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No. 36

House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BEGICH).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 24, 2025.

I hereby appoint the Honorable NICHOLAS J. BEGICH, III, to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2025, 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 time equally allocated between the parties 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 1:50 p.m.

CONGRATULATING DAME KAREN PIERCE

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

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ambassador Dame Karen Pierce, who served nearly 5 years as the British Ambassador to the United States and was recently appointed as the United Kingdom's Special Envoy to the Western Balkans.

During Ambassador Pierce's time in the United States, she happily embraced her role as the guardian of the

special relationship between our two countries. During a time of increasingly strident partisanship, Ambassador Pierce was able to find allies across the political spectrum, receiving praise from all sides for her ability to bring people together.

Ambassador Pierce has continued to play a key role in advocating for increasing economic engagement between our two nations—I look forward to a U.S.-U.K. free trade agreement—and she has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to global stability. Whether wrestling with security challenges, strengthening economic ties, or championing democratic values, Ambassador Pierce has exemplified the very best diplomacy leadership.

Dame Pierce was indefatigable. It seemed she gathered people to her home in Washington every day and every evening for conversations about the most important matters on the globe. I think I saw more of Karen these last 5 years than I saw of my own family. She was everywhere, and she knew everybody, one of the most important skills of the most important diplomat from our most important ally.

Ambassador Pierce's New Year's Eve celebrations will live long in Washington memory.

Please join me in thanking Ambassador Pierce and wishing her the best on her next mission to the West Balkans. Her legacy of diplomacy will continue to inspire future generations.

ZONING IN ON SERVICE: HONORING GERRY
HYLAND'S LEGACY

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Gerald W. "Gerry" Hyland, the true pillar of the Mount Vernon community who recently passed away.

For 28 years, Gerry served as the Mount Vernon district supervisor, but he was no ordinary public servant. After getting his LLB from George Washington School of Law, he decided

that was not taxing enough and proceeded to earn a master's of law in taxation from George Washington School of Law.

Gerry was a man who wore many hats, from Air Force colonel to lawyer, but it was his role as a community leader where he truly found his calling. He may have been known as Mr. Pot-hole, but his impact on the community was anything but shallow.

Gerry was known for his sharp legal mind, his dedication to public service, and his uncanny ability to solve problems. His office said that the supervisor never met a pun that he didn't like or a constituent he wouldn't try to help. You might say he had a real knack for zoning in on the issues that mattered most.

Gerry always tried to include his constituents in every big decision. It seems Gerry knew the secret ingredient to community engagement, a healthy serving of Hyland sauce.

As a master of puns, Hyland left a lasting impression with his humor. Before retiring in 2015, at his final board of supervisors meeting, he shared one last pun that perfectly encapsulated his wit: There once was a supervisor who told 10 puns to his colleagues to get them to laugh, but no pun in 10 did.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DON FOWKES, JR.

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor the life of Don Fowkes. Don, of Duncansville, Pennsylvania, passed away on February 15.

A graduate of Hollidaysburg High School, Don joined the Allegheny Township Police Department in 1968 and honorably served for 32 years, culminating as the chief of police.

□ 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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Don was later elected as township supervisor in 2003, giving 50 years of his life to serving Allegheny Township in Pennsylvania.

My thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Nancy; his daughters, Tracy and Tonya; and his grandchildren, McKenzie and Jordan.

Don's service and his commitment to community will never be forgotten by the individuals of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District.

RECOGNIZING CAREER AND TECHNICAL
EDUCATION MONTH

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this month is Career and Technology Education Month, celebrating the students, teachers, and administrators throughout the country who participate in these important programs.

Last week, I met with the students and staff at Colonial Career and Technology Center at New Oxford High School in Adams County, Pennsylvania, and the Bedford County Technical Center in Everett, Pennsylvania.

It was a pleasure to tour these facilities at both campuses and meet with their dedicated staff and the talented students to learn more about the skills that these students are building each and every day while in those classrooms.

Programs like these give students an opportunity to explore future careers while gaining real-world, hands-on experience in that field. This gives students an opportunity to use their hands and brains as they carve out careers, careers that are so necessary right now throughout America.

I thank all the career and technology centers throughout Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District for preparing students for success in a competitive job market, strengthening regional workforces, and helping to bolster the economic health of our communities.

HONORING MICHAEL STRANK

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sergeant Michael Strank of Franklin borough, Pennsylvania, who is one of the patriots who planted the American flag atop Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima in late February 1945.

