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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 3, 2026.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE KENNEDY 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 6, 2026, 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.

RECOGNIZING VIRGIN ISLANDS HISTORY MONTH

(Ms. PLASKETT of the Virgin Islands was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Virgin Islands history month, a time to honor the extraordinary story of a people whose courage, resilience, and sacrifice have shaped not only our beautiful islands but this great Nation itself.

One hundred and eight years ago, on March 31, 1917, the islands of St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John were trans-

ferred from Denmark to the United States in the costliest per-acre land purchase in American history. The 25 million in gold bullion paid for our islands was shipped to Copenhagen from the United States. No provisions were made for the people who lived there. No vote was taken by the Virgin Islanders themselves.

Many great nations and conquerors have tried to keep us voiceless and marginalized. Yet, good, strong, blessed people can never be kept down. We have always found a way, from our beginning until today.

Virgin Islanders have always been revolutionary. From the very first recorded history of our islands, the people of Ay-Ay, present-day St. Croix, met Columbus with the first armed resistance in the so-called New World.

In the 1700s the Akwamu people of St. John took and held their freedom for almost a year, forcing colonial powers to bring an armada to break their hold. In 1848, we became one of only two places in the Western Hemisphere to gain freedom through the direct and violent overthrow of enslavement.

Our islands gave this Nation Alexander Hamilton, who learned his genius for finance in the merchant house of St. Croix, from the African counting systems, Dutch ledgers, and others. We have given the United States Abraham Markoe, the designer of the 13 stripes in the American flag. Denmark Vesey gave up his freedom in pursuit of liberation in South Carolina. We have also given the United States Edward Wilmot Blyden, our son, the father of Pan-Africanism; Camille Pissarro, the founder of Impressionism; and William Leidesdorff, the early pioneer and founder of present-day San Francisco.

In the mid-1900s, Virgin Islanders came to Washington and petitioned to be included in the draft, asking to send our sons to defend a country that would not yet defend us. We have given America generals, diplomats, statesmen, scientists, artists, and athletes.

We have sacrificed in military service at three times the national average, fighting for a commander-in-chief we do not elect.

I am a limited voting Delegate. I serve on committees. I fight for my constituents. I show up every single day. However, when the final vote is called on legislation that will directly affect my people, the people of the Virgin Islands, I cannot cast that vote. We are full Americans in responsibility but partial Americans in right. That must change.

Our territory has faced enormous challenges. Hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated our infrastructure, tested the will of our people. We still rebuild.

We are fighting for SSI expansion so that elderly and disabled Virgin Islanders receive the same Federal safety net their fellow Americans on the mainland receive. We are fighting for inclusion of territories in Federal programs that every other American takes for granted. We are fighting, as we have always fought, for the full promise of an American Dream to extend to our shores.

We have tools now that our ancestors did not: Federal investments in our ports, our energy grid, our schools, community project funding, and a growing network of advocates. But tools are only as powerful as the hands that wield them.

As we observe Virgin Islands History Month, I want to speak directly to every Virgin Islander. We are the descendants of people who refuse to accept their circumstances as permanent. We are the heirs of a revolutionary tradition that predates this Republic, and we have the power to reimagine and rebuild a Virgin Islands that our ancestors would recognize as worthy of everything they endured.

That means engaging fully in our Democracy at every level. It means electing leaders who will fight for territorial equity. It means our young people pursuing education and eventually

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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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returning home to lead. It means our businesses innovating, our farmers growing, artists creating, community organizations building, and it means a local government managing systems that work for all and not just benefit a few. It means demanding loudly, persistently with history behind us and without cowering for fear that this Nation treat the people of the territories as full and equal American citizens we are.

Mr. Speaker, let us celebrate in our actions Virgin Islands History Month.

FUNDING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

(Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deep concern over the lapse in funding for the Department of Homeland Security. Every single day that we fail to provide DHS with the necessary resources, the risks facing the American people dramatically increase.

The security of our homeland should never be a bargaining chip. Instead of prioritizing the safety of the American people, Democrats have chosen to weaponize the appropriations process for political leverage. This is not how our Democracy was founded to operate. Americans continue to bear the consequences of Democrats engaging in political theater.

As we return to the floor for a vote, Members of Congress must set aside partisan agendas and personal politics. Our first duty is to protect the citizens that we serve.

With the war in Iran, we have reached an increase in global instability. In moments like this, we should be strengthening our Homeland Security posture and not allowing it to lapse.

An unfunded Department of Homeland Security sends the wrong message to our adversaries and leaves our homeland vulnerable. It is neither a safe nor responsible act. It is a failure of Congress not to have met one of its most fundamental obligations.

