

On Tuesday, we will consider a number of bills under suspension of the rules, a list of which will be distributed to Members' offices. Members should note that we do not expect any recorded votes before 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 12.

On Wednesday, May 13, and Thursday, May 14, the House will meet at 10:00 a.m. to consider the following legislation:

H.R. 3494—The Child Protection and Sexual Predator Punishment Act of 1998;

H.R. 3534—The Mandates Information Act of 1998;

H.R. 10—The Financial Services Competition Act of 1997; and

H.R. 2431—The Freedom from Religious Persecution Act of 1998; and

H.R. 512—The New Wildlife Refuge Reauthorization Act.

Mr. Speaker, we hope to conclude legislative business for the week on Thursday, May 14. The House will not be in session on Friday, May 15.

I would like to take this opportunity to note that we will have a lot of important legislation on our plate next week. It may be necessary to work late on Wednesday evening in order to ensure a reasonable getaway time on Thursday.

□ 1545

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. COBURN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BONIOR addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FOX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FOX addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BENTSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BENTSEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### TRIBUTE TO CHARLES PETER THOBÆ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY. Today, Mr. Speaker, America lays to rest an excellent journalist and a better father. It was with great sadness that the friends of Charles Peter Thobæ learned that he had passed away Monday, May 4, in Houston, Texas.

A journalism graduate of Boston University, Charles was a reporter with the Houston Chronicle for 11 years and an editor of the Texas Churchman for 25. Believing in faith and his community, he served on various charitable boards and was a very active member of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church.

During his 40 years in public relations, he did free-lance writing, including traveling, writing, and op-ed pieces for both the Houston Post and the Chronicle. Recently, Charles Thobæ also reviewed books for the Chronicle, specializing in contemporary history, military affairs, and sometimes thrillers.

David Langworthy, who is the Chronicle's Outlook editor, remarked, "He had an eye for the human and the personal. He was able to put those personalities into prose that brought our readers insights that were valuable."

His family is a special one. He was born December 9, 1930, in New Rochelle, New York, to Kathryn and Albert Thobæ. He is survived by his beloved wife, Miriam Banks Thobæ; his beloved daughters, Frances Kathryn, Sarah Banks, and Carol Ellen Thobæ. He is also survived by his mother, Kathryn Thobæ of Dennis, Massachusetts.

His daughter, I have had the pleasure of working with her in my congressional office. She recently said of her father, "He remained dedicated to people, the literary world, and religion his whole life. Everybody who knew him loved him, and he made a profound impact on everyone's life."

We celebrate his life and mourn his passing today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. CLAYTON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, today is the National Day of Prayer. This Nation and each of us individually would be far better off if we all spent more time in prayer. There are very few people in this country who would disagree with that.

Certainly our Founding Fathers believed in prayer. Most of them came here in large part to get freedom of re-

ligion, not freedom from religion. Yet, beyond a belief in prayer, many other issues of faith are very contentious. But there is more common ground than the vocal minority sometimes would have us believe.

Three or four years ago, William Raspberry, the great Washington Post columnist, wrote a really outstanding column on some of these issues. He asked a very important question, Mr. Speaker, when he wrote, "Is it not just possible that antireligious bias, masquerading as religious neutrality, is costing this Nation far more than we have been willing to acknowledge?" Let me repeat that quote from William Raspberry, "Is it not just possible that antireligious bias, masquerading as religious neutrality, is costing this Nation far more than we have been willing to acknowledge?"

In this same column, Mr. Raspberry then told of a Jewish talk show host who had said that for those who thought there was no place for God in the public life of this Nation, he wished they would ask themselves this question: If they were walking late one night in the roughest section of one of our Nation's largest cities and they heard footsteps approaching rapidly from behind and they turned and saw four strapping, well-built young men, would they not be relieved to know that these young men were just returning from a Bible study?

We open up every session of the House and Senate with prayer; and we have rabbis, priests, ministers from all faiths and there has never been a problem about it. Yet, for some reason, we do not allow our schoolchildren the same privilege. And the problems of the schools have grown much worse over the last 25 or 30 years.

