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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. JOLLY).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 15, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DAVID W. JOLLY 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 6, 2015, 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, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, the man pictured alongside me will go a long way towards determining who lives in the White House for the next few years. No, he is not a pollster or a campaign spin doctor. No, this is a Federal judge for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas, the Honorable Judge Andrew Hanen.

The lawsuit by 26 Republican Governors and attorneys general seeking

to block the executive actions taken by the Obama administration on immigration was filed in his court. He has not ruled yet on the constitutionality of the case.

He ordered a preliminary injunction, however, saying he thought the States have standing to bring the suit—or at least that the State of Texas did. That was enough for him to stop the implementation of the program nationwide.

Not surprisingly, just last week, the judge refused the government's request to lift his injunction and allow the plan to move forward.

Here is the reality: Congress mandates that about 400,000 people will be deported this year out of a total of 11 million.

The Secretary of Homeland Security developed a plan to choose between hardened criminals and those immigrants who have lived here for at least 5 years, have U.S. citizen children, and can pass a criminal background check at their own expense.

The plan also requires immigrants to renew their temporary status periodically to prove again that they have not committed crimes or fraudulently sought out services or benefits.

It is that plan for the parents of U.S. citizens in American families, people who have been working and staying out of trouble for years, that the Texas judge here believes will cause irreparable damage to the State of Texas and, therefore, must be stopped nationally.

Just as they had hoped, the judge ruled that Texas might some day in the future suffer irreparable harm because of driver's licenses. In other words, people who qualify for driver's licenses and who take the test and pay their fees for driver's licenses—if they live in Texas and apply for those driver's licenses in Texas—will be doing the State irreparable harm.

I have a driver's license. It is right here. I had no idea I was causing irrep-

arable damage to the State of Illinois just by applying for it and paying for the driver's license and learning the rules of the road and buying car insurance; but who am I to disagree with a Federal judge?

On Friday, the Department of Justice will argue before the fifth circuit court in New Orleans that the President's executive actions should move forward. It is well known that the fifth circuit is among the most conservative.

Look what happened a couple of weeks ago in that very same circuit court. They ruled on a lawsuit related to the State of Mississippi which, like Texas, felt it might some day in the future be dealt damage by the deferred action program announced by the President for DREAMers back in 2012.

The panel of judges from the fifth circuit looked at the program, the evidence, and the cost of the State of Mississippi, and the fifth circuit judges said Mississippi is not harmed and, thus, does not have legal standing for the lawsuit.

That bodes well for the country and the President's executive actions. In the meantime, Judge Hanen still hasn't ruled on the case. Maybe he is running out the clock, trying to make the immigrants in cities like Chicago and Houston lose hope or stop preparing to sign up or maybe magically self-deport and give up on watching their children, their U.S. citizen children, grow up in America.

It might turn into a drawn-out series of rules and appeals that wind up in the Supreme Court, which could take us well into 2016.

2016 is an election year, where Latino U.S. citizens—not immigrants we are discussing, but their neighbors, cousins, spouses, and coworkers who are citizens of the United States—are not likely to vote for a party that is making sure that their neighbors, cousins, spouses, and coworkers are still a top priority for deportation.

□ 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 have a feeling the citizens will support the candidates and the parties that support their communities. I also have a feeling that the decision to drag this fight out in the courts will be one the Republican Party regrets from a political point of view; just like the decision not to allow a vote on immigration reform over the past 2 years will be seen as one of the biggest and most consequential political mistakes of all time.

How long does a vote take? Fifteen minutes—it might sound too much like a Geico commercial, but just 15 minutes could have saved the Republicans a great deal of heartache.

The failure to take those 15 minutes for a vote might mean that there are no Republican Presidents for a long time who would nominate judges like this one.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I began a series of remarks leading up to tomorrow, Emancipation Day, in the District of Columbia, when Lincoln and the Congress freed the slaves in the District 9 months ahead of the Emancipation Proclamation.

There are no slaves living in the District today, nor is there a single free and equal citizen living in your Nation's Capital. Freedom from slavery did not give residents freedom as equal citizens.

During yesterday's remarks in this series, I spoke about D.C. residents going to war, to every war since the Nation was created, without ever having a vote. Today's remarks fit today, April 15, the day when D.C. residents will be the only Americans who pay Federal taxes without a vote for or against those taxes or anything else. For us, it is not tax day; it is taxation without representation day.

It is no overstatement to say that this House is obsessed with taxes, that is to say, tax cuts. There are tax cut bills on the floor this very week. Our residents are not demanding tax cuts—take the money—but they are demanding the rights that go with the taxes they pay.