An immigrant from Eastern Europe, Sergeant Strank signed up for the Marine Corps in 1939, and in 1942, he was promoted to sergeant, preparing to go to war in the Pacific after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

In February 1945, Sergeant Strank was on the island of Iwo Jima, where some of the most intense fighting throughout the war had occurred.

On February 23, 1945, Sergeant Michael Strank, along with other Marines, climbed to the top of the volcanic rock and planted Old Glory for all to see.

Though the battle waged for 2 more weeks, Sergeant Strank and his fellow marines created a lasting image that would go on to embody American strength and courage.

Unfortunately, Sergeant Strank never made it home from Iwo Jima, as he was killed in combat just 1 week later. However, the image that he and his fellow soldiers and marines created lives on today, serving as a reminder to all generations of what American perseverance and strength can accomplish.

To Sergeant Strank, I say Semper Paratus, and to all who served as part of the Greatest Generation, I thank them.

May the brave men and women who pick up the torch today to protect our freedoms around the globe take inspiration from those who came before them, like Sergeant Strank.

REPUBLICAN BUDGET BETRAYS
MIDDLE CLASS

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, we are now in the eighth week of the 119th Congress, which has distinguished itself with incredibly low productivity and low effort.

So far, we have brought up just a bunch of moldy old leftovers from the last Congress. We have been averaging roughly about two votes a day since the Congress was sworn in on January 3.

Despite the fact that we have a government shutdown looming in about 2 weeks, on March 14, the Speaker is much more focused on other things than trying to again avoid a catastrophe like that.

It appears that this week we actually are going to take up the budget reconciliation bill that again has been worked out down at the Mar-a-Lago hotel over the last 2 months or so, where a conga line of billionaires have been observed walking through, meeting with leadership of the Republican Conference, laying out their priorities, not the American people's priorities, in terms of what they want to see in that reconciliation bill.

This week, we are going to take up, apparently, according to the Speaker's Office, an actual vote on that.

Why is that being given priority over a government shutdown? The real reason that is being given priority is that the tax cuts that were passed in 2017, particularly on personal rates, are going to be expiring in 2025. For the people who benefited the most, the top 1 percent of this country in terms of their economic position, for them, that is their number one priority.

A week ago Friday, in the Budget Committee, on a party-line vote, the Republicans produced their bill, their budget reconciliation bill, which extends those tax cuts, despite the fact that it worsens our budget deficit and leaves middle-class and lower income Americans in the dust.

This chart was done by the Peterson Institute for International Economics, a nonpartisan think tank, which shows again where the benefit of that bill is

going to go. The top 1 percent in income—in the State of Connecticut from where I am from, that is people whose income is about \$1.2 million a year—they are going to get a \$70,000 tax cut. For somebody who is in the lowest quintile, which is income up to \$14,000 a year, you can see on this chart they are going to get about \$130. For a middle-income person who makes roughly about \$114,000 a year, they are going to get about a grand in terms of their tax payments.

Now, if we actually had a mature, reasonable process in this Chamber where Democrats would also be consulted in terms of putting together a plan to make sure that lower income and middle-income individuals' taxes don't go up, we could work out an arrangement, but not with a price tag of which the top 1 percent are going to continue to rake in tax cuts that were, again, shoved into the bill in 2017, lowering the top marginal rate from 39 percent to 36 percent. Again, that was just a complete and total windfall for people who don't need that type of tax relief.

Let's look again at what else the Budget Committee did with this chart, which shows how they are going to pay for extending those tax cuts. The cost of extending those tax cuts for the top 1 percent is \$4.5 trillion over the next 10 years.

There were some other additions that they put into the budget, which are going to add to the deficit. To pay for it, they included a whole bunch of cuts. The big one is to cut the Medicaid program, a program which provides healthcare for 70 million Americans, such as people in nursing homes. Almost half the live births in this country are covered by Medicaid. Young, working-class individuals, because of the ACA expansion, are covered by Medicaid.

Again, this bill talks about cutting \$880 billion, about 20 percent of the cost of the program, indiscriminately with no precision in terms of who it is affecting. It has work requirements. Are people in their nineties in nursing homes really going to do that? Give me a break.

There are some other cuts to higher education to help pay for this.

The bottom line is, at the end of the day, we are still going to be adding to the deficit. The deficit hawks in the Republican Party are adding to the deficit with this measure on top of the deficits that we are already running today.

This bill is fiscally irresponsible and outrageously unfair in terms of who benefits from it. It is extremely harmful to middle-class and working families of this country whose essential need for educational services and healthcare are going to be cut. They will take the hit in terms of advancing this priority.

This is an important vote for the people of this country to be watching. This is a gut check for every Member in this