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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. BOST).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 16, 2016.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE BOST to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

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.

WIDESPREAD FLOODING IN LOUISIANA

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to my home State of Louisiana, where thousands of people throughout the State, and in my congressional district particularly, are dealing with the aftermath of widespread flooding.

Beginning on Wednesday of last week, heavy rains began falling across northeast Louisiana. By Friday, we had recorded over 2 feet of rain. Creeks

and lakes overflowed. Water topped levees and spilled into neighborhoods. State highways looked like rivers, and parking lots looked like ponds.

Since the flood began, I have visited a number of parishes throughout my district. Whether it was in north, central, or southeast Louisiana, the one constant was there were far, far too many people hurting.

As of yesterday, at least four people had died from the flood in Louisiana. Nearly 15,000 homes had been reported damaged, and the number will definitely grow. More than 6,800 people have requested help from FEMA, and that number will likely grow as well.

Lives were changed last week, and we have a long way to go to recover. The President has approved, at the request of the Governor, Federal disaster aid for most parishes affected. This is a great, great thing, and we need it. I appreciate that support very much.

I have lived in Louisiana all my life. I still live in a soybean field in northeast Louisiana not far from where I grew up in a cornfield, also close to my home. I have seen a lot of things in my time and I have seen a lot of rain come, but I have never seen as much rain as we received last week.

Unfortunately, Louisiana is all too familiar with disasters. In the last 10 years, we have seen five hurricanes, an oil spill, and now this horrific flooding. But each time we face adversity, Louisiana and her people respond. We follow Christ's commandment, which is to love and help one another.

I have been so inspired by the way our communities across Louisiana have answered the call to serve: packing sandbags in the wee hours of the morning, volunteering at shelters, cooking food for relief workers, housing stranded family members; and sometimes people who are not even known to these people, they are taking them into their homes. The acts of kindness just keep coming and coming, and we need more of them to keep coming.

There is one group of individuals I want to especially recognize, and that is our first responders. The National Guard has rescued over 3,295 people so far. Sheriffs, deputies, other law enforcement officials, and firefighters are still tallying their numbers because they have saved so many lives. These men and women have logged countless hours and put themselves in harm's way to save the lives of others.

I have heard stories of some officers using makeshift rafts to pull people from flooded homes and getting them out before waters overtook their home.

I have seen videos of the National Guard with Black Hawk helicopters rappelling into floodwaters and pulling people to safety who were clinging to trees. I saw one instance where a gentleman had been in a tree for up to 2 days.

It is just incredible what our first responders have done.

There is another story about our power company employees saving a man whose truck was swept off the road by water. Again, he had been in a tree, hanging on for life, for 2 full days before he was saved.

Story after story in parish after parish show the incredible strength our Louisianians have and the first responders' abilities and their caring and what they have done for our State.

The rains have stopped for now, but we are not in the clear by any means. The water is pushing most of our rivers over their flood stages in a big, big way. I hope another round of floods isn't on the way.

In Louisiana, we know how to bounce back from adversity, but we will only do so with the continued generosity of those who are in a position to help others. I ask the Nation to remember Louisiana in its prayers as we continue and start the process of rebuilding.

□ 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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A REALISTIC INFRASTRUCTURE AGENDA

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the tortured Presidential nominating process continues with generalities and insults, but maybe we could avert our eyes and attention for a moment and consider some real challenges that we face closer at hand.

The backdrop in the metropolitan area in Washington, D.C., is that D.C. Metro has shut down for the entire day to deal with safety concerns—an unprecedented step. The bigger issue for most people in the region, for most riders and potential users, is the system's reliability.

It is a symbol of a lack of resources and a lack of leadership, not just for Metro, but for the States of Virginia, Maryland, the District of Columbia, and the Federal Government itself. They have, sadly, been lacking in leadership, in vision, and providing the resources for this vital system for a region of approximately 4 million people.

At the same time, we have a looming water and sewer crisis, almost 2 million miles of pipe, in some cases long past its useful life. A water main breaks every 2 minutes. We have serious problems with system reliability with sewage.

The city of Flint, Michigan, and its terrible situation with lead in the drinking water has captured attention, but it has also pointed out for people who look deeper that this is a problem that afflicts communities across the country. We have, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers, an overall grade, as a country, of D dealing with sewer and water challenges.

What if the major candidates would train their attention on serious proposals to deal with the infrastructure crisis already upon us? Not mere generalities, but let's talk about how they would pay for it. What is their vision to deal with multiple needs, and how would they set priorities?

