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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Reverend Alpheus Townsend, Unity Temple of Peace, Bronx, New York, offered the following prayer:

"O God our help in ages past our hope for years to come our shelter from the stormy blast and our eternal home."

Lord of Majesty, mercy and love we are grateful for this day and for the blessings it affords. We thank You for the bounty of this Nation and for its form of government. Thank You for inspiring its leaders over the years.

We ask Your blessing and guidance upon the membership of this assembly who are entrusted with the awesome task of helping to foster and preserve peace and justice in our world.

Father, bless and strengthen families, our youth, our schools and businesses with integrity and success, now and ever more for Your honor and glory, 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 Washington (Mr. NETHERCUTT) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. NETHERCUTT 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 a

bill and a concurrent resolution of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 484. An act to provide for the granting of refugee status in the United States to nationals of certain foreign countries in which American Vietnam War POW/MIAs or American Korean War POW/MIAs may be present, if those nationals assist in the return to the United States of those POW/MIAs alive.

S. Con. Res. 110. Concurrent resolution congratulating the Republic of Latvia on the tenth anniversary of the reestablishment of its independence from the rule of the former Soviet Union.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 301(b) of Public Law 104-1, the Chair, on behalf of the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate and the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, announces the joint appointment of Barbara L. Camens of the District of Columbia and Roberta L. Holzwarth of Illinois to five-year terms on the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. At this time the Chair will recognize the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL). Other 1-minute speeches will be at the end of the day.

WELCOMING REVEREND ALPHEUS TOWNSEND TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure today to introduce my good friend, my constituent, and my minister who gave the prayer this morning, Reverend Alpheus Townsend of the Unity Temple of Peace in my district in the Bronx, New York.

Pastor Townsend is a wonderful American success story. He resides in

my District with his wife Millicent and son William, and is truly a champion, living the American dream, as so many immigrants who have come to our shores and helped to make our country the great Nation that it is.

Reverend Townsend was born in Jamaica and came to the United States in 1965 and worked at a number of jobs in New York, at Bankers Trust on Wall Street for 5 years as an operations specialist and at Lenox Hill Hospital in Manhattan. But he knew that the ministry was really his call.

He attended Unity Ministerial School in Missouri and was ordained in 1981. He founded the Unity Temple of Peace in the Bronx, New York, in my district, in 1982 and continues to pastor there.

Just recently, he was elected president of the Clergy Coalition of the 47th Precinct in the Northeast Bronx, which serves all five boroughs of New York City. It is a wonderful organization, assists many, many people, young, old, all types of people. He assisted in writing the bylaws and charter for the organization.

He has provided college scholarships to high school students, and I have been pleased to work with him in this regard and to contribute to these scholarships because young people, as we know, of course, are our future. And Pastor Townsend has especially ministered to young people. He has worked with the council and the community and works with the police to enhance the quality of life in the community.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored and privileged to not only call Pastor Townsend, my constituent, but am honored and privileged to call him my friend. We have worked very, very closely together. He honors me and all of us with his presence today.

□ 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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I thank the Speaker for allowing him to give the prayer this morning so that the entire House of Representatives and, indeed the entire country of the United States, can see what a wonderful pastor he is and how truly he is doing God's work and truly doing work for all of us.

Again, it is people like the Reverend Townsend who have come here to this country as an immigrant, who have participated and have really helped to make this country the great country that it is. I thank the reverend.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2559,
AGRICULTURAL RISK PROTECTION
ACT OF 2000

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 512 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 512

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2559) to amend the Federal Crop Insurance Act to strengthen the safety net for agricultural producers by providing greater access to more affordable risk management tools and improved protection from production and income loss, to improve the efficiency and integrity of the Federal crop insurance program, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York (Mr. REYNOLDS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my friend, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, during consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. REYNOLDS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks and to include extraneous material.)

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, the legislation before us today provides for consideration of the conference report to H.R. 2559, the Agriculture Risk Protection Act of 1999.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 512 is a standard conference report rule that waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration.

