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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Reverend Dr. Ronald F. Christian, Director of Lutheran Social Services of Northern Virginia, Fairfax, Virginia, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, we acknowledge Your presence this day in our own personal lives and in our corporate soul as a Nation.

Your steadfast love has been extended to all people for all time, especially those most in need of it.

Your gracious mercy has been meted out evenly and fairly throughout all generations.

Your nature of being righteous towards all is matched only by the demand from Your children for justice.

The clarion call by the prophets of old "to return to the Lord" is always apropos.

O God, may we be as free to give as we are desirous to receive the blessings of Your steadfast love and gracious mercy.

May we all seek to do right, be just, and always walk humbly before Your all-encompassing righteousness.

And, may we never turn a deaf ear to the trumpet call for an introspective look at who we are as persons and as a Nation.

Bless, O God, the efforts of all Your people this day, in this room and in the workplaces of our land.

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 Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TRAFICANT 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair desires to make a statement. With the concurrence of the Minority Leader, the Chair would take this occasion to make an announcement regarding proper decorum during debate in the House, including one-minute and special-order speeches, specifically with regard to references to the President of the United States.

As indicated in section 17 of Jefferson's Manual, which under rule XLII is incorporated as a part of the Rules of the House, Members engaging in debate must abstain from language that is personally offensive toward the President, including references to various types of unethical behavior.

Rulings in this Congress, which will be annotated in the accompanying section 370 of the House Rules and Manual, include references to alleged criminal conduct. This documented restriction extends to referencing extraneous material personally abusive of the President that would be improper if spoken as the Member's own words.

Occupants of the Chair in this Congress and in prior Congresses have consistently adhered to this principle regarding the present and past Presidents.

While several rulings by the Chair in this Congress may have predated certain public acknowledgments by the President, and while the standard in Jefferson's Manual has been held not to apply in the other body, it is essential that the constraint against such remarks in ordinary debate continue to apply in the House.

On January 27, 1909, the House adopted a report in response to improper ref-

erences in debate to the President. That report read in part as follows:

The freedom of speech in debate in the House of Representatives should never be denied or abridged, but freedom of speech in debate does not mean license to indulge in personal abuses or ridicule. The right of Members of the two Houses of Congress to criticize the official acts of the President and other executive officers is beyond question, but this right is subject to proper rules requiring decorum in debate. Such right of criticism is inherent upon legislative authority.

The right to legislate involves the right to consider conditions as they are and to contrast present conditions with those of the past or those desired in the future. The right to correct abuses by legislation carries the right to consider and discuss abuses which exist or which are feared.

It is * * * the duty of the House to require its Members in speech or debate to preserve that proper restraint which will permit the House to conduct its business in an orderly manner and without unnecessarily and unduly exciting animosity among its Members or antagonism from those other branches of the Government with which the House is correlated.

This is recorded in Cannon's Precedents, volume 8, at section 2497, and is quoted in section 370 of the House Rules and Manual.

In addition to relying on the precedents of the House, the Chair would comment on the importance of comity and integrity of debate in the House in an electronic age. Debates in the House were not broadcast by radio or television before 1978. There were correspondingly fewer occasions when Members were called to order for improper personal references to Presidents. In 1974, there were no allegations of personal misconduct on the part of the President called to order on the floor before or during proceedings in executive session of the Committee on the Judiciary.

Indeed, it is only during the actual pendency of proceedings in impeachment as the pending business on the

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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