A really fine column on religious tolerance, Mr. Speaker, was written a few weeks ago by nationally syndicated columnist Charley Reese. I would like to read this column into the RECORD at this point.

This is what Mr. Reese wrote:

Want to know the definition of a stone-cold bigot? It is anybody who is offended by the sight and sound of someone practicing, expressing, or proclaiming his religious faith. Such people are not only bigots, they are the south end of a horse traveling north. Their intolerance is exceeded only by their ignorance of the Constitution.

The first amendment forbids the establishment of an official church or religion. Period. Nothing else. To establish an official church or religion would require legislation so designating it, and taxes and appropriations to subsidize it. That's all THOMAS Jefferson meant when he said there was a wall of separation between church and state.

Mr. Reese continued:

But when a private individual or a public official prays in a school or any other public place, he is not establishing an official church. For someone to say that the mere sight of a Christian proclaiming his faith in a public place is offensive is to indict himself as a vicious bigot and an inconsiderate, self-centered boor. These boors apparently have no conception of civility and respect for others. They act as if religious faith were an infectious disease.

One of the most touching sights I saw

Mr. Reese continued,

... in the Middle East was a poor man, a Muslim, in shabby clothes, kneeling on a newspaper, the only prayer rug he could afford, on the tarmac of the airport in Amman, Jordan, and saying his evening prayers. His example of simple faith in his God touched my heart.

Truthfully, I cannot conceive how any decent human being could say that such a sight is offensive. People who find other people's religion offensive are demonstrating their hatred, not their interest in liberty.

The only way a free society can work is for everyone to respect everyone else. There is no respect when someone says, "Your religion is offensive to me, so keep it out of my sight." That is hate speech. Nor is it being disrespectful to practice your own religion or to pray as your particular religion teaches you to pray.

Mr. Reese said,

I don't know about you, but I've had a bel-lyful of rude, self-centered people. It's time to teach some people in this country some simple manners.

Good manners are based on reciprocity. Respect for respect. Tolerance for tolerance. There are some people who use Orwellian doublespeak and practice bigotry while proclaiming their support for tolerance. We should expose such people for what they are, bigots.

If you are a nonbeliever and are present when believers are praying, don't pray. But out of respect and courtesy for them as human beings, do not be rude or make ugly remarks about them. Respect people as people, even if they practice a different religion. And respect their religion.

Mr. Reese concluded this column by saying,

I am fed up with seeing religious people browbeaten and insulted by bullies packing lawyers. We have too many mean-spirited tails trying to wag our dog in this country. It may be time to bob some tails.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a great column by Charley Reese, and I include the column for the RECORD:

RESPECT PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF RELIGION  
(By Charlie Reese)

MARCH 30.—Want to know the definition of a stone-cold bigot?

It's anybody who is "offended" by the sight and sound of someone practicing, expressing or proclaiming his religious faith.

Such people are not only bigots, they are the south end of a horse traveling north. Their intolerance is exceeded only by their ignorance of the Constitution.

The first amendment forbids the establishment of an official church or religion. Period. Nothing else. To establish an official church or religion would require legislation so designating it, and taxes and appropriations to subsidize it. That's all Thomas Jefferson meant when he said there was a wall of separation between church and state.

You would have to be an idiot to conclude otherwise because the same people who wrote and passed the First Amendment also provided for tax-paid chaplains to pray in Congress. The problem the founders of the country dealt with is nonexistent today in America. It was the common practice of governments in their day to adopt a church and tax everyone to subsidize it. The practice had been brought from Europe to the colonies.

But when a private individual or a public official prays in a school or any other public place, he is not establishing an official church. For someone to say that the mere

sight of a Christian proclaiming his faith in a public place is "offensive" is to indict himself as a vicious bigot and an inconsiderate, self-centered boor. These boors apparently have no conception of civility and respect for others. They act as if religious faith were an infectious disease.

