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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 22, 2020.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY CUELLAR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2020, 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 10:50 a.m.

INEQUALITIES IN COVID–19 ASSISTANCE DISTRIBUTION

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the inequalities that persist in COVID–19 assistance distribution.

Back in March, House Democrats recognized the global health crisis was causing an economic crisis. As Americans struggled, we provided them with stimulus checks to help them make ends meet during these uncertain times.

However, not everyone who was entitled to these checks received them. The Senate wrongfully included a provision in the CARES Act that prevented families with only one American citizen parent and another who is a tax-paying immigrant with an ITIN from receiving this financial assistance.

Let me repeat this. Citizens of the United States are being prevented from receiving stimulus checks because of whom they love.

This blatant discrimination must be corrected. We need to help people like Lacey, an amazing, hardworking citizen who works for the State government and isn't able to receive a stimulus check. Lacey and her spouse have been together for 14 years and were married in 2010. They have raised six beautiful children, all of whom are U.S. citizens.

For the past 7 years, Lacey has worked at the Illinois Veterans Home in Quincy, Illinois. She works long hours to make sure her veteran residents are safe, healthy, and happy, and in March, this job made her an essential, frontline worker.

Lacey loves her job and loves her residents like they are her own family. Since the onset of COVID, she has continued her hard work and dedication to her job. Lacey has picked up overtime shifts to cover for coworkers who are sick and has worked hard to ensure the standards of care at the facility remain high. She is a United States citizen who works every day to care for our Nation's veterans.

Despite her service to our country and the fact that she and her children are American citizens, her family did not receive a check, all because her spouse is an immigrant using an ITIN and they file their taxes jointly.

She has done everything in her power to speak out and advocate for herself and has connected with others like her in the Facebook group Mixed-Status Families United.

She told me: ''I am being punished for who I married. My husband and I work and we pay our taxes. Why are we being treated like second-class citizens?''

Her words resonate, because she is right. She is being treated like a second-class citizen.

I ask you, during a period of unprecedented challenges, when Americans are facing more than one crisis, when we are depending on essential workers more than ever, is it right for our country to treat people differently based on the immigration status of their loved ones?

As a country, I believe we can and should do better. There is no scenario in which citizens should be denied the help they are entitled to. Likewise, tax-paying immigrants who are paying their fair share should not be denied assistance, left out on their own.

I am pleased that the HEROES Act, which the House passed more than 100 days ago, rectifies this issue and makes all tax-paying individuals eligible for a check.

While I believe all taxpayers should receive a stimulus check regardless of their citizenship status, at the very least, we need to ensure that all U.S. citizens receive a check regardless of who their spouses are, and underscore the necessity of including a fix that corrects this provision retroactively and for any additional stimulus checks provided moving forward.

We must stand with mixed-status families and continue to fight for them and their rights. Now, more than ever, we need to provide for people who are suffering due to this pandemic.

I urge my colleagues to join me in taking swift action to resolve this issue.

FINDINGS OF THE CHINA TASK FORCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

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