



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 155

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2009

No. 130

House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. SPEIER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 15, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JACKIE SPEIER 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 6, 2009, 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.

REBUILDING AND RENEWING AMERICA

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, these times demand that Congress and the administration do more than one thing at a time, health care, energy, dealing with the economic downturn and near financial meltdown inherited by the new administration. One challenge needs more attention, rebuilding and renewing America.

Our fraying infrastructure has been a growing problem for years. The Amer-

ican Society of Civil Engineers has rated our overall infrastructure with a grade of "D" and has done so repeatedly. It is one of those rare, important issues that actually unites people rather than dividing them.

Water and transportation investments are overwhelmingly supported by the public across the board from coast to coast. And a majority of Republicans, Democrats and independents would increase their taxes to get this job done.

Rebuilding and renewing America will make a huge difference in both the economy and the everyday quality of life of Americans. The economic recovery package that we passed early in the year was an important step to stop the economic free fall. I would hate to think what my State of Oregon would be facing without the \$6 billion for education, health care, unemployment and infrastructure. It was very important for the State of Oregon and for States across the country, important but not enough.

The perfect next step is to reauthorize and fund the next transportation bill, which expires in 15 days. Our Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has been hard at work. They have developed a great outline for the new legislation.

But the highway trust fund that would fund that new vision faces a significant shortfall. Our recent stopgap efforts to plug the hole just adds to the long-term deficit without the certainty that communities and contractors require to start needed big projects.

In the short term, the House should come together, work with the Senate and pass a short-term extension of 4 to 6 months that will allow us to get the reauthorization and the funding in order.

In the meantime, every Member ought to take advantage of this opportunity to involve people back home in this critical discussion. People from

the private sector, from their local Chamber, contractors, unions, the local community leadership, all being part of this movement to rebuild and renew America.

This is the fastest way to get the economy on track, to improve the environment, put people to work and make our communities more liveable, our families safer, healthier and more economically secure.

GET HEALTHCARE DONE RIGHT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Madam Speaker, the American health care system is clearly in need of reform. Yet at the same time our system of health care continues to be the envy of the world in producing life-saving innovations in the pharmaceutical industry, in medical procedures and in treatment.

Congress certainly must act to help bring down costs and expand access to health insurance, while preserving the quality of care patients receive in this great, great Nation. I have heard many of my Democratic colleagues, and certainly the President, speak about the need to increase competition in the health insurance marketplace to help reduce costs, and I could not agree more.

But where I part company with my Democratic colleagues is in their prescription for the problem. The way they want to increase competition is to create a new government insurance company, better known as the public option, to provide this competition. They have demonized insurance companies in an effort to build support for this misguided plan, even though recent public opinion surveys have shown that over 80 percent of Americans are satisfied with their current plan. My concerns with the public option, which

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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