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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Eternal God, through Whom we see who we are and what we can become, thank You for giving us another day.

Send Your spirit upon the Members of this people's House to encourage them in their official tasks. Be with them and with all who labor here to serve this great Nation and its people.

Assure them that, whatever their responsibilities, You provide the grace to enable them to be faithful in their duties and the wisdom to be conscious of their obligations and fulfill them with integrity.

Remind us all of the dignity of work and teach us to use our talents and ability in ways that are honorable and just and are of benefit to those we serve.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. NORTON led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

GENTRY FIRE DEPARTMENT 100TH ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. WOMACK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WOMACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in celebration of the Gentry Arkansas Fire Department's 100th birthday.

Gentry, Arkansas, is home to over 3,000 of my constituents; and for the past 100 years, the Gentry Fire Department has been steadfastly committed to their safety and well-being, as well as the safety of thousands more who reside in the surrounding areas of Benton County.

From its humble beginnings in 1914 to the purchase of its first firetruck in the 1940s, the Gentry Fire Department and firefighters have worked tirelessly for its citizens, placing themselves in great danger to protect the lives and property of others.

We rest easy knowing the department will continue to do so for the next century, and I join the residents of Gentry to express my profound gratitude.

Thank you to the Gentry firefighters, past and present, for 100 years of selfless service to the Pioneer community. I wish you a very happy 100th birthday.

about 50 million people, 13 million who are children, living below poverty in the greatest country in the world. We know we must expand economic opportunity to have a strong middle class, who are the backbone of this great country. We know that getting every American working will add to not only our tax base, but also reduce the deficit and debt and eliminate poverty.

So the question is, Madam Speaker, why aren't we doing it? Where are the visionaries? Where is the President's American Jobs Act of 2013 or the 21st Century Full Employment and Training Act? Where are they?

Madam Speaker, let's bring them to the floor.

CUBAN JOURNALIST JULIET MICHELENA DIAZ

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the case of Juliet Michelena Diaz, an independent Afro-Cuban journalist who last month was unjustly detained by Castro's thugs simply for photographing the brutality of the state security forces of Fidel Castro in Havana.

The detention of this young journalist is not just an example of the regime's efforts to silence those who are critical of its actions, but it also shows how ruthless the Castro brothers continue to be in their policy of repressing independent voices and violating human rights.

There is no independent press in Cuba and many journalists are afraid to speak out against the dictatorship for fear of incarceration. That is why it is so important to support the free flow of information on the island so that the Cuban people can exchange ideas to promote democratic principles and the rule of law.

FULL EMPLOYMENT

(Ms. HANABUSA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HANABUSA. Madam Speaker, the bottom line is we need bold visions to achieve full employment.

We know only too well that we have had unprecedented periods of high unemployment. We know that we have

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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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DECriminalIZING MARIJUANA LAWS

(Ms. NORTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, 18 States and the District of Columbia have rapidly decriminalized marijuana laws, making them subject only to fines. They did so for various reasons. None of those reasons were more solid or important than the Council's decision to decriminalize D.C.'s marijuana laws.

African Americans in the District of Columbia and Whites use marijuana at the same rate, but Blacks have an arrest record for possession eight times that of Whites. That's discrimination.

It is the same thing when Chairman JOHN MICA of the Government Operations Subcommittee of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee decides to hold a hearing on D.C.'s marijuana decriminalization law but on no others. Two prior hearings have looked at marijuana decriminalization. None has called local public officials.

Be on notice. The District of Columbia insists that it not be treated any differently from the 18 States that have decriminalized marijuana and the States who have legalized it.

VETERANS FAIR ECONOMIC TOWN HALL

(Mr. WALBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALBERG. Madam Speaker, last week, I had the pleasure of holding a veterans fair economic town hall and several general town halls across my district. Throughout the conversations I had with my constituents, I heard a growing concern about the increasing government intrusiveness, whether it is in the doctor's office, the classroom, or the economy.

House Republicans understand that our constituents want government to work efficiently. We have offered real solutions that will grow good-paying jobs and expand opportunity for all.

In fact, we have already passed over 200 bills that will start helping people today but unfortunately are still collecting dust on Senator HARRY REID's desk. This includes bills that would lower health care costs and return choice back to patients, as well as expand domestic energy production to both create jobs and lower costs for consumers.

It is time, Madam Speaker, for the Senate to join us in advancing real solutions. It is time to make life work better for all Americans.

HONORING HAROLD CORBIN

(Mr. MEADOWS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MEADOWS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor Mr. Harold Corbin

and thank him for his service to the 11th Congressional District. This last Saturday marked 50 years of continued service to this great district. It was the first district meeting that he had missed.

Mr. Corbin is a lifelong resident of Franklin, North Carolina, which is a testament to his commitment to our community; and from 1980 to 1989, Mr. Corbin served as the Republican chairman of the 11th Congressional District. As chairman, Mr. Corbin made important contributions that have had a lasting impact on western North Carolina.

In 1981, his activism led to the election of the former Representative Bill Hendon, who was the first Republican Congressman to represent the 11th District in over 100 years.

From 1982 to 2002, Mr. Corbin served as the chairman of the Macon County Board of Commissioners. His leadership and inspiration to his son led his son to get involved in politics. He now holds that same position. It is both of them that have set a tremendous example for our Nation.

I will close with this. All of us in Washington can learn a lesson from Mr. Corbin, who has long said that, once elected, Representatives serving constituents ought to leave their politics at the door and truly serve the citizens.

TVA'S WATTS BAR NUCLEAR FACILITY

(Mr. DESJARLAIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DESJARLAIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to share my findings from last week's tour of TVA's Watts Bar Nuclear facility located in Tennessee's Fourth District in Rhea County.

The Watts Bar facility is constructing a second nuclear unit, which will be completed late next year. It will be the 21st century's first new reactor to go online, doubling the facility's capacity and then creating reliable energy for nearly 1.3 million homes and businesses.

This project has contributed significantly to the local economy by providing more than 3,300 high-paying jobs. TVA makes safety and security its top priority. During the construction of Unit 2, the workers have achieved a milestone of 22.8 million work-hours without a lost-time incident.

I would like to extend a special thanks to TVA's senior vice president of operations and construction, Mike Skaggs, and his team for making my visit so educational and productive.

Madam Speaker, it is imperative that we continue to support the safe, affordable, and reliable energy that nuclear provides in order to attract industry and create jobs.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on consideration of H.R. 4487, and that I may include tabular material on the same.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MEADOWS). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oklahoma?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 557 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 4487.

The Chair appoints the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 0912

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 4487) making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes, with Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

Mr. COLE. Madam Chairman, thank you for the recognition, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 4487, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2015, provides \$3.3 billion for the operations of the legislative branch, excluding Senate items. The recommendation is the equivalent to the fiscal year 2014 level and a decrease of \$122.5 million, or 3.7 percent, from the requested level.

Conforming with the longstanding practice under which each body of Congress determines its own housekeeping requirements and the other concurs without intervention, funds for the Senate are not included in the bill as reported by the committee.

Through seven hearings and meetings with agency heads, the committee listened to all who presented their respective concerns and budget requests. It was necessary to make some critical decisions and prioritize programs, and we did this in a bipartisan and transparent manner.

We are presenting to the House today a bill that is fiscally responsible and maintains current operations for the Legislative Branch agencies.

The bill includes \$1.2 billion for the operations of the House. This is equivalent to the fiscal year 2014 enacted