



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 155

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2009

No. 157

## House of Representatives

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

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,  
October 27, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DONNA F. EDWARDS 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.

### SHANNON MELENDI AWARENESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, October 20, 2009 should have marked the 35th birthday of Shannon Denise Melendi; instead, she will be forever the 19-year-old victim of kidnapping and rape whose life was tragically ended at the hands of a ruthless killer.

Shannon was a gifted young college sophomore from Miami attending Emory University in Atlanta. In Miami, at Southwest High School, my alma mater, she was president of the

junior and senior class and a champion orator who was captain of the debate team for 3 years. She was also in the National Honor Society and graduated cum laude in the top 3 percent of her class.

As a member of the Legal Eagles club, Shannon was an aspiring attorney whose ultimate goal was to sit on the Supreme Court. During her senior year, Shannon even spoke before the United Nations and Congress.

With grand dreams and a promising future ahead of her, nothing could have turned out to be more tragic than her disappearance. The news was devastating to her home community as it was to the Atlanta area where she had already established herself as a bright individual with an even brighter future.

She disappeared without a trace on March 26, 1994 while working at a part-time job at a softball country club. Shortly after, the first 10,000 posters and 60 billboards went up in Atlanta with Shannon's picture declaring her missing. Not long after that, her father, Luis Melendi, had the signs changed to "kidnapped."

Calvin "Butch" Hinton was named as a suspect. He was a coworker and an umpire she knew through her part-time job. Many pieces of evidence linked him to the disappearance of Shannon, but unfortunately not enough for a solid case. In a strange twist of fate, this demented man burned down his own home to keep the authorities from investigating him further, but he was sentenced to 9 years in prison for fraud when he tried to collect insurance on that house fire.

Then, more than 11 years after Shannon had disappeared, Hinton had just been released from prison when he was rearrested and placed on trial for Shannon's murder. After many heart-wrenching moments in the trial, the verdict came back guilty and Hinton was sentenced to life in prison.

Because of the atrocious acts of this horrible man, a bright young life was extinguished and the world is forever poorer because of it. Chillingly, though, this murderer is up for parole in 2011. With the confessed perpetrator behind bars, we have the comfort of knowing that no other person can fall victim to him, and that is why we should fight to keep him there in prison. Unfortunately, many perpetrators are roaming the streets today still preying on the most innocent of victims. Let us make sure that Calvin Hinton is not one of them.

Shannon's parents, Luis and Yvonne, as well as her sister, Monique, are still active today in efforts to protect children by strengthening our laws and protecting and educating youth and their families about violence and perpetrators. They honor their daughter and their sister, Shannon, and the countless other children like Shannon through their work. Shannon's story must serve as a reminder to students that they must always be aware of their surroundings and stay safe.

As a mother and grandmother, I cannot imagine the heartache the Melendis have gone through. Luis Melendi still speaks to high school seniors about the dangers posed by perpetrators and reminds them that this could happen to anyone. Last week, on what should have been their daughter's 35th birthday, the Melendi family spoke to the students at Coral Shores High School in Tavernier to keep Shannon's memory alive and to drive home the idea of being aware and being safe. With these efforts and the laws that we pass, we can help protect our Nation's youth.

It is in honor and remembrance of Shannon Melendi that I urge my colleagues to remain champions and protectors of our youth. Through the life of Shannon Melendi we know that even though it was short, we can make sure that the lessons learned from her murder last eternally.

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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I thank the Speaker for the time, and we will always remember Shannon.

#### REVITALIZING OUR ECONOMY

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, the challenge for all America, not just the new administration and Congress, but our communities, our businesses, especially American families, is how to revitalize our economy. There is a great deal of contention occasionally here in Washington, D.C. about the best approach, but this problem takes on a new urgency as the experts now tell us that while the economy appears to be recovering, the jobs aren't. A jobless recovery, posing special problems for Americans from coast to coast.

But beyond the problems with the economy, there are serious issues dealing with the state of repair of America; our electrical grid is inadequate and unreliable, too many roads and bridges are in serious disrepair, and there are problems with inadequate or non-existent sewage collection and leaking water mains. And there is environmental damage in sites from coast to coast with Superfund, brownfields, even unexploded ordnance and military toxics on military defense locations.

The opportunity and the challenge is to combine the problems with the economy with what we need to do to rebuild and renew America. Luckily, this is a solution that is overwhelmingly supported by the vast majority of Americans—Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. This is a solution that in times past has been able to bring together people in Congress to deal with the revitalization of our infrastructure.

