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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

God, our Refuge and our Strength, there are people who suffer today amidst the blessings of this Nation. There are suffering people everywhere known to You alone. Help us to come to an understanding of suffering, the wisdom it brings, and the power it has to transform human lives.

There are those who suffer the consequences of their own wrongdoing and faulty judgment. There are those who suffer at the hands of those they love and others in the hands of unjust oppressors, victims of war, abuse, illness, neglect and the death of a loved one.

There are those who suffer routinely and endure criticism daily just for being good and working for what is right and just.

But there are also those who, by Your Spirit, embrace suffering out of dedication to their country, their profession or their family. There are even those who embrace suffering out of love for You and You alone.

May hope and forgiveness sustain those weakened by pain and may love and justice transform human suffering into joy.

You are our Strength now and forever. 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 has passed without amendment bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 1791. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide penalties for harming animals used in Federal law enforcement.

H.R. 4249. An act to foster cross-border cooperation and environmental cleanup in Northern Europe.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 707. An act to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to authorize a program for predisaster mitigation, to streamline the administration of disaster relief, to control the Federal costs of disaster assistance, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2392. An act to amend the Small Business Act to extend the authorization for the Small Business Innovation Research Program, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills and concurrent resolutions of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 2102. An act to provide to the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe a permanent land base within its aboriginal homeland and for other purposes.

S. 2712. An act to amend chapter 35 of title 31, United States Code, to authorize the consolidation of certain financial and performance management reports required of Federal agencies, and for other purposes.

S. Con. Res. 57. Concurrent resolution concerning the emancipation of the Iranian Baha'i community.

S. Con. Res. 113. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress in recognition of the 10th anniversary of the free and fair elections in Burma and the urgent need to improve the democratic and human rights of the people of Burma.

S. Con. Res. 122. Concurrent resolution recognizing the 60th anniversary of the United States nonrecognition policy of the Soviet takeover of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and calling for positive steps to promote a peaceful and democratic future for the Baltic region.

S. Con. Res. 124. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress with regard to Iraq's failure to provide the fullest possible accounting of United States Navy Commander Michael Scott Speicher and prisoners of war from Kuwait and nine other nations in violation of international agreements.

S. Con. Res. 126. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the President should support free and fair elections and respect for democracy in Haiti.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain 15 one-minute speeches on each side.

HILLARY CLINTON MIRED IN ANOTHER CONTROVERSY

(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, candidate Hillary Clinton is mired in another controversy. She has been accused of using an obscene ethnic slur when her husband lost a race for Congress in the 1970s. More than one person says they heard it, and now it is out in the open.

It has been said that the character of a person can sometimes best be seen in how they carry themselves when they lose. Ethnic slurs or throwing things are not generally regarded as marks of strong character.

Ms. Clinton, of course, denies that it ever happened. It sort of depends though on what the meaning of ''it'' is. Does it not?

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Her husband says it did not happen, or at least not quite the way the other witnesses claimed it happened. He says something like it may have happened, because he says, and I quote, she has never been ''pure on profanity.'' Not much of a defense there.

There are three witnesses who claim she did, and two, she and her husband, who claim she did not.

I just want to ask one question. Can anyone imagine Barbara Bush being accused of this or Nancy Reagan or Rosalyn Carter or Betty Ford or Pat Nixon or Lady Bird Johnson? There is definitely a stature gap here.

PERSECUTION AND HARASSMENT OF FREE PRESS IN RUSSIA MUST END

(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, as President Clinton makes his way to the G–8 Summit in Japan, there is no more important item on the agenda than to tell Mr. Putin, the President of Russia, that the persecution and the harassment of the free press in Russia must come to an end.

I have called to my colleagues' attention in the last few weeks the systematic harassment and persecution of the one remaining free media network in Russia. Yesterday this persecution was escalated to a new level when the Government authorities took steps to seize the personal property of Vladimir Gusinsky, the head of Media-Most which owns NTV Television Network, Echo of Moscow Radio, and other independent media ventures.

Mr. Putin must understand that there is no room for Russia in the community of free and democratic nations, if he and his thugs are determined to destroy a free press. This harassment must come to an end, or relations between the free democracies of the world and the new totalitarian Russia will take a serious turn for the worse.

