures, the unsung heroes who have steered our Nation through social revolutions, critical periods of growth, and eras of innovation. From the civil rights movement to the labor movement, Black women have time and time again pushed the needle of progress forward.

I acknowledge two exemplary trailblazers who I often credit as inspiration for my own work to build a better world.

Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman elected to the United States Congress and the first woman to run for the Presidency, embodied the spirit of courage and resilience.

She was truly "unbought and unbossed." She fought back against racism and sexism and never listened when someone told her that she couldn't achieve her dreams. She was a beacon of hope for those of us with an unwavering commitment to justice.

Barbara Jordan, the first Black woman elected to the Texas Senate and the first southern Black woman elected to the United States House of Representatives, made history in countless ways.

She brought the issues of her communities to the forefront and ensured that Congress invested in Black women. She rose above partisanship and spoke truth in the Halls of power.

Today as I speak in this Chamber, I stand on their shoulders, but let us not forget, whether in the Halls of Congress, academia, the corporate world, or, in my case, my entrepreneurial grandmother and my activist mother, there are many shoulders that we can stand on.

Women's History Month serves as a poignant reminder that the contributions of Black women must be amplified and celebrated, ensuring their rightful place in the annals of our Nation's history.

CONSEQUENCES OF OPEN BORDER POLICIES

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, a British container ship was sunk by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in the Gulf of Aden.

This attack is yet another example of how, under President Biden's weak and ineffective leadership, our adversaries have been emboldened and our allies left vulnerable.

Last year, President Biden agreed to release more than \$6 billion to Iran, effectively providing more funds and resources to the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism. This is unacceptable. It shows that, yet again, President Biden is unwilling and unable to provide the leadership that Americans want and that Americans need.

When U.S. ships were threatened with sustained rocket attacks, the Biden administration waited weeks to respond, only further emboldening these terrorist groups to continue their aggression.

It is time to return to leadership that embodies President Ronald Reagan's call of peace through strength. The American people simply cannot afford a President that fails to keep America safe.

CONFRONTING A GROWING BORDER THREAT

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, in his State of the Union speech tomorrow night, President Biden will be forced to confront the growing threat posed by an open and porous southern border.

☐ 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 the month of January, more than 176,000 illegal immigrants attempted to enter the United States. That was on the heels of the month of December when more than 300,000 illegal immigrants again crossed the southern border.

Because of the open border policies championed by President Biden and enacted by Secretary Mayorkas, these illegal immigrants were bused to our major cities. The consequences of this decision have been felt in nearly every community in the United States.

Schools have been converted into shelters for illegal immigrants. In places like New York City and Denver, government services have been scaled back, and city employees, like librarians, have seen their hours cut in order to provide handouts to people who are in the United States illegally.

At a time when more than 300 suspected terrorists have attempted to enter the U.S., President Biden has thrown open our gates and encouraged this crisis to continue.

Ending catch and release, giving our Border Patrol agents the tools and resources that they need, and resuming construction of the border wall are vital to keeping our Nation safe.

It is time for President Biden to reverse his disastrous border policies and put a stop to this crisis.

CELEBRATING VIRGIN ISLANDS HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, this week heralds Virgin Islands History Month. It is the beginning of a monthlong celebration in the Virgin Islands of our history.

My being on the House floor as a representative, representing my people of the Virgin Islands, is the culmination of generations of people's work. My presence here is built upon the indomitable spirit of Virgin Islanders whose legacies are woven into the very fabric of our culture—marked by their bravery, visionary leadership, and profound sacrifice.

Our homeland is a mosaic of rich cultures and a history as diverse as its people, a history that is not just defined by the actions of a select few but a legacy that elevates the collective greatness of all Virgin Islanders. Above all, we are about self-determination that has been a chronicle of epic feats.

As early as 2200 B.C., the Virgin Islands was originally settled by pre-Columbian indigenous groups. In 1493, we had the first instance of self-determination on our island as Columbus' expedition encountered strong resistance from a Carib war party at Salt River Bay on the island of St. Croix, preventing his men from establishing a foothold.

