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House of Representatives

The House met at 11 a.m.

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

We pray, gracious God, for the abundance of Your spirit in our lives and in the lives of every person. Our petition is that Your gifts of mercy and justice, of understanding and peace, of tolerance and patience, of freedom and responsibility, will rest in our hearts and souls and minds this day and every day, and cause us to be the people You would have us be. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from California [Mr. LANTOS] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. LANTOS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed with amendments a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2036. An act to amend the Solid Waste Disposal Act to make certain adjustments in the land disposal program to provide needed flexibility, and for other purposes.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain fifteen 1-minutes on each side.

TIAHRT AMENDMENT TO AID FLAT ECONOMY

(Mr. TIAHRT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, our economy is flat. Many experts say that we are bordering on recession. I think the Clinton administration should shoulder the blame. The union workers remember that President Clinton signed both NAFTA and GATT into law and both agreements have not worked. Now the President will not even use the tools available within the agreements to save American jobs. That is why I am proposing an amendment to the farm bill. It is supported by the AFL–CIO to prioritize the export enhancement program to save jobs. Union jobs, support farmers, and export value-added products like flour will force the President to do the right thing. It is no wonder our economy is flat. We need someone to fight for our jobs, and that is what Congress intends to do.

RESOLUTIONS CONDEMNING ASSAULT ON FREE MEDIA IN SERBIA AND DENOUNCING LOUIS FARRAKHAN'S SUPPORT OF TERRORIST REGIMES IN LIBYA, IRAN, AND IRAQ

(Mr. LANTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, this morning I am introducing two resolutions, and I know these resolutions will receive broad bipartisan support. The Communist dictator of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic, has closed down the only independent television station in Belgrade. I think it is an outrage that, as Milosevic is trying to work his way back into acceptance by the civilized world community—and he should do so—he also simultaneously closed down the Soros Foundation, a humanitarian and charitable organization that has done an enormous amount of good for the people of Serbia and indeed for the people of countless other countries. I am calling on President Clinton in the most emphatic terms to insist that the independent television station in Belgrade be reopened and the Soros Foundation be allowed to continue its work.

My second resolution, Mr. Speaker, denounces Louis Farrakhan's visit to Libya, Iran, and Iraq. It is critical that the President of the United States direct executive agencies to establish whether U.S. laws were broken. Farrakhan can say whatever he wants, but he must obey the law.

THE CLINTON CRUNCH

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, the Clinton crunch is upon us.

No, this is not a new kind of cereal. It does not go snap, crackle, and pop if you pour whitewater—or should I say milk—over it.

No, Mr. Speaker, the Clinton crunch is a disease that infects middle-class America.

Its symptoms? Higher taxes and stagnant wages.

Its cause? The policies of the Clinton administration.

The cure? Lower taxes and a balanced budget.

Mr. Speaker, it is true, the Clinton crunch is upon us. Luckily, there is still hope for middle-class America. But we must act soon. We must cut taxes and we must balance the budget.

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Unfortunately, the current occupant of the White House does not seem that interested in cutting taxes or balancing the budget. In fact, he would rather feed the Clinton crunch with higher taxes and more Washington spending.

Mr. Speaker, the differences could not be clearer. Bill Clinton wants higher taxes and higher spending. House Republicans want lower taxes and less spending. Which do you think is the cure for the Clinton crunch?

GOP EXTREMIST AGENDA WRONG APPROACH

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, our constituents are worried about jobs. They see downsizing in their communities. They are concerned about wages because the economy continues to be a problem for many Americans. But the answer is not the GOP extremist agenda that basically protects the rich and the powerful but threatens the health, safety, and security of America's working families.

The Republican leadership over the last year has been putting forth this extremist agenda at the expense of the middle class, at the expense of the average working American. They have tried to put into place tax breaks for large corporations and for wealthy Americans. They have tried to cut taxes, or they have tried to eliminate tax credits, the earned income tax credits for working Americans at the lower end of the income spectrum.

At the same time, you see the President suggesting that we do things to help the average working American. The President has talked about tax cuts for families. He has talked about doing things for education, such as your ability to deduct tuition that you pay for your student, your children that are in college. It really is terrible that we continue to see this GOP extremist agenda that hurts the average working American, and I hope that now that we are back in session and we are away from this 3-week break that we are starting to see some action in this Congress to help the average working American.