WORKING ON BEHALF OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(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, Napoleon Bonaparte once said ''if you wish to be a success in the world, promise everything, deliver nothing.'' Promise everything, deliver nothing. That also happens to be the mantra of our Democratic leadership on the other side.

We all know, however, how Napoleon's plans turned out. Thankfully, this Republican-led Congress realized the importance of promises it made to the American people, and this Republican Congress is keeping those promises.

We passed a responsible, affordable, and voluntary Medicare prescription drug plan. We passed a Commerce, Justice, State Department Appropriations Act, which provides the resources necessary to fight crime and enforce our laws.

We passed a Defense appropriations bill which boosts funding for critical military readiness and gives our servicemen and women a much-deserved pay raise. Instead of just touting useless rhetoric and making empty promises, this Republican Congress has and will continue to take action in addressing the problems facing the American people.

INTERNATIONAL ABDUCTION

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

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, the issue of international child abduction is one of the most important to me, and to the parents of the 10,000 American children who have been abducted to foreign countries. These children have lost years of time with their parents, and their parents have missed watching them grow up. It is outrageous that American children are being held hostage in other countries by unlawful noncustodial parents and unresponsive foreign justice systems.

In February of 1998, Aryssa Torabi was abducted by her father to Tehran, Iran. Aryssa's father was able to leave the country with fraudulent custody papers. A Federal warrant was issued for his arrest and the FBI has become involved in the case.

In May of this year, Aryssa's mother found her through the work of a private investigator who was able to speak with the family, with the abductor's family, and get some pictures of her. The reports from the family are that Aryssa is extremely unhappy.

Children like Aryssa and her mother should not be kept apart, we must continue to do all that we can to take action on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, we must bring our children home.

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

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

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, the Food Stamp Program is designed to help indigent families feed their children. This is a noble goal.

Unfortunately, widespread abuses in the food stamp program cost American taxpayers an estimated $1.4 billion in 1998 due to improper payments.

That is money denied to thousands of poor American children throughout the Nation. In fact, food stamp reforms such as the electronic benefits system, the EBT, which has replaced food stamps in 29 States, have actually generated more welfare fraud.

In one instance, two people in Beaumont, Texas, were convicted of trafficking in EBT food stamp benefits in exchange for crack cocaine. And in another, the owner of a meat and seafood market redeemed more than 331,000 in EBT food stamp benefits, even though virtually no food was purchased.

We cannot let this continue. For the sake of our children and for the sake of the taxpayer, we must do a better job of eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse.

DISASTER WAITING TO HAPPEN ON U.S. BORDERS

(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, a study finally admits, and I quote, ''America's borders are so wide open, terrorists could easily smuggle a nuclear bomb across both our borders.'' Think about it, 3 million illegal immigrants, heroin and cocaine by the tons, and now a report that further says it is so bad in some areas orange cones are used like scarecrows with no border patrol presence at all.

Unbelievable. We have soldiers vaccinating dogs in Haiti, while terrorists can bring nukes across our border. Beam me up here. Who master-minded this policy? The Proctologist Association of North America?

Mr. Speaker, I yield back a disaster waiting to happen on the borders of the United States of America with a Congress sleeping at the switch.

GAS PRICES

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

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, throughout our summer gas crisis, the Clinton-Gore administration has played possum with the American people. They have claimed that the gas crisis was not caused by a supply issue and blamed oil companies for price gouging. But a recently released internal memorandum obtained from the Department of Energy by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN) tells a different story.

The Energy Department memo dated June 5 indicates that ''high consumer demand and low inventories have caused higher prices for all gasoline types.'' The memo also indicates that recently implemented gasoline standards may increase costs. But not 10 days after this memo was drafted, Secretary Browner told more than 30 Midwestern Members of Congress that the gas price hike was inexplicable.

The Clinton-Gore administration has lost e-mails, lost important files and lost nuclear secrets. Now, we can add the true reason for the energy crisis to the lost list.

TRIBUTE TO LUTHER ROSS WILSON

(Mr. STENHOLM asked and was given permission to address the House