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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DEAL of Georgia).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 21, 1998.

I hereby designate the Honorable NATHAN DEAL to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 21, 1997, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) for 5 minutes.

URGING THE PRESIDENT TO WORK WITH CONGRESS TO SAVE THE CENSUS

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the increasing partisanship of the White House over their embattled Census plan. Last week the White House made two comments that demonstrated how far they will go to get their way.

First, they announced their intention to shut down a huge part of government over the Census, and later in the week the Vice President made some racially divisive and inaccurate comments.

Let me begin by making the majority position on the Census very clear. We want to save the Census from failure. The General Accounting Office and the Commerce Department's own Inspector General have warned that the Clinton administration is risking a failed Census plan. Their plan is too complicated and relies on unrealistic assumptions and timelines. We cannot allow the Census to fail. The 2000 Census will cost about $4 billion, and we cannot risk that kind of money on a plan that probably will not work.

What Republicans want to do is work with the administration to save the Census. We have some very specific problems with the administration's plan. Experience has shown that sampling used on a large scale just is not accurate enough for a Census.

In 1990 the Census Bureau tested sampling and compared it to the actual enumeration. For cities and towns with populations under 100,000, the actual enumeration, that is, counting everyone, proved to be more accurate and reliable. So we do not believe we should spend $4 billion on a plan that has failed its only test. That does not seem to make much sense.

Another major problem is the deletion of Americans from the official Census count. Again, when they tried this in 1990, 1.46 million Americans were removed from the sampled Census. Under the Clinton Census plan, it will happen again. It is wrong to use statistics to remove individuals from the Census count. Because statistics is an imprecise science, real Americans who exist will be removed from the count, and cities and towns all across America will lose representation.

If Members are concerned about the undercount, as I am, then they have to be equally concerned about a Census that removes real people from the official count. They, too, would be undercounted under sampling.

We are concerned that the administration is moving forward without the consent of Congress. They simply ignore the fact that the Constitution gives Congress the responsibility to direct how the Census is conducted. Much of the Census is about trust. The American people have to trust the outcome of the Census or else it is worthless.

If the administration ignores Congress, they will guarantee a failed Census. They need to work with us so all Americans have faith that the process was inclusive and open.

That is why I was disappointed to hear last week that President Clinton wants to shut down the government over the Census. He wants to sign a bill that provides 6 months of funding for the whole Commerce Department, the whole State Department, and Justice Department, so he can have leverage over the Census.

Can Members believe the President wants to take cops off the street to get his way over the Census? Can Members believe the President wants to hold U.S. foreign policy hostage to the Census? Why would he want to shut down the Border Patrol over the Census? It is irresponsible, and goes against his 1995 statement when he said, ''It is wrong, deeply wrong, to shut down the government while we negotiate.'' Work with Congress, Mr. Speaker, and we will have a better Census.

I was, along with many of my colleagues, saddened by comments made by Vice President GORE at the annual NAACP convention. He told the participants that the Republicans ''don't even want to count you in the Census.'' These outrageous comments do nothing to unite America, and do nothing to help save the 2000 Census from failure.

Congressional Republicans are prepared to make an unprecedented effort to count all Americans. We have provided more money than the President

☐ 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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