



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 162

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, JULY 7, 2016

No. 109

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WEBSTER of Florida).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 7, 2016.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DANIEL WEBSTER 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.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND WATER

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to climate change, the data is in and the science clear: Our world is shifting. Sea levels are rising. Glaciers are shrinking. Oceans are becoming more acidic.

What is more? The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is 95 percent certain that humans are causing the current climate change trend. To sit here and deny the science simply because it inconveniences us does nothing but cause greater harm for our planet and future generations. Each day that passes without action on climate change is another day we are wreaking havoc on our world.

I think President Obama said it best when he stated: "If anybody still wants to dispute the science around climate change, have at it. You'll be pretty lonely, because you'll be debating our military, most of America's business leaders, the majority of the American people, almost the entire scientific community, and 200 nations around the world who agree it's a problem and intend to solve it."

It is hard to believe that some of my colleagues are so determined to deny climate science that they are willing to sacrifice the health and safety of Americans. Nowhere is the sacrifice more evident than in our waterways. We use water for everything, from drinking and bathing to growing crops, shipping goods, generating electricity, and recreation. But climate change is creating profound changes to this precious commodity, threatening water availability, access, and quality.

Many areas of the United States, especially in the West, currently face devastating water supply issues. The amount of water available in these areas is already limited, and our demand will continue to rise as the population grows.

One of the greatest examples of this is the Colorado River system, a major source of water supply for the Southwest. In recent decades, water flow through this important river system has been lighter than expected given annual rain and snowfall rates. Not surprisingly, studies show that rising temperatures and climate change are the cause of this decreased water flow.

As greenhouse gas pollution continues to pile up, it traps more heat, continually raising global temperatures, and parches the Colorado River watershed. Researchers expect that for every degree of Celsius of global warming, the amount of water that gets evaporated and sucked up by plants from the Colorado River could increase 2 or 3 percent. With 4.5 million acres of farmland irrigated using the Colorado River water and with nearly 40 million residents depending on it, the incremental losses that are predicted will have a devastating impact.

As the West continues to experience less rain and an increase in the severity and length of droughts, greater impacts on drinking water supplies are projected. Unfortunately, it is not just the western U.S. that is in danger. In my own region, the Great Lakes are under threat as they are warming at rates faster than the world's oceans. It is expected that the Great Lakes region will grow warmer and probably dryer during the 21st century, with temperatures in the region warming anywhere from 5 to 12 degrees Fahrenheit.

The impact climate change has on the five lakes will have serious implications for aquatic life, as well as high economic costs for our communities. Several different climate models for the Great Lakes region all predict that lake levels will decline over the next century. Within another 30 years, Lake Superior may be mostly ice free in a typical winter and has already experienced increased water temperatures. Lake Erie water levels, already below average, could drop 4 to 5 feet by the end of this century, significantly altering shoreline habitat.

We are at the tipping point, and instead of addressing the root of the issue, climate change, my colleagues continue to deny the science. Our waterways are national treasures. They serve as the backbone for our health, economy, ecosystems, and recreation. We cannot simply stand by while the course of the world is altered. The science is clear, the data is pointing us in one direction: Now is the

□ 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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H4471

time to act on climate change. We are not given a planet with unlimited resources. It is our job to protect our waters and the people that rely on them, and that begins with finding real solutions to our climate crisis.

STOP SPENDING BILLIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I am on the floor again today with a prophetic political cartoon. In the cartoon, Uncle Sam is in a wheelchair, and he is at the edge of a cliff that is known as the fiscal cliff. Then, he has President Obama pushing him in the wheelchair; and then the donkey, representing the Democratic Party, is pushing Mr. Obama. And then the elephant, representing the Republican Party, is pushing the donkey and President Obama to push Uncle Sam off the cliff.

What is ironic is that Uncle Sam is yelling like he is excited: "I can see Greece from here." Well, we know what has happened to the economy of Greece. It is in total collapse.

Mr. Speaker, we are \$19.2 trillion in debt. I was here in the year 2000 when Bill Clinton left office. We were the majority in the House and the Senate. We were headed for a surplus. The debt in 2000 was \$5.6 trillion. Now we are here 16 years later and it is \$19.2 trillion.

The reason I bring this up is because we have an opportunity to stop spending billions and billions of dollars in Afghanistan. It is nothing but a waste. It is a waste of our young men and women in uniform. It is a waste of the taxpayers' money.

Recently, in an article in The Washington Post titled "Former Afghan Leader Karzai: Military Action Cannot Resolve Conflict in Afghanistan," the former President of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, told The Washington Post recently that he doesn't think a military effort will bring peace to Afghanistan. He said: "We did it for the last 14 years and it didn't bring us that, so how do we know . . . military action will bring us that now?"

