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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 14, 2026.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE HARIDOPOLOS 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.

ASSERTING CONGRESS' CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE

(Mr. COURTNEY of Connecticut was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, this week, Congress will have an opportunity to assert its constitutional role when we vote for the second time on a War Powers Act resolution to force President Trump to seek legal authority for his unilateral military campaign in Iran.

As a member of the Armed Services Committee and a cosponsor of this

measure, I strongly urge my colleagues in the House to vote "yes" to reclaim our constitutional role under Article I, Section 8, as the sole branch of government with the power to decide whether our country goes to war.

On February 28, the President, without consultation with Congress and almost all of our longtime allies, ordered military strikes against Iran, taking the United States into a war now in its seventh week.

Despite the massive costs of this war and the international energy crisis it has created, to date, the President has never articulated what exactly was the imminent threat to the homeland on that date, nor has he laid out a clear, practical plan for success.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 7 weeks, the most arduous and heart-wrenching cost of this war has been borne by 13 American soldiers, who lost their lives, and their families. Hundreds of servicemembers have been injured, and hundreds of innocent civilians, some the very victims of Iran's brutal regime that President Trump said he would liberate, have been killed.

As a result of this war, our servicemembers have had their deployments in the Middle East abnormally extended, such as the sailors on the USS *Gerald Ford*, which today is on day 294, with no end in sight. Thousands of marines have been waiting for weeks in the Middle East aboard amphibious ships as plans for the Strait of Hormuz keep changing.

At home, the war has driven up inflation, driven down the stock market, raised interest rates, and sharply driven up energy prices.

President Trump ignored U.S. military advice that Iran would close the Strait of Hormuz where 20 percent of the world's oil and 30 percent of its fertilizer transits.

Mr. Speaker, researchers at Brown University a few days ago released a real-time, running Iran war cost track-

er that calculates the increased cost of gasoline and diesel fuel since February. As of this morning, American consumers have paid \$19.9 billion in added costs. If you go to the website, which is on the poster here, you can watch in real time as the meter runs.

The average price of gas at the war start was \$2.98. Today it is \$4.12. Diesel was \$3.67, and today it is \$5.65. This morning, in my district, on the way to the airport in Enfield, Connecticut, gas is \$4.29, and diesel is a staggering \$6.19.

Any Member of this House visiting a farm, like a dairy farm that I visited back home during the Easter break, or small businesses like homebuilders who run their equipment on diesel, has heard about the shock and hit that they are taking in terms of keeping their operations sustainable and profitable.

The entire world had high hopes that the present 2-week cease-fire would quickly pivot to a longer term deal and opening of the strait. But after negotiations fell through, the President announced that he was instituting a naval blockade of all Iranian ports with no allied support, another example that he continues to believe he is free to escalate this war without any obligation to adhere to constitutional norms.

Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. Every legal authority indicates that under the law of the sea, this is an act of war. In testimony to the Senate on January 28, Secretary of State and National Security Advisor Marco Rubio himself said: "A blockade is an act of war."

Mr. Speaker, the one role that the Trump administration has acknowledged Congress must play is to vote on funding this war. There are reports that a request is coming to us for as much as \$200 billion to pay for his initiative.

Let me be clear. This body is not and should not be a rubberstamp that

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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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forces the cost onto taxpayers for war decisions which were made outside the law.

Mr. Speaker, 228 years ago, James Madison wrote the following: "The Constitution supposes, what the history of all Governments demonstrates, that the Executive is the branch of power most interested in war and most prone to it. It has accordingly with studied care, vested the question of war in the legislature."

On March 5, I joined 211 of my colleagues in voting "yes" on the War Powers Resolution, H. Con. Res. 38. This War Powers Resolution failed by a vote of 212 to 219.

This week, this body has another chance to show the American people that we are listening to them and are aware of the damage caused by this conflict and have an opportunity to rein in the unilateral actions of this President that is dangerously weakening and isolating our country.

Congress cannot wait any longer to act. I implore my colleagues to support this bipartisan resolution when it comes to the floor this week.

RECOGNIZING CHRIS ARDINGER

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Chris Ardinger of Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, for his selection as the recipient of the Spirit of Community Award.

The award honors individuals who demonstrate an exceptional commitment to improving the quality of Franklin County life, where Chris serves as the administrator of Antrim Township.

Known for his transparent leadership and reliability, Chris has made significant contributions to enhancing the quality of life in the Cumberland Valley.

Most certainly, Chris Ardinger has devoted his life to professional and volunteer community activities.

