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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 23, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE FITZPATRICK to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, 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 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, it's time, after a decade, to wind down this American-Afghanistan adventure. With his speech last night, President Obama started a process America needs to accelerate, removing 100,000 combat troops from Afghanistan.

I supported the initial move 10 years ago against the Taliban in Afghanistan. It began on a very hopeful note,

even with nations like Iran working with the United States in that critical 2001–2002 post-9/11 era.

It was a tragic mistake not to finish the job and withdraw with global support. Instead, the Bush administration, sadly, with support from too many in Congress, started a reckless, flawed and ultimately tragic war in Iraq.

President Obama reasonably says that we won't try to make Afghanistan a perfect place. We won't because we can't. America has already invested enough, direct costs of over 1,500 American lives, approaching one-half trillion dollars. Indirect and long-term will be much greater. Bear in mind, we have invested \$2 trillion in the war against terror, and the long-term costs are going to be between \$4 trillion and \$6 trillion.

In Afghanistan, ultimately there will be a negotiated settlement with the least, worst guys, the Taliban and warlords, assorted tribal strongmen. It's already started.

We cannot afford to continue this effort, not when crying needs are here in America to rebuild and renew our country.

Last week, the American mayors got it right when they called this question and called for renewed investment here at home. The tragedy is that it's not ultimately going to make that much difference the longer we're there and the more we fight. Whether it's going to be 1 year, 2 years, 10 years, far in the future, it's not going to look that much different in terms of the ultimate outcome in Afghanistan.

America needs to be engaged in this dangerous region. It needs to help Afghanistan. It needs to help the Pakistani people. It needs to be involved, both diplomatically and with development assistance. No longer do we need to have combat troops being a part of that mission.

REPUBLICAN WOMEN IN CONGRESS

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week my Republican female colleagues spent an hour on the floor of this great Chamber talking about why they have chosen to come to Congress, talking about why they have chosen to leave the private sector and come to the public sector, and talked about why it is so important, so vitally important that they chose to come as Republican women.

I think that as you listened to that debate, their stories were inspiring. You realized the diversity of the background of the Republican women that have come to this Chamber, the richness of the experiences, the life experiences that they have brought with them. You also realized how solidly and firmly committed they are to strengthening and preserving this great Nation.

I think it's fair to say that our Republican philosophy of government centers on faith, family, freedom, hope, opportunity, and preserving those tenets that really underpin this Nation.

I can say that, as a wife, a mother, a grandmother, a small business owner, I've had the blessing of learning firsthand how very important it is that we take our conservative philosophy of life and government into the public sector of our Nation. Daily we work to preserve opportunities for all of our children and our grandchildren.

We work to make certain that each and every child in our presence knows the value of, and realizes there is an opportunity for them to achieve the American Dream; that it is a good thing, a healthy thing for them to dream big dreams and to work very hard to make those dreams come true.

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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We know, and we teach our children in our families and our extended families, in our classrooms, that if you work hard, you exercise discipline, you show integrity, and you put others first, that inevitably, you're going to prevail and enjoy seeing your dreams come true in the marketplace of products and ideas.

We all know, and we work hard so that our children don't have to work harder. We work hard so that we're giving more opportunities to the next generation.

That is why you're going to see our Republican Conference women continue to lead the fight on preserving jobs, rebuilding jobs, rebuilding this economy, making certain that the 21st century economy is jobs-rich for our children and our grandchildren.

That is why we have taken the lead on the issue of health care. Women are the drivers when it comes to health care decisions, and we are committed to making certain that we reverse this course that we are on with ObamaCare, that we push to repeal that law, and that we make certain we preserve access to affordable health care for everyone in this Nation.

We are committed to strengthening our Nation, our economy, jobs, strengthening our people, and making certain that we secure freedom for future generations.

REINSTATING THE DRAFT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RANGEL. My colleagues, once again I come before this House to ask you to reconsider establishing the draft. I know some of you think politically this doesn't make sense. But after listening to the President last night, the only people that I saw that were making sacrifices in these wars that have been undeclared have been our troops. They have volunteered. They come from communities that most of them are not wealthy. But when they get there, they defend the flag.

