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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. PASTOR of Arizona).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 9, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ED PASTOR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

Reverend Anthony L. Bennett, Mount Aery Baptist Church, Bridgeport, Connecticut, offered the following prayer:

Good morning, God, our Creator, Provider and Sustainer. It is to You, our refuge, strength, and one God who is known by many names. To You God, we give thanks for this day; a day in which we have another chance to manifest Your divine essence upon the Earth. You have given us another opportunity to demonstrate Your love for us in how we treat one another.

And so, on today, I lift the Members and staff of this, the United States House of Representatives. I pray Your wisdom and guidance will consume them so that they understand the individuals, families and, yes, even the nations that will be impacted by their decisions today. So teach them and all of us to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God.

In the name of Jesus, I pray. 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 Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas 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.

WELCOMING REVEREND ANTHONY L. BENNETT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. HIMES) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to introduce today to the Congress of the United States, Pastor Anthony L. Bennett of the Mount Aery Baptist Church in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Pastor Bennett is accompanied today by his wife, First Lady Bennett, and their young and energetic son, Ahmad.

The Mount Aery Baptist Church draws its name from the biblical Mount Ararat where Noah's ark is believed to have come to rest after the cataclysmic floods. This is an apt metaphor because Mount Aery is a beacon, a refuge, a house of good works in a very troubled city, one of the poorest in Connecticut, in fact, one of the poorest in the Nation.

But under Pastor Bennett's leadership, the Mount Aery Church has sponsored ministries for children, for teenagers, for those at risk of dependency or recovering from dependency. He has fostered educational outreach programs that have made a difference in a very, very troubled location.

One of the most personally moving things I have experienced in the last several years was when the Mount Aery Baptist Church raised up recent high school graduates of the city of Bridgeport at a time and in a place where half of the city's high school students do not graduate from high school.

Pastor Bennett is a leader, a minister, and a pastor; and I can't help but thinking this morning that if all of us strove to match his example, we would be a better country, indeed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 10 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

PUBLIC OPTION IN HEALTH REFORM

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

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my support for a strong public option as part of our health reform bill. Health care is not a place for playing political games; it is simply too precious. That is why we need to pass a meaningful bill, one that actually achieves the goal of providing everyone with affordable access to quality care.

If private competition alone could have achieved this, it would have already. I am supporting comprehensive health reform for patients, for each one of us who has a loved one who has needed care but was denied by their insurance company and couldn't afford the out-of-pocket expenses. Let's give those companies a reason to provide us with better, more affordable coverage, and give patients greater choice in who will be their insurer.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the inclusion of a viable public option in our health reform legislation.

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