We are going on 15 years of being in that country—and the waste, fraud, and abuse in Afghanistan is worse now than it has ever been.

I think about the needs of our veterans, I think about the needs of our children, I think about the needs of our senior citizens, and so many other needs. We passed a bill yesterday to help with the mental health issues of America, yet it is not funded. But, yes, we will find the money to fund Afghanistan so we can continue to waste and spend the taxpayers' money and get nothing for it. It is just absolutely ridiculous.

Mr. Speaker, I voted against the Department of Defense bill last week simply because there is another \$43 billion

in there going to Afghanistan. This is OCO funds, it is slush funds, and it can't even be accounted for.

The taxpayers are frustrated with both parties and fed up because we are not doing our jobs. We are not doing what is necessary. We ought to be debating Afghanistan on the floor of the House and we ought to be saying, "Is it worth it or is it not worth it," and have an up-or-down vote. No, we just let it continue to go down this road with no end to it.

Mr. Speaker, I close this way, because to me this tells you more about Afghanistan than anything I could say today. Afghanistan is known as the graveyard of empires. Well, I know one empire that is headed for the graveyard, and it happens to be the United States of America. And if we continue to fund and waste the taxpayers' money in Afghanistan, then I hope that graveyard will have a headstone, and it will one day, that says "USA," because we will be in the graveyard of Afghanistan.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a vice chair of the House Gun Violence Prevention Task Force and in solidarity with the majority of Americans who are demanding that Congress take meaningful action to prevent gun violence.

We all know the statistics. Whether it is through mass shootings that make the headlines or the unseen violence that happens daily on our streets, gun violence takes the lives of more than 30,000 of our Nation's citizens each year, a number that far exceeds other industrial countries.

Now, all these countries have their share of violent extremists and madmen, but only our country gives easy access to weapons of mass killing. And that makes all the difference for America.

Rather than seeking out commonsense solutions to address this crisis, the Republican majority continues to cower to the gun lobby and the firearms manufacturers. Now they plead the Second Amendment, but Constitutional Law 101 would tell us that all of our rights, including the precious freedoms of religion and speech, must be balanced to protect innocent third parties and to protect the safety of the wider community.

One commonsense measure we should all agree on is background checks to keep guns out of the hands of criminals, domestic abusers, and the dangerously mentally ill. You can't shout "fire" in a crowded theater because of your freedom of speech, and neither should you be able to buy a weapon if you have a history of violence and criminality.

In fact, almost 90 percent of Americans, including the majority of gun

owners, support universal background checks for all gun purchases. The problem is that our present background check system is rife with loopholes. Background checks are not required for private sales at gun shows. They are also not required for Internet sales.

Bipartisan legislation has been introduced by Representatives PETER KING and MIKE THOMPSON that would finally close this egregious loophole. It is an entirely sensible reform that would have a measurable impact on the safety of our schools, homes, and neighborhoods, without preventing law-abiding citizens from using guns for self-defense or recreational purposes.

Despite attracting 186 cosponsors, including several Republicans, the background check legislation has never been brought to the floor or even received a hearing in committee. It has been languishing for more than 15 months. Meanwhile, the shootings and the suicides and the massacres continue to accumulate.

My colleagues, we must do better. Our fellow citizens are totally fed up, both with the unspeakable killing and suffering and with a feckless Congress that hasn't lifted a finger to prevent it.

Now, this week, after intense public criticism and a historic protest by Democrats on the House floor, Republicans seemed for a while to be willing to hold a vote on legislation they claim would prevent suspected terrorists from purchasing firearms. After all, nearly 2,500 individuals on the terrorist watch list have successfully purchased weapons in this country.

But rather than embrace existing bipartisan legislation to actually fix the problem, Republicans put forth a woefully inadequate proposal that would require law enforcement and courts to grapple with unworkable processes, unreachable standards, to be completed in an unreasonably short period of time.

Their bill would allow suspected terrorists to receive firearms by default after only 3 days if the court is unable to work through a complicated process. That is the same flaw that allowed the White supremacist Charleston shooter to obtain the weapon that he used to murder nine people at Emanuel AME Church.

In other words, the bill is totally inadequate. Now, under pressure from their most extreme Members, Republican leaders refuse to even put this bill on the floor.

What should be on the floor is bipartisan legislation, H.R. 1076, that would permit the Attorney General to block gun sales to suspected terrorists. This legislation, based on a proposal from the Bush Justice Department, would still allow individuals to challenge the government in court to restore their gun ownership rights.

We don't have to choose between protecting our communities and respecting due process.

□ 1015

And so, Mr. Speaker, we ask our colleagues how much longer must we