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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. DUNCAN of Tennessee).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 17, 2016.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR. to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Neiman, one of his secretaries.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2016, 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.

BIG GOVERNMENT: TSA'S FAILURES

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, early in 2015, the Department of Homeland Security removed the TSA Director and Administrator after it was re-

vealed that banned items made it through screening in different parts of our airports throughout the United States.

This didn't happen once or twice, but it happened 67 times out of 70 tries. That is a 90 percent failure rate. Any business would be out of business if it failed 90 percent of the time to do what it is supposed to do.

We are not talking about selling goods and services. We are talking about security—American security. But TSA is a government agency, so, to me, accountability doesn't seem to be a priority.

After this fiasco in 2015, the Administrator was replaced with a new Administrator. I don't know that security is better or not—maybe it is—but we do know that the lines are longer and TSA efficiency is questionable.

To find that out, just go to any of our airports and try to travel. Travelers are faced with wait times in excess of 3 hours just to get through security. Flights are missed and flights are delayed because of the security chokepoint. It is ironic that people wait in line longer than it takes them to fly from point A to point B. Security lines should not take longer than the flight itself, but that is happening in our airports.

The TSA Director blames the passengers for the delays. So it is not TSA's fault; it is the flying public's fault for the long lines and delays?

The cost to American taxpayers for TSA is \$7 billion a year. Are we safer, better off, and more secure because of this massive government bureaucracy? Americans need to answer that question.

TSA must also work on its treatment of passengers. I constantly hear in my congressional office from people who travel about the way they are treated by government employees at TSA when they try to go through security.

Now, I know a lot of TSA employees. Some of those in Houston are wonder-

ful people. Yet some TSA employees are rude, demeaning, and disrespectful to the travelers. That has got to stop. There is no excuse for it. Flying has become torturous for some travelers because of TSA.

Homeland Security must figure out a better way to protect and serve the people, the flying public, without causing people to miss their flights. Maybe TSA should use trained dogs before and after the security points to help check for explosives—I am not sure the answer—but change the current model because it is not working.

This issue must be fixed, and the issue is not to blame the fliers. The issue is TSA needs to respond to this issue. There are airports all over the world that screen passengers. Maybe TSA could learn something from some of these other airports about efficiency and security. This problem must be fixed, and the answer is not to blame the Americans who travel and blame them for waiting in line for 3 hours to catch a plane that flies only 1 hour.

Airports should strongly consider moving to private screeners. The law allows this to happen, Mr. Speaker, but the law requires that, if an airport wants to use private screening companies, they must get the Department of Homeland Security's approval to use that screening company over TSA. That is an issue in itself. But the answer is not to continue having the same issues and problems that we now face.

People who travel a lot and travel rarely, when they talk about their traveling experience, one thing they seem to always mention is the way they have to go through screening and the way they are treated by TSA. Remember, a 90 percent failure rate is not acceptable.

The security must be better, and people must be treated better, because that is just the way it is.

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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