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No. 9

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 22, 2008.

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

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, 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 each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) for 2 minutes.

PROTECT AMERICA

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a matter of great urgency. In just a few short days, the legislation that permits our intelligence community to monitor terrorist communications will expire. This law, known as the Protect America Act, is a vital tool used by American agents to quickly intercept and act upon electronic communications between foreign terrorists.

Just last summer, we passed this law because Congress recognized that the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 was not designed to govern the surveillance of modern telecommuni-

cations, the same electronic communications that groups like al Qaeda are using to plan attacks against U.S. citizens. I, for one, still believe that intelligence analysts shouldn't need to consult with lawyers every time a suspected terrorist buys a new disposable cell phone. But unless we act before February 1, that is exactly the kind of legal delay that our intelligence agents will face.

So let's abandon the partisan rhetoric and enact a long-term reauthorization of this important law, and let's do so without adding new bureaucratic hurdles or exposing private communication companies to unjustified lawsuits. Our men and women on the front lines deserve every tool we can give them to intercept and interrupt terrorist plots. The American people count on them to keep us safe. Let's pass this law.

PAYROLL TAX HOLIDAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFazio) is recognized during morning-hour debate for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFazio. The Bush administration presided over the creation of the housing bubble and the underlying exotic financial instruments with their typical "hands off" regulatory approach. Now it has exploded, and some in the administration are recognizing that the economy is in trouble, something that middle-income America and average Americans have known for quite some time.

Finally, the President and his appointees are talking about some stimulus. But they are drawing a line. They are saying yes, we will do some stimulus, but we will not invest in America. There will be no infrastructure investment. They are saying that would be bad. So far, there's no indication either that they intend to bring any regulatory discipline to the bizarre, exotic, over-leveraged, and opaque financial

markets, something that also cries out to be done.

Stimulus, yes. I believe we can reach agreement on that. It needs to be targeted toward those who have been hurt the worst: Middle-income and working families. The best way to do that, the most progressive way to do that would be through a payroll tax holiday. Nearly half of the people in this country pay more in payroll taxes than they do Federal income taxes. It's a flat, regressive tax. Forty-four percent pay more in payroll taxes than they do income taxes. Lower income Americans, seniors in particular, who work part-time jobs to augment their retirement Social Security, pay no taxes, and would not get any rebates under the President's plan. They need help too. They are struggling with higher costs of medical care, fuel, and heating like everybody else in this country.

So a payroll tax holiday would be the fairest way to get money to the people who need it the most, who would be most likely to spend the money, and provide some short-term stimulus to the economy. That is short-term. But long-term we need to reinvest in America, and it is strange the President draws a line in the sand there. It is not so strange, I guess, since the Secretary of Transportation last week, Mary Peters, recommended phasing out any Federal role, any Federal investment in our roads, bridges, highways, and transportation systems in this country. She said the financial markets will take care of that, they will lend us the money, the same financial markets that are totally in the tank and having to go overseas now, the same big firms that are borrowing money from Saudi Arabia and other state funds in order to stay afloat because of all their speculation. No. We need investment in America.

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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