We have opportunities right now. There is pending a reauthorization of the Surface Transportation Act. If Congress acts, and the administration signs it, this could mean 6 million jobs revitalizing transportation from coast to coast, border to border.

I have legislation, House bill 3202, a water trust fund, that would enable communities to deal with serious problems like leaking water mains. We lose 6 billion gallons of water a day, enough to fill Olympic size swimming pools from here to Pittsburgh. Coincidentally this bill can help fix these problems while putting hundreds of thousands of more Americans to work dealing with those problems.

The administration has requested, and we have introduced, legislation to reintroduce the Superfund tax to deal with the problems of Superfunds again that are found in every State of the Union. Left unattended, the pollution actually gets worse and migrates, becoming more expensive to clean up over time. This is an opportunity to solve the environmental problem and return this land to productive use.

This is something that America supports. The time for the Obama adminis-

tration and this Congress to unite on a vision to rebuild and renew America is now, to enact it into law and provide appropriate funding. This action will pay dividends to Americans for decades to come, making our communities more livable and our families safer, healthier, and more economically secure.

#### AARP GETS FREE PASS IN HEALTH CARE DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, does America's biggest senior citizens organization, AARP, get a free pass in the ongoing health care reform debate?

Speaker PELOSI recently called insurance companies "immoral villains," and Senator JAY ROCKEFELLER derided their tactics as "rapacious," yet the majority has simultaneously relied on an organization that has received billions of dollars in windfall profits from those same insurers as an "independent" source to support their government takeover of health care—AARP.

The Democrat majority has even relied on AARP's support for legislation, S. 1776, that would increase the Federal debt by nearly \$250 billion to fund physician reimbursements, even though the bill would raise seniors' Medicare premiums by over \$60 billion. AARP opposed unpaid-for legislation as recently as December for the very same reason.

An analysis of Democrats' rhetoric and actions provides evidence why AARP may have changed its position. In exchange for its support of a government takeover of health care, AARP has received special considerations regarding several provisions in health reform legislation that could benefit the organization quite handsomely.

While the AARP Web site claims that the organization supports "guaranteeing that all individuals and groups wishing to purchase or renew coverage can do so regardless of age or pre-existing conditions," a review of the New York State Insurance Commissioner's Web site finds that AARP-branded Medigap coverage imposes a 6-month waiting period for individuals with preexisting conditions. Yet section 111 of H.R. 3200 would exempt Medigap policies from new limits on preexisting condition restrictions, thus allowing AARP to continue to deny Medigap individuals with serious health conditions.

The health reform bill approved by the Senate Finance Committee would eliminate the tax deductibility for all insurance company executive salaries over \$500,000. However, as drafted by the committee, the legislation would exempt AARP from this requirement, even though fully 38 percent of its \$1.1 billion in 2008 revenue came directly from royalty fees paid by United

Health Care—more than AARP received in membership dues, grant revenue, and private contributions combined.

But for Chairman BAUCUS' exemption, AARP salaries would in fact be subject to the penalties in the Finance bill. In 2008, then CEO William Novelli received total compensation of \$1,005,830, more than 78 times the average annual Social Security benefit of \$12,738.

According to a story published today in the Washington Post, AARP collected \$650 million in royalties and other fees last year from the sale of insurance policies, credit cards, and other products that carry the AARP name. One of the main products that AARP pushes are so-called Medigap insurance policies for senior citizens. These policies supplement existing Medicare policies that seniors already have.

So what's the big deal? Well, in case you missed it, AARP is helping push the Democrats' big government version of health care reform. They've been a vocal proponent of the government-run health care proposal before Congress. Interestingly, the proposal before Congress slashed funding for a Medicare program called Medicare Advantage. This program is especially popular with seniors in my district. About 40,000 seniors in my district enjoy the benefits of a Medicare Advantage plan, but these plans will be killed off under the Democrats' government takeover of health care, and AARP has been pushing this brand of health care reform.

AARP has the right to offer services to its members, but pushing for a version of health care reform that will hurt millions of seniors who have Medicare Advantage plans and that will almost certainly increase shares of AARP's Medigap policies is a very dangerous conflict of interest.

AARP has hundreds of millions of dollars in insurance revenue on the line in today's health care debate. I think America's seniors deserve to know the facts about how health care reform will affect them, and it appears that AARP may have a few too many dogs in this race to be an impartial source of information.

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#### CHOOSING HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. I thank the Speaker.

I rise today to support the economic engine of America—our small businesses. Small businesses represent more than 99 percent of all businesses in this country and employ more than 50 percent of the private sector, non-farm workforce. In fact, 25 percent of the total job growth from 1992 to 2005 came from those small businesses with