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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. BOST).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

March 25, 2025.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE BOST 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 3, 2025, 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.

MAJORITY OF AMERICANS SUPPORT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

(Ms. BONAMICI of Oregon was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn in the strongest terms possible President Trump's executive order that threatens millions of students and local public schools through the dismantling of the Department of Education.

This is an illegal and unconstitutional abuse of power straight out of the Project 2025 playbook. Congress

created the Department. Only Congress can dismantle it, something I will fight every step of the way.

I note that Donald Trump and Elon Musk have likely never set forth in a public school, and they certainly do not understand what the Department of Education actually does and why it is important, but students, families, and teachers in Oregon and across the country understand.

In the past few weeks, several Oregon parents have told me they are terrified that their kids will lose access to vital educational services. One mom said she worries about sending her two kids with special needs to kindergarten next year if there are cuts to IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Unlike Secretary McMahon, I actually know what IDEA stands for and what it means for students. I have been an education advocate for decades, and no one has ever said we need less money to meet the needs of students with disabilities. It is always a plea to fully fund IDEA.

Another mom told me that her kids attend a title I school and get enough to eat because of school breakfast and lunch programs. It is a fact that high-poverty schools, about half the schools in the U.S., have greater educational needs, and that is why title I dollars provide flexibility so districts can determine how to best meet the needs of their low-income students. Cutting that funding will widen, rather than close, the achievement gap.

Nonsensically, Trump and Musk are rejoicing at the idea of returning power to States and local communities. Return what? States and local districts already have power over core functions of education, including curriculum, staffing, and budgeting. In fact, it is against the law for the Federal Government to set curriculum.

Donald Trump also makes a bogus argument that declining test scores jus-

tify abolishing the Department, but test scores don't make the case for slashing Federal investment in education. On the contrary, they show us where we need to direct resources and support to students, especially low-income students and students with disabilities.

Unfortunately, we are losing an important research tool about what students need because the Trump administration has taken a chain saw to the National Center for Education Statistics.

We know that more than 51,000 public schools serve concentrated populations of students from low-income families and receive title I funds. Almost 7.5 million students with disabilities receive a free, appropriate public education because of IDEA.

I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to speak with your local and State legislators and ask them if they have extra resources to fill these gaps.

Also, the majority of Federal funding through the Department of Education is to open doors of opportunity to higher education for students who choose to attend college but can't afford the cost. This includes Pell grants, Federal work-study, and low-interest loans to those who qualify.

I would not be where I am today without the Federal aid I got to first attend community college, then college, then law school.

Importantly, the Department of Education is a civil rights agency. The Office for Civil Rights enforces Federal laws prohibiting discrimination and harassment, investigating thousands of civil rights cases every year, primarily from students with disabilities. This work will be more difficult, if not impossible, with the Trump administration firing at least 240 employees in the Office for Civil Rights and closing more than half of its regional offices.

Donald Trump also says he wants to shut down the Department but keep its

□ 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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core functions. Get rid of the people with expertise and give the core functions to other agencies without the expertise or the staff to handle them? That is not government efficiency. It is absurdity.

Last month, I introduced H. Res. 94 in defense of public schools and the Department of Education, and more than 85 of my colleagues have signed on. We will fight all efforts to defund and dismantle the important work the Department does, and we won't back down.

The consequences are clear: Closing the Department of Education will harm students, families, communities, and the economy. The majority of Americans support the Department of Education, and I know public school advocates will be working tirelessly to maintain the strong and vital Federal investment in our system of public education.

Donald Trump and Elon Musk might think that this ill-conceived abuse of power will go unchecked. They are about to find out how wrong they are.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

CONGRATULATING DAWSON-BOYD BLACKJACKS

(Mrs. FISCHBACH of Minnesota was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Dawson-Boyd Blackjacks on defeating the defending champs to claim their first-ever title 1A championship.

It has been 34 years since the Blackjacks have been to the State tournament, and their hard work paid off. With what felt like the entire town in Williams Arena, this game was a dream come true.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Blackjacks on their victory. They have made all of their families, community, and the Seventh District proud.

CONGRATULATING ALBANY HUSKIES ON UNDEFEATED SEASON

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Albany Huskies on their undefeated season, closing it out with a win over Waseca in the Class 2A championship last weekend.

These players were unshakable, even when the score was tied up. They knew their mission and executed, and they have made their families, the Albany community, and the entire Seventh District proud.

