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Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, March 20, 2000, at 12 noon.

House of Representatives

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2000

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

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 15, 2000.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DOUG OSE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Reverend Dr. Richard Camp, Ministry to the National Parks, Boston, Massachusetts, offered the following prayer:

Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the Earth. Your never ending providence orders every event, sweetens every fear, and brings real good out of seeming evil. We come to You for the grace another day will require for its duties and events.

Help us to walk in wisdom to those to whom we must give account, to walk in kindness to those with whom we work, and to walk with courage as we seek to do what is right.

Guide the women and men of this Congress today. Give them the vision to see the impact of today's decisions on tomorrow's world. And may the ripple effect of their lives of integrity return to bless them and all people in the days ahead.

God of hope, fill us with joy and peace as we trust in You that, by the power of Your spirit, our whole life and outlook may be radiant with hope. 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 gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY 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.

LEARN FROM OUR MISTAKES

(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, some startling news: Last month the Commerce Department announced that the U.S. trade deficit surged to an all-time high in 1999. The trade deficit rose over 65 percent from 1998, over 65 percent.

Mr. Speaker, the U.S. economy is being shipped overseas and the American workers are being left behind unemployed and unable to reach the American dream. And in spite of this indisputable fact, the Clinton administration continues to encourage the expansion of current free trade policy, such as NAFTA, to other nations around the world.

Sadly, the President has also failed to mention another fact that the Commerce Department also announced, and that is that the United States experienced record trade deficits with its NAFTA trade partners last year, as well. Seems obvious to me and many of my colleagues here that NAFTA and similar trade policies have caused more harm than good for our economy and for the American workers.

Let us not make the same mistake twice.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back such ill-conceived trade policies that seem to only trade away American jobs for higher trade deficits.

WE HAVE MEANS TO PROTECT OUR FAMILIES, SUPPORT OUR SENIORS, AND EDUCATE OUR CHILDREN

(Ms. SCHAKOWSKY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of senior citizens who cannot afford to pay for their prescriptions. I rise for the children who go to overcrowded and broken down schools. I rise for the people who work full time

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and still cannot afford health insurance or quality child care. I rise for people who cannot afford to send their children to college. I rise for the 80 percent of the homeless who go to work every day and play by the rules and cannot afford a roof over their heads. I rise to oppose Republican budget priorities that will make the very rich even more rich.

We have the means to protect our seniors, to support our families, and to educate our children and to bring everyone along. This is the moment in history when we can and should do that.

REPUBLICAN BUDGET PLAN PAYS DOWN DEBT

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, would my colleagues go on a huge credit card spending spree if they knew that they would be dead and gone once the bill came due and their children would be responsible for paying it off? Of course not.

Most Americans work hard to make sure that they have some money to leave their children when they die. Most Americans would never dream of leaving their children a pile of debt for their inheritance. But that is exactly what the Federal Government has been doing for years.

For 40 years, when Democrats controlled the Congress, they spent money on more and more Government programs and created bigger and bigger debt and they knew that their children would be the ones saddled with the bill, but they kept spending and borrowing and spending more. That was wrong.

Republicans are putting an end to this kind of spending-now-and-paying-later mentality. One of our priorities in this budget is to pay down the public debt. We want to pay off those bills so our children do not have to.

Let us work together to make sure our legacy to our children is a sound economy, safe neighborhoods, and quality schools instead of decades' worth of bad debt.

INCOME TAX BUSINESS OUT OF CONTROL

(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, the income tax business is out of control.

Check this out. Steve and Heidi Salashi of Monroe Falls, Ohio, failed to file a 1997 income tax return with the City. The reason they did so is they only owed 19 cents. Nineteen cents.

Now, if that is not enough to bust your bunions, the City of Monroe Falls took them to court. They face 6 months in jail and a thousand-dollar fine because they even lost the record of the Salashi family, which included, Mr. Speaker, a $25 late fee.

Beam me up. Mr. Speaker, it is time to put a dagger in the heart of income taxes. Our Tax Code is so heavy it would give a King Kong gorilla a hernia.

I yield back the anguish of the American taxpayers.

COLOMBIA AID PACKAGE

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

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, in Shakespeare's play Julius Caesar, the soothsayer warned Caesar to ''beware of the Ides of March.'' Caesar did not listen and Caesar perished.

Today, on this Ides of March, I bring my colleagues fair warning. If we do not pass the Colombia aid package soon, our friends in Colombia could suffer the same fate as Caesar and our own children could be next.

Mr. Speaker, in fiscal year 1999, Federal agents intercepted nearly 2,800 pounds of heroin and 280,000 pounds of cocaine coming into the United States. And of these amounts, DEA estimates that 80 percent of the coke and 75 percent of the heroin originated in Colombia.

These are staggering figures indeed, but they only represent the seizures. I can assure my colleagues that much more is making it to our streets and to our young people.

Without U.S. help in fighting the drug war, the Colombian Government has little chance of ending the violence and stopping the flow of drugs. With the illegal drug trade providing the insurgents with over $600 million a year in drug money, it is likely that the duly-elected Government of Colombia will fall without our immediate help. Failing to act will stay with our children forever.

REPUBLICAN BUDGET PLAN OUT OF STEP WITH AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it seems that once again the Republican budget would be just another re-run of last year's out-of-step ideas. This is a reckless plan. It fails to extend the life of Medicare by one day. It fails to extend the life of Social Security by one day.

Instead of investing in the future of American families by paying down the national debt, it spends nearly $150 billion on budget busting tax cuts that benefit mostly the wealthy in this country. The Republican plan is out of step with the American people.

In addition, Republicans think that the cost of prescription drugs is a low-income problem. They are wrong. The increasing cost of prescription drugs is putting a massive financial burden on middle-class seniors.

Democrats want to make sure that all seniors are covered. They should not have to be poor to get Medicare coverage for the overwhelming cost of prescription drugs. Americans want a budget that protects Social Security, Medicare, that allows for prescription drug benefits for all seniors.

It seems that the Republican budget once again fails to connect with the needs of middle-class families.

GAS PRICES TOO HIGH—PEOPLE ARE HURTING

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

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, the American people are paying almost $2 a gallon for gas while the Clinton administration is asleep at the wheel. Gas prices are too high, and people are hurting.

Mr. Speaker, why do mothers have to choose between a gallon of gas and a gallon of milk? The American people have to swallow the soaring price of fuel at the pumps, seriously jeopardizing their livelihoods.

Whether it is a tractor-trailer, a delivery van, or a family minivan, gasoline prices are making Californians choke. Still, the Clinton administration has done nothing.

Since 1993, when Al Gore broke the tie in the U.S. Senate to impose this administration's gas tax, U.S. oil production has declined by 17 percent, oil producing jobs have declined by 27 percent, and 36 U.S. refineries have closed their doors.

We need action now, not later, Mr. Speaker. Gas prices need to be lowered now.

STUDENT ATHLETE PROTECTION ACT

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

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, today one of the great events in sports in America begins, March Madness, the NCAA tournament.

While our student athletes are going to be giving it all on the court, the coaches are going to be trying to outthink and out-strategize one another.

But what do these coaches have in common, coaches like Mike Krzyzewski at Duke, Mike Montgomery at Stanford, Bill Guthridge at North Carolina, Roy Williams at Kansas? They all support a bill that the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) and I have introduced called the Student Athlete Protection Act, a bill that seeks to preserve the integrity of college, amateur, and high school sports by imposing a complete ban on betting on college sports, not de minimus bets on pools and offices, but on betting in Las Vegas.

Let us try to protect the magic and the purity of the competition in these sports and support this bill.