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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. ROGERS].

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 11, 1997.

I hereby designate the Honorable HAROLD ROGERS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

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

We are ever indebted, O loving God, that Your spirit is with us from the exhilarating moments of gladness through the valley of the shadow of death. When we celebrate the wonders of faith and hope, Your presence surrounds us and makes us whole; when we miss the mark and the shadows close upon us, Your still small voice rescues us, forgives us, and nourishes us along the way. For the gift of Your abiding spirit wherever we are, we offer this prayer of thanksgiving and praise. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. TIAHRT] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TIAHRT 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.

BALANCED BUDGET REPRESENTS A NEW ERA

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

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, the liberals are nervous.

The tax-and-spend crowd is outraged.

The big government supporters of the status quo have declared war.

And what is all the fuss about?

The reason for the anxiety is pretty clear. Those who built the welfare state over the past 40 years are about to have their credit card taken away.

What I hold in my hand, Mr. Speaker, is my congressional voting card. It is given to each Member of Congress. For some it is like a credit card. We stick it in the box, we press the button and we spend and spend and spend, and my children and your children are given the bill.

Well, guess what, Mr. Speaker? After 40 years of big government liberalism, the frenzy of credit card madness is about to end.

With nothing to show for it but $5 trillion in debt and thousands of broken liberal promises, Washington is about to act responsibly for the first time in memory. Washington now has the opportunity to pass a balanced budget with tax cuts, an absolute nightmare to those who built the welfare state over the last 40 years.

But their day is past. This balanced budget represents a new era. Mr. Speaker, the era of credit card madness is over.

TIME TO LOOK AT WORKERS' RIGHTS IN AMERICA

(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, since 1888, Reznor heaters were made in Mercer, PA. Yesterday, Reznor executives told their workers if you do not accept the $2.20 an hour cut, we will move the plant to Mexico; take it or leave it. Four hundred dollars a month, $5,200 a year, $15,600 in cuts over the life of a 3-year contract. Take it or leave it, workers. We will go to Mexico.

Shame, Congress. Mr. Speaker, Reznor executives are holding the gun to their workers' heads. The Congress of the United States is pulling the trigger all around America. Shame, Congress. How about some more NAFTA? I think it is time to take a look at the rights of American workers. I yield back any jobs that might be left.

PRESIDENT WANTS TO SHUT THE GOVERNMENT DOWN

(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, the President wants to shut the Government down. The President wants to shut the Government down. That is the reason for his veto on the disaster relief bill.

He said it was not a clean bill, that there are riders. Can any of us name a spending bill that does not have riders? This one went from $4.8 billion at his request up to $8.4 billion. We have forward funding of FEMA, we have Bosnia relief, and we have other things. One rider says that if Congress and the President cannot reach an agreement, we will continue government until, until, we work out our differences. That is a good thing. Certainly no reason for a veto.

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The bottom line is the President thinks it is more important to shut the Government down than provide relief for those who suffered from a disaster.

Mr. Speaker, the President wants to shut the Government down.

AMERICA NEEDS HIGH EDUCATION STANDARDS

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

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, America needs high education standards, and I rise today to urge my colleagues to sign on to my resolution in support of educational standards of excellence.

This simple resolution is a commonsense approach to improving education in this country. As a former State superintendent of my State's public schools, I know firsthand that setting high standards and equipping our students and teachers with the tools they need to meet those standards is the best way to assure quality education in our schools for all of our children. This Congress must take aggressive action to provide leadership that is needed to raise educational standards.

Yesterday, I received a letter of support from the Council of Chief State School Officers, which represents the educational policy leadership in each of the 50 States in this country. This letter reads in part:

> The Council * * * is pleased to support your resolution urging States to adopt challenging academic standards and tests to measure student achievement.

Later this week I will introduce my bill, and I urge my colleagues to join with the chief State school officers in each State in support of the educational standards resolution.

BALANCED BUDGET AGREEMENT PUTS MORE MONEY IN POCKETS OF AMERICAN FAMILIES

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

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I keep hearing from my liberal friends who are outraged that Congress is trying to cut taxes. They look at Washington and they know that Congress is trying to balance the budget and they simply cannot understand why Republicans are calling for tax cuts.

