



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 172

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

No. 144

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 14, 2026.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JAY OBERNOLTE 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.

FUTURE OF AMERICAN EDUCATION

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

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the future of American education.

For decades, public schools have been asked to do more with less. Add to that, the fact that we have seen many new and complicated challenges over the past 10 years.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted learning and placed enormous strain on

students, educators, and families. Importantly and alarmingly, screen time, cell phones, devices, and social media changed the way young people interact with each other and the world around them. Generative AI is transforming how students learn and how educators teach with serious consequences like cognitive shrinking and, as we have seen in international scores recently, decline at least partly attributed to digital distractions.

Now, the Trump administration is trying to dismantle the Department of Education and slash the Federal support that closes opportunity gaps for millions of students in schools. At the same time, too many students are struggling. Students from low-income families, students of color, students with disabilities, and students in different parts of the country from urban to rural continue to experience significant gaps in achievement.

We must change course. We need to move forward with a vision of public education that recognizes the challenges of today, a vision based on research and best practices. We need a vision that recognizes that today's children are tomorrow's leaders and are worthy of policies that create a better future.

That is why I am introducing the Transforming Education for the Future Act. This legislation recognizes that a good education is about more than a test score. Every student deserves a well-rounded education that prepares them to be creative, critical thinkers who will be successful regardless of their background or the path they take in life.

That means more hands-on, project-based learning. It means access to the arts, career and technical education, and civics education. It means career counseling to help students see a path to their future. It means instilling a love of learning, reading, and studying, not cutting the humanities.

Students deserve a fair measure of how they are doing, but standardized test scores alone do not define a child's potential. This bill would encourage the use of multiple, high-quality measures to give families and educators a more complete picture of student learning.

We also need to invest in the people who make learning possible. Teachers and school staff are the foundation of our public schools, yet educators continue to face low pay, difficult working conditions, and a shortage of resources. We must strengthen the educator pipeline, improve compensation and working conditions, and give educators the resources they need to succeed.

We need to invest in what works. My bill would strengthen education research and promote evidence-based practices that improve student success and well-being. We must also address the barriers that make learning harder.

Kids can't focus in school when they are hungry or if they are homeless. Lack of affordable, high-quality childcare is creating gaps at an early age. The Transforming Education for the Future Act would triple funding for title I to better serve students from disadvantaged backgrounds and the schools that educate them.

It would establish free universal preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds through a Federal-State partnership. It would make school breakfast and lunch free and provide summer meals. These are not extras. They are investments that determine whether a child can learn, whether a teacher can teach, and whether a community can thrive.

We need to keep the Federal Government focused on its responsibility, not to set curriculum, but to support the civil rights of students. The Federal Government has an important role to play in giving every child access to high-quality education regardless of their ZIP Code, income, or ability.

That means protecting the Department of Education so it can carry out

□ 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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H5535

the responsibilities given to it by Congress. It means fully funding IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, so we finally fulfill the promise Congress made to students with disabilities and their families nearly 50 years ago.

It means strengthening civil rights protections and addressing segregation in schools. It means investing in public schools, not diverting Federal dollars into voucher programs that funnel money to private schools, including religious schools.

Circumstances have changed, but the American system of public education has not yet adapted. We need a public education system that meets the moment for today's students and tomorrow's. We need an education system that prepares students not to pass a test but to think critically and build a future. We need to support educators who make that possible, and we need to remove those barriers that stand between children and opportunity.

The Transforming Education for the Future Act is a blueprint for doing just that. It strengthens public education, and it reclaims the promise that every child in America deserves the opportunity to grow, learn, and succeed.

Mr. Speaker, that is the future our students deserve. That is the future we should build together.

RECOGNIZING DONNA MILLS

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Donna Mills of Hesston on her election as the national president of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary.

A life member of the Standing Stone VFW Post 1754 in Huntingdon, Donna has served the VFW Auxiliary in numerous roles, including auxiliary, district, and department president.

Donna joined the organization at the age of 16 on the eligibility of her grandfather, who had served in the U.S. Army during World War II. Her commitment to the VFW Auxiliary is exemplary.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of constituents throughout Huntingdon County and the entire 13th Congressional District, I congratulate Donna on her election to this impactful leadership position.

HONORING JUDGE PATRICK JONES

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it is with sorrow that I rise to honor the life and public service of Pat Jones, who recently passed away at his farm in Logan Township.