A former executive director of the Tuscarora Area Chamber of Congress, Chris was elected to the Tuscarora School District Board of Directors at the age of 19. He served 8 years, including 2 as the board president.

On behalf of the constituents throughout Franklin County and the entire 13th Congressional District, I congratulate Chris Ardinger on this prestigious award, and I thank him for his contributions to our great communities.

HONORING DON BAILEY

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise to honor the life and the career of Don Bailey, an educator, an administrator, and football coach, who passed away recently in his hometown of Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

A graduate of Forest Hills High School, Coach Bailey dedicated his entire professional life to the school dis-

trict, serving as a teacher, a principal, and an administrator.

As head football coach at Forest Hills, Coach Bailey became a legend over his 45 years. His success includes 375 wins, 11 Laurel Highlands Conference championships, and 10 District 6 championships.

Over the years, Coach Bailey was honored with induction into the Pennsylvania Football Coaches Hall of Fame and the Cambria County Sports Hall of Fame. He was also selected for the Lifetime Achievement Award by the National Football Foundation.

As we pause to remember his legacy, we also keep his wife, Diane, and all of his family in our prayers.

Please join me in honoring the life of Coach Don Bailey, who was truly a Cambria County football legend.

HONORING MARK TAYLOR

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor former Saxton Fire Chief Mark Taylor, who stepped down from his position in November, after 40 years of dedicated service.

During the Saxton Volunteer Fire Company's recent annual banquet, Chief Taylor was presented with an award that recognizes his unwavering dedication.

Chief Taylor joined the fire company as a volunteer 50 years ago. He has been described by colleagues as a beacon of leadership to ensure the safety of his entire community.

Chief Taylor's legacy includes mentorship of countless firefighters and a strategic vision that positioned teamwork at its core.

I thank Chief Taylor for his profound impact on municipalities served by the Saxton Volunteer Fire Company and for his vital role in inspiring firefighters throughout his years of service.

CONGRATULATING RICHARD FERTIG, JR.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Richard Fertig, Jr., of Smith Transportation on selection of Professional Driver of the Year.

This award is the profession's highest honor, recognizing safety, leadership, and community impact of professional drivers.

Richard Fertig, Jr., has been driving trucks for Smith Transport for more than 20 years. Since joining Smith Transport, he has accumulated more than 2 million miles driving safely, which is a testament to his commitment to precision, to discipline, and to safety.

As a veteran, Richard's truck is wrapped in a powerful tribute to Vietnam veterans, and it has become a symbol of respect everywhere he drives.

Like many others, Mr. Fertig considers Smith Transport founder, Barry Smith, to be his role model and his mentor.

On behalf of constituents throughout Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, best wishes for continued success, continued safety, and continued achievement.

PRIVATE MEDICAL DATA OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

(Mr. SUBRAMANYAM of Virginia was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, we need to stop this administration from trying to collect private medical data on Federal employees and their families.

Recently OPM, the Office of Personnel Management, started asking Federal workers and their family members for their detailed monthly health records.

This isn't just trends or summaries. This is things like prescriptions and claims, so all this data has personally identifiable information that paints a clear picture of a person's private life and health.

Why do they want to do this? Well, we are not really sure. One story from OPM is that this is to help provide competitive, quality, affordable health plans. But OPM already has health claims data warehouses, and they haven't really explained how this would actually help with finding a competitive plan. They certainly haven't cited legal authority for why they are entitled to every Federal worker's detailed health information.

We are being asked right now to trust that this will all be secure, but they haven't really outlined how they will keep this information safe, and OPM has a really poor track record. This is the agency that leaked 21 million records in one of the largest Federal data breaches in recent history.

Last year, there were credible reports that DOGE personnel were granting sweeping access to sensitive OPM systems and data.

A Federal judge has temporarily blocked this policy of collecting Federal worker health data because it likely violates the Privacy Act, but we need to permanently stop this policy from moving forward.

Instead of going after Federal workers' personal information, I would ask the OPM to instead focus on processing the backlog of retirement claims, which has surpassed 55,000 cases. In any case, I hope my colleagues will join me in opposing what OPM is doing here.

FOREST SERVICE REORGANIZATION

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the planned reorganization of the Forest Service, which will mean the relocation or closure of dozens of Forest Service offices.

The Forest Service is an agency many of us don't think about, but it does so much important work that impacts our lives every day. They protect national forests, wildlife diversity, and watersheds. They lead the fight against forest fire and promote fire prevention. They research forest health and manage 193 million acres of land.

We already know that these relocations and closures of Forest Service offices will be a disaster, because the first Trump administration relocated