



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 158

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MARCH 27, 2012

No. 50

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 27, 2012.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ERIK PAULSEN 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 17, 2012, 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.

RUSSIA AND THE JACKSON-VANIK AMENDMENT

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of issues with which we have to contend around here. Obviously there are dramatic increases in gasoline prices. We are going to be dealing with the budget this week. FCC reform is on the agenda for today. But one issue that hasn't gotten a great deal of attention that we are going to be addressing in the coming weeks and months is whether or not we deal with

the issue of so-called "Jackson-Vanik legislation" and allow us to proceed with extending permanent normal trade relations for us to be able to trade with Russia.

Mr. Speaker, as we look at this issue, there are a number of factors that need to be addressed: first and foremost, what impact is this going to have on our Nation's job creators, those who are trying to grow our economy; and equally, if not more, important is the impact on human rights, the development of the rule of law, and the building of democratic institutions in Russia.

Now, we all heard the statement that was made by the President just yesterday in his off-microphone discussion with President Medvedev about how things are going to go and the flexibility he'll have in his second term. Well, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that one thing that is very important for us to recognize is, there is action that we can take today that will allow us to deal not only with the notion of our creating jobs here in the United States of America but also tackling the very important human rights issue.

Let's also realize that Russia is going to be a member of the World Trade Organization. All that's necessary now is for the Duma, the Russian Parliament, to ratify their accession. The question is, will U.S. workers have access to the Russian market? And that's very important. But also, as we look at the challenges of getting our economy growing, we recognize that that is a priority. But as I said, Mr. Speaker, it's also very, very, very critical for us to do everything that we can to ensure the development of those democratic institutions in Russia, the development of the rule of law, which we all know has been lacking based on what we've seen in the last election, and also to ensure the kinds of human rights and women's rights that have been ignored.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with my colleagues a little bit of a let-

ter that was just put forward by a half-dozen of the lead human rights activists in Russia. These are not my words. These are the words of these human rights activists. They say:

Those who defend the argument that Jackson-Vanik provisions should still apply to Russia in order to punish Putin's antidemocratic regime only darken Russia's political future, hamper its economic development, and frustrate its democratic aspirations.

They go on to say:

Jackson-Vanik is also a very useful tool for Mr. Putin's anti-American propaganda machine. It helps him to depict the United States as hostile to Russia, using outdated Cold War tools to undermine Russia's international competitiveness. We, leading figures of the Russian political opposition, strongly stand behind efforts to remove Russia from the provisions of the Jackson-Vanik amendment. Jackson-Vanik is not helpful in any way, neither for the promotion of human rights and democracy in Russia nor for the economic interests of its people.

Mr. Speaker, it's high time that we tackle this issue to ensure that we can promote human rights, the rule of law, and the development of democratic institutions in Russia and ensure that we, for the American worker, can create job opportunities right here in the United States.

HONORING ARA PARSEGHIAN

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

Mr. DONNELLY of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an American hero, Ara Parseghian, who has led a life dedicated to coaching and teaching others, serving others, and a life that has given hope to families all across the world. Many Americans know about Ara Parseghian through his legendary football career. Before that, though, he proudly served our Nation in the United States Navy during World War II. He went to college at Miami of Ohio and was lucky enough to marry Kathy Davis.

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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