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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BALLENGER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 13, 2001.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CASS BALLENGER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2001, 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 not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

BICYCLE RIDING IS EFFICIENT MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION AND PROMOTES WELLNESS

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I came to Congress dedicated to making the Federal Government a better partner in helping our communities to be livable, for our families to be safe, healthy and economically secure. One important way of advancing that mission is through the intelligent use of the bicycle. As a person who cares about cycling and the world environment and energy supply, it was, to say

the very least, unnerving to read the story about cycling in China in Monday's Washington Post.

China is a huge country with an old and venerated tradition that is having trouble modernizing. It has experienced a century-long love affair with the bicycle since it was first introduced to China by American missionaries. They have more bicycles in China than any place in the world, but it is ironic that this country is seeking to ban bicycles in some areas. It is especially ironic to ban them from the central cities where they can have the greatest impact.

The bicycle is the most efficient means of transportation that has ever been devised. Unlike the horse or automobile, there is no pollution generated from cycling. It leaves the cyclist healthier, and the cyclist takes up a fraction of the roadway. As somebody who brought a bicycle to Washington, D.C. instead of a car when I was elected 5 years ago, I can testify that for the vast majority of my meetings around Washington, D.C., I will beat my colleagues who take cabs or their cars.

The movement from bicycles to cars has serious and wide-spread side effects and is a prescription for disaster. It is frightening to consider the 1.3 billion Chinese each with their own car living further from where they work.

The increased demand for concrete in the cities and impact on the environment resulting from more automobiles in China than any place in the world is not going to help our efforts to address global climate change.

The bicycle is not the only answer to problems of livability and it is not for everyone; but the facts remain at a time when our roads are too congested, the fitness of our children, the skyrocketing levels of morbid obesity, an important part of every community's equation for being safer, healthier and more economically secure is probably stored in the garage or parked in the basement. Over 100 million Americans

have access to bicycles, but what should Congress do to help people use them?

First, and foremost, Congress should lead by example and provide more adequate bike parking, more showers and changing facilities in order to encourage bike commuting here in Washington, D.C. Surveys show that if offices are so equipped, 45 percent of the employees who live within 5 miles would choose to bike commute to work.

Federal employees are allowed, in many cases, free parking or free transit. They can be reimbursed for cab fair or auto mileage, but cyclists are on their own; and that is rather foolish. Benefits should be expanded to include bicycle commuters the same way we treat other Federal employees.

We need to provide funding for safe transportation for our children. Over the course of the last 20 years, the number of children who are independently able to get to school on their own has decreased substantially, in some communities by 70 percent or more.

Regular cycling can help deal with that access. It can help with the epidemic of childhood obesity and promote the wellness of our children. Indeed children that ride to school in cars in slow-moving traffic experience worse air pollution than those who are walking or cycling.

I hope that Congress will consider more ways to encourage the implementation of the Safe Routes to School program to help provide the routes and to teach children about bicycle safety and promoting biking as a viable means of transportation.

Last but not least, Members of Congress should join the Congressional Bike Caucus. This is a group of Members of Congress who periodically host rides around Washington, D.C. for Members, their families and staff, but there is also a serious component to what we do.

□ 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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