CONGRATULATING ALEXANDRIA CARDINALS ON CHAMPIONSHIP

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Alexandria Cardinals basketball team on defeating Mankato East for their first-ever 3A Boys championship title.

The senior co-captains, Sam Hagstrom and Chase Thompson, were especially excited, saying: "It has been a fun ride," and, "We ended things with a bang and left our mark," after their big win.

This is a closely bonded group of young men, and their teamwork certainly paid off.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Cardinals on their win and for making their families, community, and the entire Seventh District proud.

CONGRATULATING WEST CENTRAL AREA KNIGHTS

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the West Central Area girls' basketball team, the Knights, on their first-ever State championship in any sport for their school.

As the fourth seed in a season full of upsets, I know this was a hard-fought victory. They should all be so proud of everything they have accomplished this year. They have certainly made their families, community, and the entire Seventh District proud.

CONGRATULATING RON MERGEN

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Ron Mergen on 37 years of service to the city of Paynesville.

A beloved and respected member of the community, unsurprisingly, last year, he was voted Boss of the Year. I know his coworkers are sad to see him go, but I also know he won't be a stranger. He has been named the grand marshal of this year's Paynesville Town and Country Days parade.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Ron so much for his service to the community and congratulate him on a well-earned retirement.

FOOD BANKS FACING URGENT CRISIS

(Ms. MCBRIDE of Delaware was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. MCBRIDE. Mr. Speaker, across the country, food banks are facing an urgent crisis, and Delaware is no exception. Millions of dollars' worth of deliveries of vital food aid have been halted to food banks.

In February alone, more than 50 percent of the food that the Food Bank of Delaware distributed came from the Federal Government. Now, with shipments frozen and no clarity on whether they will be restored, they are in uncharted territory.

The Food Bank of Delaware is now uncertain whether they will receive 14 truckloads over the next 4 months. These halted deliveries represent over a quarter of the food expected to be received from the Federal Government for the rest of this fiscal year. Cathy Kanefsky, the CEO of the Food Bank of Delaware, shared with me that this would be devastating.

This is not an abstract issue. It is not a partisan issue. This is about families, working parents, seniors, veterans, and children. These are people who rely on food banks to get through the month.

One in eight Delawareans face food insecurity, and the Food Bank of Delaware has been a lifeline for thousands of families.

The truckloads in question represent over 600,000 meals that the food bank will not be able to put on the tables of Delawareans.

Yes, the Food Bank of Delaware plays a frontline role in combating hunger, but they offer more than just food. They provide dignity, hope, and a sense of community.

Food banks, which are already stretched thin, are now being asked to do even more with even less. The loss of Federal support jeopardizes their ability to serve effectively, placing additional strain on State and local resources.

At a time when grocery prices remain high and demand for assistance is great, the loss of these shipments could mean fewer meals for families in every corner of my State.

Further cuts at the hands of the administration to the USDA's local food purchasing assistance program only add to this crisis. At the direction of this administration, the USDA axed two programs that give schools and food banks assistance to buy food from local farms and ranchers. In Delaware alone, this will amount to \$2 million in cuts.

Just last month, I stood on this floor to raise the alarm about \$10 million in funding owed to Delaware farmers. Now, I stand here again to raise the alarm about the Trump administration taking their chain saw to another life-saving service that supports our farmers in feeding Delaware. All of this will result in fewer customers for Delaware's farmers and higher prices at the grocery store for Delaware's families.

The Trump administration has broken their promise time and time again to the American people, ripping funding and literal food from the hands of my constituents.

The USDA must restore these shipments and funding before the consequences become dire to families across Delaware.

CELEBRATING SEAFORD'S TRANSFORMATION

Ms. MCBRIDE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the transformation happening in Seaford, Delaware, an investment in economic growth, opportunity, and the future of western Sussex County.

Seaford is a small city rich in history. Just last week, I had the privilege of meeting with Seaford's leadership to discuss the city's progress and their vision for the future.

Over the last decade, Seaford has transformed its small but vibrant downtown through Delaware's innovative Downtown Development District program, started by our former Governor, Jack Markell. Through hard work and dedicated investment, Seaford's Main Street has gone from 90 percent vacancy to more than 90 percent occupancy.

At the center of the next phase of Seaford's revitalization effort is the Nylon Capital Center, a project that will breathe new life into a space that was once a focal point of Seaford and