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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 of Illinois).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 6, 2025.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MARY E. MILLER 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.

CONGRATULATING THE GORDON LONGHORNS

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

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Gordon Longhorns for their win over the Whiteface Antelopes with a score of 70-24 to become the UIL Class 1A Division 1 State Football Champions.

The Gordon Longhorns finished the season with a perfect record of 15 wins and 0 losses. After a season of early

mornings, long hours on the field, and staying focused in school, these student athletes and trainers and coaches showed dedication, strength, and an unwavering commitment to victory. I am proud that all their hard work and dedication throughout the year has paid off.

As some of these bright and talented individuals prepare for their next endeavors, I wish them the best of luck and blessings for an even brighter and more victorious future. Go Longhorns. In God we trust.

A HOSTILE TAKEOVER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Madam Speaker, today is February 6. It is my 80th birthday, and I should be celebrating, but you know what? I am mourning. You know why? Because Elon Musk, an unelected billionaire donor, has mounted a hostile takeover of the Federal Government.

It is an astonishing display of corruption: A billionaire CEO who is not confirmed, who is accountable to no one, and who donated millions to Donald Trump's election campaign is now in charge of the Treasury Department's payment system. He is doing what vulture capitalists have done to American businesses across the country.

They come in, do a hostile takeover, strip a company of its parts, and layoff a third of the hardworking people who make the company run. But you know what the difference is? This company is the United States of America. The parts that he is stripping out are our private information. They are attempting to dismiss committed workers who make this country run, and they are ripping the American people off in the process. Donald Trump is cosigning all of it.

The richest man in the world now has access to the personal information and financial information of millions of Americans, including Social Security numbers and bank account details. This unprecedented breach of public trust puts countless Americans at risk of identity theft, financial fraud, and political retaliation.

Handing over such sensitive information to a reckless billionaire with a history of self-serving business dealings and foreign interests is not just irresponsible, it is dangerous.

He is attempting to dismantle the systems within the Federal Government for several reasons. First, contrary to the image he has worked to cultivate, he is not a competent manager. He does not understand how many government organizations function or the important role they play in supporting the United States and its citizens. Rather than learn, he is choosing to break them like a frustrated and impatient child.

Second, he sees an opportunity to make more money. His companies already receive billions in government contracts by taking control of key parts of the Federal system. He can steer more taxpayer money into his pockets.

Last is ideological. He was born and raised in South Africa under the apartheid system, and he is a white supremacist. He elevates the opinions of neo-Nazis on his social media platform. He proudly gave a Nazi salute at a rally earlier this year. He does not want the government to work for or answer to anyone who is not a straight, rich, White man.

Since the moment my office opened Monday morning and continuing, my constituents have been calling my office understandably furious at this naked display of corruption. I share in their outrage. This is an outrageous thing we are witnessing.

My congressional colleagues and I have been in discussions over the past

□ 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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few days about what we can do to fight back. I am fully committed to using every tool at my disposal to resist this egregious, un-American, and unconstitutional overreach.

To those listening, call your Representatives and tell them how you feel about this out-of-touch billionaire reaching his hands into your private information. To the civil servant employees who work every day to keep the government running, I ask you to stand your ground.

Tell those minions of the unelected billionaire donor that you don't work for them; you work for the American people. When they demand access, tell them no. When they tell you that you are dismissed, tell them to speak to your union rep because you are not leaving until you hear from them.

Stand up, American people. Stand up for your families and protect your rights. To my Republican colleagues, aren't there at least three who believe in America?

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived viewing audience.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH

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 discuss a topic fundamental to the strength of our workforce and the future of our economy: career and technical education, otherwise known as CTE.

Yesterday, I introduced a resolution celebrating CTE month and highlighting these programs' vital role in preparing students for high-skill, high-wage careers. The reach of CTE programs is vast. They shape industries that are the backbone of our economy, healthcare, information technology, advanced manufacturing, infrastructure, and the skilled trades, just to name a few.

With a record number of learners enrolled in CTE programs nationwide, more than 12 million, it is clear that these initiatives are making a difference. However, we still face a major challenge: a skills gap.

Today, there are approximately 8 million job openings in this country. Businesses, both large and small, are struggling to find qualified workers with specialized skills needed to compete in an ever-evolving job market.

Emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and automation are reshaping our economy, demanding higher levels of expertise, problem-solving, and adaptability from our workforce. The solution is clear: We must continue to invest in CTE programs.

These programs bridge the gap between education and employment, ensuring that students and workers of all

ages have the tools that they need to succeed. CTE is a powerful pathway to success.

By providing hands-on experience, industry certifications, and real-world knowledge applications, CTE empowers individuals to secure high-quality jobs and build prosperous careers.

I have long recognized the importance of CTE through legislation like the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. This investment modernizes Federal support for CTE programs and provides greater flexibility for States and local communities to tailor education to workforce needs.

A practical outcome of this that I have seen is we were under-enrolled, and, today, as a result of that legislation, we now have waiting lists of individuals, both youth and adults, seeking this pathway to success in life.

The results speak for themselves. According to a recent analysis, CTE students in secondary programs have a 4-year graduation rate of over 96 percent. This is significantly higher than the national average.

According to the CTE Research Network, which conducts analyses of CTE in coordination with the Institute of Education Sciences at the Department of Education, CTE has significant, positive impacts on several high school outcomes, including academic achievement, employability skills, and post-secondary readiness.

Employers also report that CTE graduates are better prepared for the workforce, stating they possess the necessary technical skills and work readiness to excel in their roles. None of this would be possible without the dedicated educators, administrators, and support staff who work tirelessly to promote and expand CTE programs.

Their commitment to student success is invaluable, and we owe them our deepest gratitude for preparing the next generation of skilled professionals.

I thank my partner on this legislation here in the House, Representative BONAMICI, as well as my counterparts across the Capitol, Senators BALDWIN, BUDD, Kaine, and YOUNG, for joining me in introducing this commonsense effort.

Madam Speaker, as we look ahead, we must remain committed to strengthening CTE, ensuring that every student, regardless of their background, has access to these opportunities. By doing so, we close the skills gap and build a more competitive and resilient economy that benefits all Americans.

“WE WERE STRANGERS ONCE,
TOO”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. McIVER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. McIVER. Madam Speaker, I rise to celebrate the incredible voices and

stories captured in “We Were Strangers Once, Too.” This is a powerful memoir retelling the immigrant journeys and stories of students from my district.

I had the opportunity to meet these young authors and witness them share vulnerable and deeply personal experiences. Their stories highlighted the difficult reality for many migrants who leave their home country in pursuit of a better life.

These stories highlight something else: Hope—hope for a brighter future and hope rooted in the belief that, no matter where we come from, we all deserve dignity, safety, and happiness.

As immigrants are othered by divisive policies, stories like these bring us closer together and show our shared humanity is stronger than what tries to divide us. They serve as a reminder, as President Obama once said: “We were strangers once, too.”

I commend the bravery of the student authors sharing these truths and the work of their editor, Shawn Adler, who is here with us in the gallery today. Thank you for sharing your voices with the world.

HONORING INEZ ROSALIE ALICK ELLIOT'S 108TH
BIRTHDAY

Mrs. McIVER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Inez Rosalie Alick Elliot, who just celebrated her 108th birthday. Known as Rose to family and friends, she celebrated her 108th birthday on January 20.

Faith has always been a cornerstone for Rose's life. A long-time member of Calvary Baptist Church in East Orange, Rose embodies the spirit of service and dedication. Her commitment to our community has been recognized with numerous accolades.

She was honored with the Essex County Legends Award for her contributions and work improving the lives of fellow seniors. Known for her grace, laughter, and wisdom, she remains a positive role model for all of us. She is a beacon of inspiration, reminding us all that faith, service, and laughter are the keys to a long, fulfilling life. Happy birthday, Rose.

MAKING SNAP MORE ACCESSIBLE

Mrs. McIVER. Madam Speaker, I introduced the SNAP Benefits Fairness Act in the U.S. House with Representative SHONTEL BROWN to remove the housing cap on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and make SNAP benefits more accessible to those who need them.

□ 1015

Madam Speaker, the cost of housing is taking up more and more of Americans' paychecks, and SNAP benefits are not keeping up. It is time to bring SNAP up to speed and create opportunities for working families to use essential programs like SNAP that reduce poverty and help them make ends meet.

By getting rid of the shelter cap, this bill ensures working families who are spending too much on rent and utilities get the benefits they deserve without being punished by high housing costs.