We want an end to no vote on this floor; an end to local matters coming to Congress without a vote on this floor; an end to D.C.'s local budget, of all matters, coming to Congress, even though there is not one dime of Federal money in it, only local money.

We want an end to every Member getting a vote on District matters that come to this floor except the Member who represents the District of Columbia. We want an end to this mountainload of injustice, and that comes with statehood.

The best way to see the injustice of paying taxes without representation is

to compare D.C. residents and what taxes they pay with what other Americans pay. Look at who pays the highest taxes in the United States of America, D.C. residents—this is per capita, my friends—compared to who pays the lowest, Mississippi. What is that, a third of what D.C. residents pay?

The two largest States in the Union, New York and California—New York taxpayers pay a little more than \$8,700 per capita, California a little more than \$8,000 per capita—both compared to our \$12,000 per capita. Southern States average between the \$4,000 and \$5,000 per capita range. The Midwest states average in the \$6,000 range. Ohio is \$6,130. Iowa is \$6,019.

Even States with many wealthy taxpayers, like Virginia and Florida, are within the \$7,000 tax range, but D.C.—650,000 residents—pays \$12,000 per resident. Find your State on my Web site. You will not find one state paying what District of Columbia residents pay.

Today is April 15, and nobody enjoys paying taxes, but we believe that the constituents of my colleagues will join the moral outrage of my constituents when they learn that D.C. residents are not only paying more federal taxes per capita than any other Americans, but that added up, this amounts to more dollars than 24 of our States are paying, all with representation.

D.C. residents pay more than their full freight to support the United States Government. The time is overdue to permit D.C. citizens to join the Union of States as the State of New Columbia, the 51st State of the Union.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today is April 15. This is the day that our income taxes are due, a day that is difficult enough under the best of circumstances, but made even more difficult, purposefully, for millions of Americans.

My Republican friends have decided to take out their differences with the IRS by deliberately torturing the American taxpayer. Ours is the largest tax system in the world that relies primarily on voluntary compliance. Most Americans, in fact, do comply, but an ever-increasingly complex tax system makes that compliance difficult.

It should be noted that it is not the IRS that makes the Tax Code complex; it is Congress that makes the Tax Code complex, a Congress that is sometimes so late in meeting its obligations with tax changes that the Service has difficulty even printing the forms on time as these changes occur every single year.

In order to help citizens with Congress' complex tax system, the Internal Revenue Service runs the largest consumer service operation in the world,

but this process has been deliberately sabotaged by the Republican approach to the agency budget.

The agency has 30,000 fewer employees today than it had in 1992. The real budget adjusted for inflation is about the level we had in 1998, when we had fewer taxpayers filing returns and a Tax Code that was smaller and less complicated.

If Congress had truly been partners with the agency in improving its service in streamlining and modernization and giving them today's computers, maybe it would be possible to keep pace, but the IRS has been given a budget that prevents it from modernizing its information technology. It uses applications for its computers that were running in the early 1960s.

The IRS is virtually a museum of computer technology, but you cannot modernize the simple call service function of answering phones and talking to taxpayers, yet Congress has deliberately slashed that money available for those positions.

When you visit the IRS offices, which I have and which I hope every one of my colleagues does before they reduce those budgets yet again, they will find employees who simply cannot meet the needs of their customers.

Our employees don't like putting people on hold for 20 minutes, 30 minutes, or more or dropping the calls altogether. It frustrates the taxpayer, and it breaks the hearts of our employees.

□ 1015

Now, it is no secret that some people forget to declare all of their income, and, frankly, there are some people who actually cheat on their taxes, but Congress has not equipped the IRS to do the audits necessary to actually collect the money that is due—billions and billions of dollars—which would pay for badly needed government services or reduce our debt.

They refuse to fund some positions that would not just pay for themselves but would collect 10, 20, 30 times or more their annual salaries, and Congress is deliberately making it worse with yet another budget cut while watching the exodus of highly trained, skilled professionals who have better things to do with their lives than work in an impossible situation and constantly be under attack.

I have no doubt that there are times when the agency has not performed in ways that we would all like, but the solution is not to torture the taxpayers and fail to equip the agency to do its job while continuing to make the Tax Code ever more complex.

This is gross political malpractice. It is not fair to the taxpayers; it is a disservice to our employees; and it makes it hard to fund the needs of our Nation. They may think it is good politics to make the taxpaying experience as miserable as possible, but it is, ultimately, bad judgment; it is poor politics; and it is a disservice to the American public.