Well, Mr. Speaker, should Congress balance the budget first and then cut taxes? The answer is no. To say that we cannot balance the budget and cut taxes is to forget what that assumes. It assumes that Washington cannot cut spending more. It assumes that Washington should continue to take much of your money while it is waiting to get its act together. It assumes that Washington should do the wrong thing for just a few more years while it is waiting to put its financial house in order.

Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, this is exactly the kind of thinking that got us in this trouble in the first place. The balanced budget agreement gets it right and puts more money in the pockets of American families.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL: A BAD BILL GETS WORSE

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

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, the reviews of the Republican tax bill are pouring in. A bad bill gets worse. A favor-the-rich tax plan. Loophole-filled tax cuts are an economic time bomb.

What we are now seeing is, after people have a chance to review the Republican tax bill, they now understand that over 60 percent of the tax cuts go to people in the top 5 percent of income in America. And corporations over time would again go back to paying no taxes at all for the privileges that American society extends to them.

And how do they pay for these exploding tax cuts that will make the deficit worse? They want to take people who are eligible for Medicare at 65 and make them eligible at 67. That means millions of workers who retire or are laid off at their jobs at 58, 59, 60-years-old, will have to wait 7 years to have health care coverage. They want to take poor elderly women, who have the smallest pensions, and tell them they will not pay for their Medicare, and they want to penalize families that put their children into day care and not give them the tax cuts.

THE TRUTH ABOUT LAWSUIT AGAINST DOE REGARDING NUCLEAR WASTE

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, this morning I want to dispel a myth and share with my colleagues the truth about a lawsuit against the Department of Energy regarding nuclear waste. Many falsely claim that it forced DOD to accept this garbage by January 31, 1998.

However, the Department of Energy advised its contract holders that it anticipated that it will be unable to begin acceptance of spent nuclear fuel for disposal by January 31, 1998. The Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management contends that the delay in disposing of the contract holders' spent fuel is an unavoidable delay and, according to DOE, is not liable for failure to perform under the terms of the contract.

The contract states that neither the Government nor the contract holder shall be liable for damages caused by failure to perform its obligations, if such failure arises out of causes beyond control and without fault or negligence of the party.

Now that the truth has been told, there is no legal obligation by DOE to accept nuclear waste by January 31, 1998. We should not let false information or tactics scare us. Vote ''no'' on 1270.

PROPOSED EPA OZONE AND PARTICULATE MATTER STANDARDS

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

Mr. GOODE. Mr. Speaker, as a result of the 1990 Clean Air Act amendments, America's air quality has improved and those improvements are continuing. Yet after industries have expended billions of dollars, and even before the improvements that will result have been fully realized, America's economy faces additional regulation.

Mr. Speaker, now is not the time to burden America's economy further. An example is an industry that provides employment to nearly 9,000 men and women in the Fifth District of Virginia. Over a year and a half period, the wood furniture and related industries engaged in a negotiated rulemaking with the EPA, the American Lung Association, the Sierra Club, Environmental Defense Fund, and others.

The rulemaking resulted in an agreement that would cost the industry an estimated half billion dollars and would substantially reduce smog-causing emissions and title 3 pollutants. Mr. Speaker, the agency called this process a credit to industry, environmental and governmental cooperation. But almost before the ink was dry, the agency was back proposing more burdensome regulations that their own scientific advisory committee cannot agree will have significant health and environmental benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I know that there are many of us here who are willing to work for standards based on quality science and health and environmental benefits—but not these regulations and not at this time.

NO TAXATION WITHOUT RESPIRATION

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

Mr. PARKER. Mr. Speaker, Washington is confiscating the American dream. Family farmers and small business owners work their entire lives to earn a living and build a farm or a business they and their children can be proud of. Then, at the moment of greatest family grieving, when the owner dies, the IRS steps in to take up to 55 percent of that farm or that business. The IRS calls this the estate tax. This is a death tax. It is a tax for dying.

The farmer and the businessperson have paid income taxes, self-employment taxes, property taxes, and school taxes. After all that, Washington wants