Over the next 200 years, control of the islands shifted among various Eu-

ropean nations. The Caribs fought colonization, launching relentless raids until they were completely eradicated by 1590.

This enduring resistance is a hallmark of our ancestral legacy. During 1733, the enslaved also uprose on the island of St. John.

The Akwamu kings and Queen Breffu of present-day Ghana galvanized enslaved people on St. John to seize control of the island for over 6 months in their pursuit of self-liberation. This valiant act of defiance forced Danish authorities to call the Spanish Armada and the French fleet to quell the rebellion and reassert control.

This weekend, we celebrated their decision to commit collective suicide rather than go back into slavery. The burning desire for freedom and the belief that such should be a birthright, no matter the fabricated classification of their oppressors, was not lost in the passing of time.

On the island of St. Croix in 1848, enslaved individuals initiated an armed insurrection that ultimately led to their emancipation. This act of strategic ingenuity positioned the Virgin Islands as one of only two instances in the Western Hemisphere where enslaved people successfully fought for and gained their freedom through an organized revolt.

Although Virgin Islanders obtained liberation, they soon discovered that their emancipation and equality were not synonymous.

In 1878, in a revolt over labor laws, which left them pretty much as enslaved peoples living on plantations, a rebellion was led by what we call Queens Mary, Matilda, Agnes, and Susannah.

Even though the movement resulted in bloodshed, their deaths were not in vain. Their struggles and sacrifices for improved working conditions served as a foundational influence on the 1892 Coal Workers' Strike spearheaded by Queen Coziah. This was a pivotal source of inspiration to stand against oppression and fight for greater opportunities.

We continue to fight in the Virgin Islands, and although we still face hardships such as our continued battle to attain the fundamental and constitutional rights denied by the Insular Cases, rights that are given to all Americans except those who live in territories, we are in an era that will be a catalyst to spur on the next revolution.

To stop now, even for a moment, would be sacrilege to the countless sacrifices and bloodshed of our ancestors. We must not take for granted the gifts that they have given us through their bloodshed. We must fight on for full equality, self-determination, and our own liberation.

BORDER CRISIS IS TOP ISSUE

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

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, this Chamber will host President Biden as he delivers his third State of the Union Address.

He will likely tout his anti-energy agenda and out-of-control government spending that has resulted in crippling inflation not seen in decades, not seen since I was a senior in high school.

He will also attempt to blame congressional Republicans for his own failure to secure our borders, which, as most Americans know, is a crisis caused by this President.

In a rare recent visit to the border in Brownsville, Texas, President Biden expressed a dire need for Republicans to "show a little spine" and pass legislation.

Some of the folks living in that border town saw straight through the visit. One resident put it best. "By a stroke of the pen," he said, "you could stop this. You don't need Congress." Others called the visit too little, too late. I couldn't agree more.

This isn't just an important issue for the folks living along the border. In fact, this issue is the number one issue facing the country.

It is an issue in my home State, where 50 Tennessee National Guard soldiers volunteered recently to deploy to the southern border to help Border Patrol officials combat drug, crime, and human trafficking.

Tennessee is known as the Volunteer State because of its deep tradition of volunteer military service, a nickname that comes with a lot of pride. It is just unfortunate that 50 men and women are having to do what the President could do—but won't—and work to secure the border.

This is a self-inflicted crisis that has turned every State, including my own State of Tennessee, into a border State.

The President halted border wall construction and ended the successful remain in Mexico program. Since taking office, he has also admitted more than 1 million illegal immigrants into the country in a blatant abuse of the executive parole authority that Congress had granted to the executive branch.

Despite having no way of tracking many of these people, the Biden administration continues this historic catch and release scheme.

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It sends a message to the rest of the world that our borders are open. None of these disastrous policies require an act of Congress, just as reversing them won't require new legislation.

There have been more than 8.7 million illegal border crossings nationwide under President Biden, more than 7.2 million crossings at the southern border alone. That is greater than the population of 36 States in our Nation.

More than 20,000 Communist Chinese nationals have illegally crossed the southern border just since October 1 of last year. They make up the fastest growing demographic entering our