Pat served as a magisterial district judge for 39 years in Blair County. Most recently, he was elected to his first term as the Logan Township supervisor in 2019.

A United States Marine Corps veteran, Pat has been described as a proud public servant who worked hard to ensure that the justice system continued meeting aspirational goals.

Mr. Speaker, as we pause to remember Pat's legacy of leadership and service, we also remember his family and keep them in our prayers. Join me in honoring the memory of Judge Pat Jones.

RECOGNIZING NEWRY LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BLAIR COUNTY

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, with appreciation I rise to recognize Newry Lutheran Church of Blair County on the 225th anniversary of its founding.

This milestone commemorates more than two centuries of faithful worship, Christian service, and ministry within the Newry community and beyond.

Founded in 1801, Newry Lutheran Church has served generations of individuals and families through worship, education, outreach, and compassionate care.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of everyone in the 13th Congressional District, I congratulate Reverend Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte and the entire Newry Lutheran congregation on their 225th anniversary milestone and express my gratitude for the many ways that the church serves the community.

RECOGNIZING ELIZABETH SCHLUSSER

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, with respect and admiration, I rise to recognize Elizabeth Schlusser of Newville for her induction into the Pennsylvania Voter Hall of Fame.

Induction into the Hall of Fame acknowledges and honors individuals who have voted in at least 50 consecutive November elections. The Voter Hall of Fame was established in 1986 and includes more than 25,000 voters statewide who were inducted over the last four decades.

As America continues to celebrate our semiquincentennial of our founding as a free and independent Republic, we take collective pride in our Nation's role as a global defender of democratic ideals, including the rights of citizens to vote in free and fair elections.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the constituents throughout the 13th Congressional District, I congratulate Elizabeth on this remarkable patriotic distinction and thank her for a level of civic engagement that is a true inspiration to all Pennsylvanians.

FUTURE OF QATARI AIR FORCE ONE PLANE

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, on September 4, President Trump was asked about the future of the Qatari Air Force One plane, which, after a messy rollout in July, he flew on to Ireland this past weekend and said: "I haven't made a decision, but it will probably go to the museum. It is scheduled to go to the museum."

Mr. Speaker, as the ranking member of the Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction

over the Air Force executive airlift programs, I will remind the House that this aircraft is not the property of any one person, including the President of the United States. That plane is the property of the U.S. Government and U.S. taxpayers, and it is under the control of the U.S. Air Force.

It is a plane the U.S. taxpayers spent hundreds of millions of dollars over the last years to retrofit prior to its maiden flight to Turkiye for the NATO Summit.

After it was discovered by the Secret Service that the plane had serious vulnerabilities and the President flew home on one of the older Air Force Ones, the Qatari plane went into another overhaul and received maxed out upgrades, as the President said, which cost even more taxpayer funds. Just a few days ago, it was announced that the Air Force had contracted a new pilot simulator training program for the Qatari plane to the tune of \$45.3 million.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the U.S. taxpayer has huge skin in the game regarding the future of this plane. It is also clear that this plane has ample long-term service life left in it. At the time it was gifted to the Air Force, it had only 800 hours of flight time, which is a fraction of the normal full-service life of a comparable Boeing 747 jet. Given its low mileage and all the expenditure of government money and training, the notion that this plane should be mothballed in a couple years and donated to a Trump museum is an insult to the intelligence of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, some may point to the example of the Air Force One plane at the Reagan Library as justification for President Trump's claim that he has the right to abscond with this plane after he leaves office.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Reagan Library plane was in Air Force service for 13 years after he left office in 1988 and served President George Herbert Walker Bush, President Clinton, and President George W. Bush until it was decommissioned in 2001.

The plane then went through a well-established legal process for transfer of excess Federal property that President Reagan had no control over, which is designed to protect the interests of the taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, everything about this Qatari gifted plane has been problematic: the unanswered questions of a foreign emolument, the lack of transparency on the cost of the initial retrofit, the rocky maiden voyage to Turkiye, and the President's repeated claims of ownership and control of the plane, which by law he does not have. It is clear Congress needs to intervene to prohibit any unlawful attempt to send it "to the museum."

Today, Armed Services Committee Ranking Member ADAM SMITH and I will be introducing the Safeguarding Taxpayer Investment for Executive Airlift Act, which will very simply prohibit the transfer of the Qatari Air