Additionally, the rule provides that the conference report shall be considered as read.

Passage of this rule will allow the House to consider the conference report to the Agriculture Risk Protection Act.

The Agriculture Risk Protection Act enjoys broad bipartisan support from colleagues representing farmers and ranchers from all regions of the country. It is the right legislative response

to the current plight of our Nation's farmers and ranchers.

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that farmers, growers, and ranchers are not experiencing the prosperity that many other Americans enjoy today. Confronted by adverse weather and low prices, they are facing a second year of extreme economic crisis.

In fact, apple growers alone lost a staggering \$760 million nationwide over the past 3 years, according to USDA statistics.

Representing Wayne County, New York, the largest apple producer in New York State and one of the largest in the Nation, this type of statistic is particularly troubling.

Growers in my district have been especially hard hit in recent years. Floods, storms, drought, and other severe weather have had a crippling effect on area specialty crop farmers.

Just last week, flooding destroyed onion crops that had been planted only days earlier in the Elba mucklands in Genesee County in my congressional district.

One local farmer estimated a 75 percent loss on 3,000 acres of onion crop, with an estimated value of \$15 million annually.

Despite these and other disasters, crop insurance programs have historically been tailored to farmers who grow so-called traditional crops, such as wheat, corn, and soybeans.

It is for that reason that I am especially pleased with the conference report which, for the first time, earmarks funds and encourages the development of products for underserved commodities, including specialty crops.

This Nation has had a long and proud agricultural history. Agriculture has been and remains a vital part of our Nation's economy and way of life. America's farmers feed not only our Nation but also the world.

We must give agriculture producers the tools to manage risk responsibly, and this legislation does just that.

This bill provides better insurance coverage at a lower cost for our Nation's farmers. It provides affordable coverage at every level, with strong incentives to purchase higher levels of protection and new flexibility for producers to choose the level of coverage that best meets their needs.

This legislation promotes the development of new products for managing risk, empowering universities, co-ops, and individual farmers who work to develop successful policies.

It makes sure that every farmer and rancher has the tools necessary for risk preparation. Proactive steps such as these are needed at the Federal level.

Under current conditions, too many farmers are unable to afford crop insurance. When natural disasters strike, the Federal Government assists victims with taxpayer dollars.

By increasing Federal contributions to crop insurance, such insurance becomes more affordable and there is less

need for taxpayer dollars for reactive solutions.

H.R. 2559 makes across-the-board reductions in farmer-paid premiums. The bill makes insurance that protects price as well as production more affordable to our farmers.

The bill also helps farmers who are hit hard by multiyear disasters to insure more of the yield of what they have proven that they can grow. These changes will help farmers from all regions growing all crops.

In short, Mr. Speaker, the Agriculture Risk Protection Act is a common sense, fiscally conservative bill. In passing the conference report, Congress goes a long way to properly prepare for natural disasters that impact agriculture production.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST), Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) for bringing this measure before the House today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the rule and the underlying measure.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my dear friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. REYNOLDS), for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I am in support of this rule. This rule waives all points of order against consideration of the conference report, H.R. 2559, the Agriculture Risk Protection Act of 1999.

This rule is necessary to allow the House to consider this conference report and will provide critically needed funding for rural America.

In essence, Mr. Speaker, this conference agreement will allow producers who participate in Federal crop insurance programs to buy better coverage for less money.

However, the conference report spends the funds set aside in the budget for crop insurance reform and for supplemental economic assistance. While these funds are badly needed in our ailing farm sector, the fact that for 3 years in a row the Congress has provided supplemental payments to agriculture points to the simple fact that our current farm policy is failing and needs a very thorough review.

Until there is such a review, Mr. Speaker, this conference agreement will help make crop insurance more useful to farmers who need protection from natural disasters and it will also provide a badly needed supplement to short-term farm income.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NETHERCUTT).

Mr. NETHERCUTT. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.