Every war, every time our Nation is threatened, all of the American people should be prepared to make some sacrifice. Those of us in Congress, when we authorize troops to go overseas, should not say that we have volunteers willing to do it. We should say that we have Americans; they come from our families, our communities, our States, and their wealth should not even be an issue. Everyone should be up at bat.

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Now that the President has dramatically reduced the need for all of these volunteers, why don't we mandate that every American make some sacrifice. Let them be trained during this transition as we withdraw our troops. Let them be able to do something to make certain that America remains strong.

This is too serious an issue. It's not a Democrat or Republican issue; it's a

moral issue. Trillions of dollars are spent on undeclared wars, but who's paying for it? The poorest among us, the lesser among us—in health care, in education, in homelessness, in joblessness. And now the wealthiest of Americans have the lowest tax rates since 1950. And really, it just bothers people when you say they, too, should make some sacrifices, not just for the war that I don't support, but for the security, the economic security of this Nation, where the debt ceiling is going to be an issue, and yet those that are paying for the cuts have nothing to do with the crisis that we're in.

So I conclude, I'll be back in support of H.R. 1152. And I will ask you to consider that as we wind down from our involvement in the Middle East, think about giving some relief to our volunteers. Think about asking young Americans to make some type of commitment. Think about having an America that says, yes, I support the involvement and am prepared to make sacrifices, which includes my family, my community, and our great Nation.

We should not just have professional volunteers; it is not American, it is not moral. When our country is involved, everyone should be prepared either to stand up and be counted or don't support this type of involvement. It is not just costly financially, but how America looks throughout the world, especially among our young people—most of whom do not know any period of time that we haven't been involved in a war.

So if we're not prepared to be honest enough to call a war a war, if we're not prepared to have the Congress put every President, Republican or Democrat, on the line for constitutional reasons, for God's sake, let's find some fairness as we ask people to put their lives on the line for our great Nation. And it's not just their lives, it's not just how they come back home, but the mental disturbance and problems that we are bringing to our great country is going to be not just trillions of dollars but adversely affect our ability to deal with education and training and technology and research while we try so desperately hard to bring these people to some type of normality for the sacrifices they've made to our country.

So H.R. 1152 only says, if we have to be involved, don't have just a small segment of our great Nation pay the ultimate sacrifice while others make no sacrifice at all. Please consider a bill that mandates that everybody from 18 to 25, 26 do some type of mandatory service for our great country, and we will only select those people that we need for the military. And if indeed it is a transition that we support, it means that they can support our country, our national security, support our Armed Forces, and not really—hopefully—be in harm's way.

Please consider it, and please rest assured I will return with this plea from time to time. I thank this House for the opportunity.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages in writing from the President of the United States were communicated to the House by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

THE FAIR TAX

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

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today after the former chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. I want to talk about taxes today, but I want to associate myself with the previous speaker's comments about how we make different decisions when we have skin in the game because that is absolutely something that we are losing in this country. We are losing what used to be that common value that we rise and we fall together.

I see my colleague from the Rules Committee, Mr. MCGOVERN, sitting in the Chamber today. And he tells the committee on a regular basis that we need to pay for those things that we do. We're involved in wars, and we need to pay. We need to have a populace that believes in what we're doing in such a way that they are willing to sacrifice not just their time but their treasure to support those measures. When we don't have folks who have skin in the game, we make different decisions. When a minority of the folks get the benefit or a minority of the folks are bearing the burden, we make different decisions.

Now the former chairman of the Ways and Means Committee is absolutely right; we have the lowest tax rates among the highest earning individuals that we've had in this country since 1950. Now what the gentleman did not mention is that we also have the lowest tax rates that we've had in this country for the lowest income individuals that we've ever had. We have fewer Americans paying income tax today than at any time since the 1950s, since the expansion of the income tax that happened during World War II, and I hear that. We have the wealthiest paying the least that they have ever paid as a percent, as a marginal rate. They're actually paying more than they've ever paid as a percentage of all the Federal receipts in this country. We have the lowest income individuals paying the least they've ever paid as a percentage of the income that comes into this country. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that much like we make bad decisions about foreign policy when we don't all have skin in the game, we make bad decisions about economic policy when we don't have skin in the game.

Now when we talk about Iraq and Afghanistan, I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, those are complicated solutions. It is not obvious to me how we move from today to peace. I don't know how we get that done. We have externalities at play there that we don't have control