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House of Representatives

The House met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDEN).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 4, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TIM HOLDEN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

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

Lord of heaven and Earth, darkness descends upon us as the days grow shorter, and the cold chastens us to withdraw inside.

Be for us the light we long for. The very promise of change creates expectation.

By the first hints of Your dawn, banish all fear and hesitation. May those who live on the margins of America's rich blessings have peace and prosperity too.

Strengthen us with Your mighty arm, that this Congress may be unified in lifting Your people to renewed hope.

For You are always faithful and can be trusted, now and forever.

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 Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. BORDALLO 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.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE BLUE CROSS/BLUE SHIELD OF SOUTH CAROLINA FOUNDATION

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and thank the Blue Cross/Blue Shield of South Carolina Foundation for the hard work on behalf of the citizens of South Carolina.

The purpose of the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Foundation is to promote the health and well-being of economically disadvantaged South Carolinians through expanded access to quality and affordable health care. Through the awarding of grants, the foundation provides necessary resources to free clinics, health education programs, and school nursing programs. Realizing that it is often children and young adults most adversely affected by inadequate health care, the foundation focuses on providing grant money to services that will assist children and adolescents who are either uninsured or underinsured.

This year they have embarked on a state-wide tour to recognize the $1.6 million in grants that they will be awarding. This is part of over $7 million in grants they have awarded since 2003.

I want to thank the foundation's executive director, Harvey Galloway, and the CEO of Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Ed Sellers, for their strong leadership.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

FUND OUR VETERANS

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

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, this is day 65. That's 65 days so far that our veterans have not had the use of the increased funding for their benefits and health care. That's $18.5 million a day not able to be used.

This bill has been done for months and the President has already agreed to sign it. But instead of moving the bill forward, the Democratic leadership in Congress chose to adjourn early for the Thanksgiving holiday.

I'm calling on the Speaker to pass this bill, and I call on all Americans to contact their Representatives and tell the Democratic leadership to send a clean veterans appropriation bill to the President now.

Our veterans are heroes. We must provide all possible benefits and health care for our veterans now.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CONGRESSMAN HENRY HYDE

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and accomplishments of a terrific Member, former Congressman Henry Hyde. He's often recognized for his wisdom and his eloquence of speaking. But, frankly, there were some other sides of him that were very precious. He was a man of quick wit and a keen sense of humor, to which I was always a willing audience.

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Above all, he was passionately committed to protecting and improving the lives of Americans, all Americans, both born and the unborn. He was an effective pro-life advocate, through prohibiting Federal funding of abortions with the Hyde amendment and his advocacy for the ban on partial-birth abortions. Conservative estimates indicate that there are about 2 million Americans alive today as a direct result of his work.

Henry Hyde leaves behind a legacy that inspires and challenges those of us who remain behind today.

My deepest condolences and sympathy to his family, and may God bless Henry Hyde.

IN RECOGNITION OF TIM CULBERTSON

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment today to recognize Tim Culbertson and all the members of the Cheviot-Western Hills Chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Chapter 3620.

The primary mission of the Military Order of the Purple Heart is to foster an environment of goodwill and camaraderie among wounded combat veterans, to promote patriotism, and to provide service to all veterans and their families.

Tim Culbertson, a Vietnam veteran and Purple Heart recipient himself, has spent decades advocating on behalf of his fellow veterans, and his service with the Military Order of the Purple Heart makes him a great asset to our whole community.

In 2000, Mr. Culbertson was instrumental in the establishment of Chapter 3620, and his dedication and patriotism were recognized earlier this year at the annual National Purple Heart Convention, where he was named the top Americanism Officer in the United States, an honor he truly deserves.

The sense of spirit, patriotism and generosity exhibited by the members of Chapter 3620 reflect the dedication, enthusiasm and commitment of their Americanism Officer, Tim Culbertson. It gives me great pleasure to recognize Tim for his accomplishments, and I congratulate him on receiving this national award, and I thank him for his contributions to all the veterans of the First District of Ohio.

LET'S STICK TO OUR GUNS

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

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Well, what do you know, Mr. Speaker. After months of drum beat urging that we take a more aggressive posture toward Iran, mention by the President of a potential World War III, the assumptions, the assertions by the White House that Iran is aggressively pursuing a nuclear weapons program, we now find that as with Iraq, this was not true.

But, differently from what happened with Iraq, this time those professional, courageous civil servants in our national intelligence agencies stood up to intimidation from the White House and spoke the truth objectively and detailed it with facts. We're very proud of them.

All the more reason why we should not yield to the President's threats to furlough over 200,000 civilian employees and contractors just before Christmas unless the Congress approves another $50 billion in war spending.

Mr. Speaker, we need to stick to our guns. We've approved $459 billion in defense spending. That's enough.

SOUND POLICY FOR AMERICA'S ENERGY NEEDS, NOT HOLLOW PROMISES

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

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to a national energy policy, here we go again.

In January, the Democratic leadership promised to work across party lines to come up with a sound, comprehensive energy bill that would address Americans' anxieties about dramatically high gas prices and escalating home heating costs.

However, the Democratic energy proposals have lacked any substance to outline a blueprint for increasing our domestic supply.

Make no mistake: we must boost our domestic energy supply. The American people want stable prices at the pump, and we can begin to address these problems; but we in Congress must make reasoned energy policy.

By promoting a level playing field for technologies, diversifying energy supplies, and increasing our domestic opportunities, we can harness our ingenuity and natural resources to relieve our current difficulties.

The American people expect more from Congress. We must increase our supply without overburdening energy producers with unwieldy bureaucracy. Let's work together to help the American people and provide some relief to the anxiety they face this winter.

RESIGNATION FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation from the House of Representatives:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, November 26, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: This is to inform you that I have sent a letter to Illinois Governor Rod R. Blagojevich informing him that I am resigning my position as the United States Representative for the 14th District of Illinois effective 10:59 p.m. CST, November 26th, 2007.

Madam Speaker, it has been a high honor to serve in the House of Representatives for almost 21 years. I am grateful to the people of Illinois for giving me that honor.

Let me also thank you, Madam Speaker, for the many courtesies you have afforded to me as a former Speaker during the past year and I wish you and all my colleagues God's blessing as you continue in your service.

I am sincerely,

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Member of Congress.

Enc: Letter to Governor Rod R. Blagojevich.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, November 26, 2007.

Hon. ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH,
Governor, State of Illinois,
Springfield, IL.

DEAR GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH: I am hereby resigning my position as the United States Representative for the 14th District of Illinois effective 10:59 p.m. CST, November 26, 2007.

I have chosen this date because I have been advised that it allows you sufficient time to call a special primary to select candidates to run to fill my unexpired term on February 5, 2008, an already established primary day. This will minimize inconvenience to the voters and expense to the counties in the 14th Congressional District.

Serving the people of the 14th District of Illinois in the United States House of Representatives has been a high honor that I will long cherish.

I am sincerely,

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Member of Congress.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the resignation of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), the whole number of the House is 432.

RECOGNIZING THE SUCCESS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII'S UNDEFEATED FOOTBALL TEAM

(Ms. HIRONO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the University of Hawaii, my alma mater, and to congratulate its football team for an undefeated season. Coach June Jones and the entire team deserve recognition for all that they have accomplished this season. Their perfect record of 12 wins and no losses is the best in the school's history, and they are the champions of the Western Athletic Conference. UH is the only unbeaten team in the Nation; and, as a result, the Warriors have qualified for a BCS bowl game. The team has been led by star quarterback Colt Brennan, who is my candidate for the Heisman Trophy.

I'm holding footballs signed by Coach June Jones and Colt Brennan, and I