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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 6, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JAMES COMER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, 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. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

THE REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, it has been just about 100 hours since the House Republican leadership released their tax plan finally, not only to the American people, but also to their own rank and file Members.

I represent a great district, it is eastern Connecticut, it is about half the State geographically, and it is home to the University of Connecticut, Electric

Boat shipyard, Groton Navy base, Coast Guard Academy. I am very proud of the fact that these are really sharp folks, and in that less than 100-hour period, I have had about 700 emails and calls into my office from people who have looked at this plan, have run the numbers, have looked at what the existing Tax Code provides, and looked at what the net impact will be if this plan were ever to become law.

Louis from Norwich, Connecticut, who is a tax preparer, describes a neighbor of his who is 68 years old, she lives by herself, she earns \$33,000 in pension and Social Security income, only of which \$21,000 is taxable, and she has a small mortgage.

She looked at the Republican tax plan, which includes a standard deduction of \$12,500, and that is it. Her new tax will be \$1,014 if that plan were to go into effect.

Under existing law, the itemized deductions that she can claim today are roughly about \$12,500, the same amount as the standard deduction, but she is also able to claim a personal exemption, which every American is entitled to under the existing Tax Code. With that existing plan, her net taxes are \$445. So this tax plan will more than double her taxes.

Now, \$33,000 a year for a 68-year-old, I would say that is barely middle class, but certainly it is middle class under a lot of definitions as a homeowner, yet this tax plan is increasing her taxes by over 100 percent.

Mark from Clinton contacted me about the fact that this tax plan is going to eliminate the deduction for qualified medical expenses above 10 percent of your adjusted gross income. What does that mean? If you have got medical expenses for eyeglasses, hearing aids, or you have someone in a nursing home that you are paying out-of-pocket expenses for, or you have a home healthcare aide coming into your home that is not covered under your

insurance, you can deduct that off of your taxes to the extent that it exceeds 10 percent of your adjusted gross income.

Mark from Clinton is one of those people. Clinton, Connecticut, is a very middle class community. His taxes are going up.

That qualified medical deduction, again, is something that was repeated over and over from individuals who contacted my office, who can't believe that, again, they are doing the right thing, they are paying their bills for their healthcare—for themselves or for their kids or for their aunt or their parent—and they are losing that deduction. I am sorry. The standard deduction that is being offered as a compensation doesn't come close to helping an individual in that situation.

In addition, the State tax deduction, which the present Tax Code allows, is gone under this proposal. In the State of Connecticut, they have calculated that families that earn between \$50,000 and \$200,000 a year will see their taxes increase by 14 percent under this proposal.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a plan which was sold to the country as a tax cut for the middle class. Again, there are lots of other economic incentives that they put in there supposedly for corporations to cut their corporate tax rate and cut the rates for people in the top 1 percent. Again, it is totally imbalanced, but I am going to set that aside for the moment, because what was also guaranteed and promised was that middle class Americans would see their taxes going down, people like Louis from Norwich; Mark from Clinton; and Jason from Niantic, who is going to lose his college student loan interest rate deduction.

They eliminate the college student loan interest rate reduction. Again, we are living in a time right now where student loan debt is \$1.3 trillion. One of

□ 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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the few ways that you can manage that debt is being able to deduct it off of your taxes. That is being eliminated under the House Republican plan.

Now, if I sound a little worked up, it is because, literally, within minutes, the House Ways and Means Committee is going to start marking up this bill. Not one hearing is being held for outside voices to sort of at least crunch through the numbers of this proposal. The plan is for Speaker RYAN to force a vote next week. We are talking less than 10 days for rewriting the U.S. Tax Code, which has not been rewritten since 1986.

When it was done under President Reagan, it took a year for the process to unfold, and that was the right way to do it, to allow the subcommittees to take a look at their provisions of the Tax Code on the Ways and Means Committee, to hold hearings, to actually have an intelligent, thoughtful exchange of ideas before you mark it up, rather than jamming it to the floor, when you are taking away people's qualified medical expenses. Again, this is just the tip of the iceberg.

The deduction that people get for dependent care assistance programs—if you have a kid who is developmentally disabled and needs a personal care attendant in your home right now, you can deduct that—that is being taken away.

This is a bad plan. We need to slow down; we need to give the American people a chance to understand this better. Again, I call on the Ways and Means Committee to, again, slow down and cancel the markups that are scheduled this week.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COMER) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: God of the universe, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Bless the Members of this assembly as they set upon the work of these hours, of these days. Help them to make wise decisions in a good manner and to carry their responsibilities steadily, with high hopes for a better future for our great Nation.

As legislation on taxes continues to be debated this week and next, may all Members be mindful that the institutions and structures of our great Nation guarantee the opportunities that have allowed some to achieve great success, while others continue to struggle.

May their efforts these days guarantee that there are not winners and losers under new tax laws, but benefits balanced and shared by all Americans.

May Your blessing, O God, be with them and with us all this day and every day to come, and may all we do be done for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. NORTON led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages in writing from the President of the United States were communicated to the House by Ms. Gabrielle Cuccia, one of his secretaries.

ISRAELI-AMERICAN COUNCIL

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers are with all those who are grieving at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas.

This morning, I was grateful to join the Israeli-American Council at their fourth National Council Conference to celebrate our ally, Israel, and the special relationship we have formed over many years with the people of Israel. It was meaningful to be greeted by National Chairman Adam Milstein, and to discuss issues with Dr. Miriam and Sheldon Adelson.

The Israeli-American Council is the fastest growing Jewish-American organization in the United States, and

works every day to foster a strong and positive relationship between the United States and the Israeli people.

I am grateful for their many accomplishments, and I wish them continued success in strengthening the American-Israeli relationship in the years to come through mutual economic success, creating jobs while promoting peace through strength with military cooperation.

South Carolina has always appreciated its Jewish heritage as home of the largest Jewish population of any State at the time of the American Revolution.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

MASS DEPORTATION WOULD DISRUPT OUR COUNTRY

(Ms. NORTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, mass deportation of Temporary Protected Status recipients today would disrupt our country and theirs.

More than 32,000 Salvadorans live in the District of Columbia metro area; and Salvadorans, at 200,000, are the largest group of TPS holders in the country today.

TPS designation requires the Attorney General to find "extraordinary and temporary conditions preventing returning to the state in safety."

The most recent influx of Salvadorans, one-third of them unaccompanied minors, shows that these conditions have been met for TPS holders and others. With the breakdown of civil society in Central America today, forced return of anyone now would be inhumane.

RECOGNIZING DEANE BOZEMAN SCHOOL FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

(Mr. DUNN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Deane Bozeman School, a title I school, located in Bay County, Florida. Deane Bozeman School prides itself on developing boys and girls of character and as well-educated American citizens. The school's administration, faculty, staff, and parents join in investing and educating over 1,300 students, prekindergarten through 12th grade. The result is that Deane Bozeman School continues a tradition of academic excellence.

This year, Deane Bozeman School reaches yet another milestone in excellence by adding a fully chartered Army Junior ROTC program to its curriculum. As cadets, the ROTC program will develop middle and high school students into leaders whose characters are based on the fundamental values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, integrity, and personal courage.

Under the leadership of Chief Warrent Officer Retired Jeff Adkins, these students will certainly thrive.