It is not really that hard. In a number of very red States, governments have stepped up to raise the gas tax and fund transportation. In metropolitan communities across the country, in red States and blue, people are dealing with their challenges, proposing to their communities funding and vision to solve the problem.

I have got bipartisan legislation to establish a Federal water infrastructure trust fund to help start in that regard.

We ought to fix the transportation funding. There is broad support amongst labor, business, profession AAA truckers to raise the gas tax and be able to deal with our transportation challenges.

Finally, we should embrace technology in transportation, things from self-driving, autonomous vehicles, elec-

tronic payment for road systems, a road user charge being experimented on in the State of Oregon. These are mechanisms that would help us update, modernize, and make these systems more effective.

And by the way, when you hear all those candidates talking about strengthening the middle class and the economy, these proposals would put millions of people to work at family-wage jobs in every community across America. It would strengthen safety and liveability and bring people together.

You know, when we have faced up to infrastructure challenges, whether it is Dwight Eisenhower's interstate freeway system, what we have done in the past with clean water and clean air, those are things that are broadly supported by Americans. An infrastructure agenda, a realistic infrastructure agenda has the potential of bringing people together while it strengthens America, and it would certainly be a nice change of pace.

HONORING THE LIFE OF KRIS ANNE VOGELPOHL

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

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and to celebrate the life of Kris Anne Vogelpohl of Galveston. Many know Kris Anne Vogelpohl as the matriarch of the Galveston County Republican Party.

Kris Anne made her way from Colorado to Galveston, where she became chief therapeutic dietician at the University of Texas Medical Branch in 1950. It was at UTMB where she met her future husband, Dr. Elmer Vogelpohl.

Kris Anne didn't waste any time getting involved in the community and local politics, too. In fact, in 1955, Kris Anne became one of the founding members of the Galveston Republican Women. From there, she solidified her GOP trailblazer status by becoming chairwoman of the Galveston Republican Party, where she thereupon built a strong foundation for the party to grow and build on.

In addition to her political service, Kris Anne was an avid philanthropist within the community. One of the organizations she invested her time in was the Salvation Army, where she joined their county advisory board in 1959.

Kris Anne's unwavering commitment to the betterment of society was a sight to behold, Mr. Speaker. She made everyone feel so welcomed. She empowered so many people to take charge and get involved. Her enthusiasm for making our county, our State, and our country even greater was infectious. The proof is in the pudding. Galveston has become one of the strongest Republican counties along the Gulf Coast and in Texas.

Dr. Vogelpohl could often be seen with Kris Anne in event after event all

over Galveston County. You talk about stalwarts, Mr. Speaker. My prayer is that we all be such sterling examples to those who come behind us. Lord knows that Dr. Elmer, as I call him, and Kris Anne were—or make that are, quite frankly.

Kris Anne lived to be 90 years old. She was married for 55 years and is survived by her husband, two children, and six grandchildren.

Kris Anne may be gone, but in reality she is still here. She will forever be in the hearts and minds of the people she touched.

Mr. Speaker, my thoughts and my prayers are with Dr. Elmer, their children, their grandchildren, and with the great multitude of friends she served. My prayer is also may the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, even the Lord Jesus Christ, wrap them up in His loving arms and comfort them. May He bless them and keep them. May God bless them all, and may God bless the great State of Texas and Galveston County that Kris Anne loved so much.

In a wonderful way, He has been blessing us. He loaned us Kris Anne.

□ 1015

HONORING THE LIFE OF OFFICER JACAI COLSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sorrow that I rise today to pay tribute and honor the life of Prince George's County Police Officer Jacai Colson, who was killed in the line of duty.

Line-of-duty deaths are always difficult to bear. A police officer or another first responder leaves their home, their station, or their vehicle, and their loved one, coworker, or partner expects to see them return.

My heart breaks for Jacai's loved ones and for the tight-knit community that is the Prince George's County Police Department.

On March 12, 2016, an off-duty detective, Police Officer First Class Jacai Colson, arrived at the District 3 police station in Landover, Maryland, with the intent of visiting a fellow officer, when matters took an unexpected turn for the worse.

We will continue to learn the details of this tragedy in the coming days. What we do know is that Officer Colson's actions saved lives and allowed his fellow officers to neutralize the threat, even as he made the ultimate sacrifice.

On behalf of the citizens of the Fourth Congressional District of Maryland, I want to extend my appreciation to Officer Colson for his selfless and heroic actions and his relentless dedication to public service.

I would like to remember the legacy Officer Colson leaves behind. He was a Pennsylvania native who played quarterback at Chichester High School in