One of the most touching sights I saw in the Middle East was a poor man, a Muslim, in shabby clothes, kneeling on a newspaper (the only prayer rug he could afford) of the tarmac of the airport in Amman, Jordan, and saying his evening prayers. His example of simple faith in his God touched my heart.

He was as oblivious to the crowd of people and soldiers as he was to the cold wind and hard tarmac. He had a beautiful expression on his grizzled face. Clearly, there was man communing with a God he loved, and God must surely love such a man.

Truthfully, I cannot conceive how any decent human being could say that such a sight is "offensive." People who find other people's religion offensive are demonstrating their hatred, not their interest in liberty.

The only way a free society can work is for everyone to respect everyone else. There is no respect when someone says, "Your religion is offensive to me, so keep it out of my sight." That is hate speech. Nor is it being disrespectful to practice your own religion or to pray as your particular religion teaches you to pray.

I don't know about you, but I've had a bel-lyful of rude, self-centered people. It's time to teach some people in this country some simple manners.

Good manners are based on reciprocity. Respect for respect. Tolerance for tolerance. There are some people who use Orwellian doublespeak and practice bigotry while proclaiming their support for tolerance. We should expose such people for what they are—bigots.

If you are a nonbeliever and are present when believers are praying, don't pray. But out of respect and courtesy for them as human beings, don't be rude or make ugly remarks about them. Respect people, as people, even if they practice a different religion. And respect their religion.

I'm fed up with seeing religious people browbeaten and insulted by bullies packing lawyers. We have too many mean-spirited tails trying to wag our dog in this country. It may be time to bob some tails.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, due to official business in my district, I was unavoidably absent on Tuesday, May 5, and Wednesday, May 6, and, as a result, missed rollcall votes 125–135.

Had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall 122, yes on rollcall 123, yes on rollcall 124, yes on rollcall 125, yes on rollcall 126, no on rollcall 127, no on rollcall 128, yes on rollcall 129, yes on rollcall 130, yes on rollcall 131, yes on rollcall 132, no on rollcall 133, no on rollcall 134, and finally, yes on rollcall 135.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GUTKNECHT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I take this 5 minutes to further clarify some of the discussions that we had a moment ago concerning the question of campaign finance reform.

I want to make it very clear for those who are negotiating on what the rule shall look like and how we shall proceed what the Blue Dog Coalition suggested in the discharge petition that was filed, that was getting very close to having the required number of votes in which we could have had a free and open debate and which we have now been promised that we will have a clean and open debate.

There are some general principles allowing clean up-or-down votes on all major campaign finance plans. The freshman bill, the Shays-Meehan bill, and the Doolittle bill, and any alternatives the leadership might come up with on either side of the aisle and wishes to offer as substitutes at the beginning of the amendment process, this is key to the discharge petition that we filed. It is exactly the same discharge petition that was used to successfully bring the balanced budget amendment up in 1992. It is a very fair process if it is allowed to proceed in this manner.

All major proposals deserve a vote. The freshmen, bipartisanly, have worked awfully hard; and they worked in an environment in which they believed that there was not going to be campaign finance reform unless there was a compromise reached, and they reached that compromise internally. They worked awfully hard. They deserve to have a chance to have their idea voted upon as they wish it to be voted upon, not as the leadership or any other individual wishes. The same is true with the Shays-Meehan; it deserves to be voted upon on its merits.

And then we use what is called the queen-of-the-Hill rule. Let the freshman bill be voted upon. If it gets the majority vote, it becomes the base bill. Then let us vote on Shays-Meehan. If it gets a majority vote and more votes than the freshman bill, it becomes the base bill; whichever one gets the most votes, as ascertained by a majority on both sides, becomes the base bill. And then allow the perfecting amendments to be offered. Let any one of the 435 of us who have an idea that they believe is important to the campaign issues before us be offered.

I have one interest, one major interest, that I want to see addressed. It is the soft money question. A lot of people do not know what we are talking about by "soft money." But to me it means unlimited amounts of money given by individuals or corporations for which there is no real reporting therein.

I am a great believer in the first amendment, and I have been chagrined to be attacked by many of my so-called