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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. CULBERSON).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 6, 2001.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN ABNEY CULBERSON 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.

DESIGNING FOR SECURITY IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the atmosphere in many cities today is one of apprehension and anxiety. We can witness this right outside the doors of this Capitol by the hundreds of jersey barriers and concrete blocks that surround these buildings and the street closures around the White House and our offices. Safety is of vital importance, but we must remain aware of the effect that hasty and poorly planned actions can have on the livability of our communities.

In the wake of the events that have occurred since September 11, there has never been a more pressing need for the Federal Government and other partners in the private sector to link hands with neighbors, civic and business leaders to assure that our families are safe, healthy and economically secure. It is essential that we accomplish these objectives without unnecessarily burdening the normal everyday functions of our communities.

Here in our Nation's capital, Congress and the Federal Government have the opportunity to lead by example and be a productive partner in working with the District of Columbia, local business leaders and concerned citizens to meet our needs. We need to work together to protect our national treasures up and down the Mall, our employees' offices and the transportation routes without suffocating the city's ability to operate.

Security measures can have a devastating effect on communities. Look at the extended closure of National Airport that has resulted in the loss of hundreds of jobs, perhaps some permanently, and the displacement of thousands of others. The roads that have been closed around the Capitol and the White House have snarled traffic and frustrated commuters.

We are well aware that we will never return in our lifetime to the pre-September 11 mindset. Therefore, it is critical that we take a long-term view to make sure that our safety concerns are planned in a manner that do not make things worse. We cannot allow terrorism to destroy our sense of community or the ability of those communities to serve us.

With this in mind, the report of the Interagency Task Force of the National Planning Commission issued last week titled "Designing for Security in the Nation's Capital" deserves our special attention. The task force began meeting far before the recent attacks,

working for months to develop a clear outline and plan for security measures that do not compromise livability.

It has been apparent of the need for this action since the closing of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House after the Oklahoma City bombing. This sort of temporary action is still in place 6 years later. Security measures that may have made sense temporarily have led to a seemingly permanent closure that has created costly traffic problems and a blighted scene in front of the home of our President.

The task force outlines several steps that can be taken to ensure the safety of Federal buildings and national monuments. The report calls for a master design that achieves the same security objectives of the items that we currently see littered all over the Capitol complex, concrete barriers, bollards and steel posts, without making it look like it would be a burial ground for chunks of concrete.

The task force report also stresses transportation concerns that have developed as a result of road closings. It proposes a fascinating solution dealing with the circulator system of either buses or streetcars that would allow for safe and secure transport of people throughout the downtown, the Mall and the Capitol area. Such a circulator system could help reduce traffic congestion, allow for the removal of parking spaces in areas of security concern and improve traffic flow while all the time improving air quality, saving energy and making it a more appropriate, enjoyable experience for visitors to our Nation's capital.

The task force will have a real dollar impact if its proposals are put in place; but to put in context, the expenditure of perhaps a hundred billion dollars in the context of billions of dollars already lost and billions more that are proposed for security measures, this

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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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