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve better. The American people deserve leadership that puts their safety first. It is time to end the theatrics. It is time to fund DHS. It is time to fulfill and protect this Nation.

RECOGNIZING JORDAN OTT

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a native of McConnellsburg, Pennsylvania, Jordan Ott, who is the head coach of the Phoenix Suns.

As a three-sport athlete at McConnellsburg High School, Coach Ott has always dreamed of working for a professional sports team. That goal was recognized in 2013 when he joined the Atlanta Hawks as a video coordinator.

Coach Ott went on to serve as an assistant coach with three NBA teams.

Last June, he was hired as the head coach of the Suns, where he was named NBA's Western Conference Coach of the Month for January.

A former high school teammate described Coach Ott as someone who will accomplish everything and take credit for nothing. What a coach.

That is a character trait worth emulating by individuals throughout all of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District. In fact, it is worth emulating throughout all of America.

Mr. Speaker, I offer best wishes to Coach Ott for continued success that exceeds his incredible expectations that will continue to rise throughout the NBA.

HONORING SNIDER FAMILY OF BEDFORD COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the Snider family of Bedford County, Pennsylvania, on the selection of their operation as a recipient of the National Beef Quality Assurance Award.

Singing Brook Farm is a third-generation farm currently managed by Ross Snider and his sister Greta Halahan.

Founded by Obie and Mary Ann Snider in 1951, Singing Brook Farms was later operated by their son, Bruce. Notably, Singing Brook Farms is an established leader in education and advocacy.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Snider family on receiving the National Beef Quality Assurance Award. Their commitment to agriculture continues to benefit all of the constituents of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District.

HONORING CLAYSBURG-KIMMEL ELEMENTARY FIRST LEGO LEAGUE TEAM

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it is with pride that I rise to honor the Claysburg-Kimmel Elementary FIRST LEGO League Team that captured the championship in the Best Robot Design category during regional competition.

What is most impressive about the achievement of these fifth and sixth graders is that they were the first LEGO Club at Claysburg-Kimmel Elementary that only formed last fall.

During the competition, students demonstrated their robot creations and offered presentations on how their robots would function in real-world settings.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate this team from Claysburg-Kimmel, their teachers and coaches Suzanne Wicker and Brandon Ickes, as well as elementary school principal Kevin Edmondson and Superintendent Darren McLaurin on this incredible achievement. Best wishes for continued success.

FACING AN INFLECTION POINT IN THIS NATION AND THE WORLD

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

Ms. MCBRIDE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today at an inflection point for our Nation and the world.

Both here at home and abroad, families are facing the crushing weight of Donald Trump's chaotic and cruel leadership. At home, inflation is driving up costs around the country, and my neighbors are struggling to afford their utility bills, their health insurance, and their groceries.

In cities across our country, masked paramilitary agents are brutally murdering American citizens, disappearing immigrants without due process, and acting with cheered-on cruelty that mirrors a secret police force.

Overseas, this President has launched more military strikes against more countries than any President in history. He is circumventing Congress and ignoring international rules. He is emboldening authoritarians and insulting our allies. Just this past weekend, the United States began yet another war of choice in the Middle East based on misrepresented intelligence and uncertain objectives.

Already six Americans have tragically died in this avoidable conflict. Whether a full-scale ground war unfolds now or not, this President's shoot-first-ask-questions-later foreign policy inevitably leads to one place globally: death, destruction, and destabilization.

Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 250th year since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. In the century and a half since, our country has faced several inflection points. In each one, we are faced with a choice: Do we destroy, or do we build? Do we destroy our Union, our Constitution, and our democracy, or do we choose to build a more perfect Union?

We seem to face one of these inflection points every 80 years, when the last living memory of the previous inflection point fades as the last generation that remembers it disappears. When living memory of the Revolution faded, we faced a Civil War. Eighty years after that, as a Great Depression raged, many in America called for a dictator to emulate the strong men in Europe.

Mr. Speaker, now as we lose the last of the Greatest Generation, we are once again seeing destroyers calling into question our democracy.

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Mr. Speaker, destroyers thrive in a culture of cynicism. They exploit it for their own gain. They want to destroy our government and sell it for parts. They want to destroy our attention span and mine what little remains for advertising dollars. They want to destroy housing and healthcare so that they can consolidate power by doling out the scraps.

They want to destroy jobs and the American worker by unleashing unregulated technology that leaves the rich richer and everyone else behind. They want to destroy international institutions and rules so that the strong can plunder the weak.

Perhaps most dangerously, they want to destroy the central ingredient of our