FIX THE WELFARE SYSTEM

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, the existing welfare system is a mess. It hurts the very people that it is supposed to help. In 1992, President Clinton campaigned on a pledge to end welfare as we know it. Remember that? Now, after 3 years of the Clinton Presidency, he has not lifted a finger to do anything about the failed welfare state. It is true that he has talked about the values of work and family, but if we examine the record, the President has not signed into law any reform of welfare. In fact, he vetoed the only genuine welfare reform bill to pass this Congress in a generation.

The President is now in the midst of backing away from the compromise welfare agreement passed unanimously by the National Governors' Association, both Democratic and Republican Governors. He had originally praised the plan as a huge step in the right direction. It is time for the President to cut the cord with the special interest groups, the liberal groups, and to help us fix the failed welfare system in this country.

CEO'S HIT JACKPOT

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, while American workers keep losing their jobs, the top chief executive officers just keep hitting the lotto. Check this out. Chemical Bank go rid of 12,000 workers; the boss made $2.5 million. GTE got rid of 17,000 workers; the boss made a cool $2 million. IBM shafted 60,000 workers; the boss made $2.6 million.

And AT&T, they take it all. They got rid of 40,000 workers and Robert Allen, chief executive officer, made 3.3 million big ones. They call it downsizing. I call it larceny. AT&T does not stand for American Telephone and Telegraph anymore. It stands for Allen and two temporaries. That is Robert Allen, folks; $3.3 million, think about it.

I yield back the balance of all this unemployment.

CUBAN ATTACK AN OUTRAGE

(Mr. ZIMMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ZIMMER. Cuba's downing of two planes whose only arms were pamphlets is an outrage, and it shows how desperate Fidel Castro is in his fight to deny the Cuban people liberty and freedom. Castro is an international outlaw, no more and no less.

I am very disappointed in the President's response to this outrage. It is entirely inadequate. If President Clinton were serious about responding to this terrible offense against U.S. citizens, he would demand that the international community join with us in an international embargo to tighten the noose around Castro and to allow democracy to take root there. He would also reverse his Executive order of last October which liberalized cultural ties with that country, only rewarding a repressive regime for the enslavement of its own people.

We must get serious, Mr. Speaker, and the way that we should start doing so is to enact the Burton-Helms legislation in its original form, not some watered down version that the President has endorsed.

LIFT THE DEBT CEILING

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we are getting dangerously close to default, and simply put, there is the wrong way to run the finances of our great Nation. Congress' failure to raise the debt ceiling will have immediate and devastating effects. The U.S. credit rating will be ruined; Social Security checks on which 43 million senior citizens rely will bounce. Benefits for over 37 million of our Nation's veterans will not be allocated. Pensions for 4 million civilian and military retirees are at risk.

Mr. Speaker, this is craziness. This is deja vu back to the days of holding the Government hostage to force acceptance of a balanced budget plan that the American people have rejected. Now the Republicans are trying it all over again, except this time the hostage is our Nation's full faith and credit, 43 million senior citizens, 3 million veterans, and 4 million civilian and military retirees.

When will they learn? Waiting until the last minute and insisting on including provisions that have nothing to do with the debt limit is the height of irresponsibility, and my friends on the other side of the aisle should be ashamed. It is time we pass a clean debt ceiling bill and get on about the Nation's business. Shame on coming this close to defaulting on our Nation's obligations.

NEWEST WASHINGTON BUZZWORD

(Mr. BASS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I guess the new buzzword we are going to hear now from the other side of the aisle is going to be the use of the word ''extremist.'' Everything we do is going to be called extremist. I would only ask that we return to the issues that we have been talking about here in Congress for the last 14 months, balancing our Nation's budget for our children and our grandchildren. Extremist is passing a welfare reform bill that encourages work and holds families together. Extremist is preserving, protecting and improving the Medicare system for our senior citizens. Extremist is giving the States more control over Medicaid. Extremist is sending power and money and influence back to State and local authorities and citizens of this country, extremist.

Mr. Speaker, let us spend the next few months talking about our Nation's hopes and not its fears. Let us make America proud of its elected officials once again.