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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 18, 2005.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MICHAEL K. SIMPSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: "Tomorrow is the anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address.

Lord, Lincoln spoke of the "mystic chords of memory." He believed the revered dead make distinct demands on us, the living.

In honoring those who gave their lives to preserve the sacred union of this Nation and to uphold the emancipated freedom of all peoples, Lincoln said, "We take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion."

So at Gettysburg then, so again, now, we the living are obliged to be "highly resolved that the dead shall not have died in vain."

By Your grace, Lord, and only by fulfilling present obligations to strengthen national unity and assure equal justice, will we the living pay fitting tribute to "the honored dead." Each generation of Americans must see to it "that this Nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom."

This must be our resolve, Lord, with Your help 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 gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. POE 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 PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to five 1-minute speeches per side.

DEMOCRATS REFUSE TO SEE PROGRESS IN IRAQ

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about something that Democrats lately seem incapable of speaking about, and that is the progress that is being made in Iraq.

As of late last month, 210,400 Iraqi security forces have been trained and equipped. Thirty-six Army battalions and three combat support battalions are leading the fight in their areas, a 71 percent increase since March. More than 50,800 Iraqi police have completed the basic training course.

And, adding to that, the progress of the Iraqi people towards democracy has been tremendous. They are now hold-

ing free elections instead of the fake ones that Saddam Hussein forced on them for many years.

Yet, I do not hear many Democrats speak of this progress. All they talk about is how we are in a "quagmire" and that the war has been a "grotesque mistake."

Our men and women are not only fighting terrorists over in Iraq, but they are also setting up roads and schools. But Democrats would rather have us cut and run and, in the process, undo all the good work that has been done.

COURAGE OUTWEIGHS POLITICS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was the most significant day in the war in Iraq since we first began our attack. As President Bush is learning that our few allies are withdrawing their troops, Congressman JACK MURTHA has publicly concluded it is time to bring our troops home.

Despite attacks by some who never had a hint of his military service, whose own mismanagement, not just of the information that got us into this effort, but whose inept mismanagement of the war itself left us with few good options, JACK MURTHA remains the single most knowledgeable and respected Member of this House dealing with military affairs.

I have not seen eye-to-eye with JACK from the beginning, when I opposed attacking Iraq, to a statement I just posted, after weeks of thought, for a more gradual withdrawal. But I and every Member who is thinking honestly about this sad episode will reconsider my conclusion because of JACK MURTHA's courageous and heartfelt statement. He is the only Member of Congress who has earned the right to be listened to . . .

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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AMERICANS ARE DYING BECAUSE OF FLAWED IMMIGRATION POLICY

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Officer Brian Jackson loved his job. He had been a member of the Dallas Police Department since 2001. He moved to Dallas from his hometown in Rhode Island because he wanted to "be a big city cop."

But in the early morning hours of last Sunday, the last 15 minutes of his shift, Officer Brian Jackson, 28, responded to one last call. His shift was basically over, but he agreed to answer one more emergency.

It was not only his last call of the night, but it was his last call ever. Officer Jackson was responding to a domestic disturbance call when he was murdered, allegedly by an illegal alien from Mexico named Juan Lizcano.

But this crime could have been avoided. This illegal alien had been arrested twice in the last year, but because of safe haven sanctuary laws in Dallas, he was never deported. Because of these preposterous laws, a dedicated police officer, husband, and friend lost his life.

Officer Jackson and his newlywed wife had just returned from a delayed honeymoon in Hawaii.

Americans are dying because the government does not protect our borders. This is yet another example of our Nation's flawed immigration policy. This ought not to be.

REPUBLICANS CUT CRITICAL PROGRAMS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, the Republicans are preparing for Thanksgiving, like many Americans. But early this morning they slaughtered the turkey. They chopped student loans, school lunch, foster care, long-term care, and Medicaid for struggling families. Now they are preparing to serve a huge portion, with gravy, to Americans with generous new tax breaks and extended tax cuts to those who earn more than \$300,000 a year and who clip coupons for a living, hard-working Americans them.

They are a little worried about kind of the mixed metaphor here, whether or not they will be called Scrooge, and some people will confuse Thanksgiving and Christmas. So they might put the bird back in the freezer and wait until closer to Christmas and hope that the struggling students and families forget what was taken from them to help those who earn over \$300,000 a year.

So that is the big decision on the Republican side of the aisle today. When does the turkey, composed of benefits that should have gone to struggling families, as a gift to the wealthy, get delivered, Thanksgiving or Christmas? Tough choice. Stay tuned.

WE MUST FINISH OUR MISSION IN IRAQ

(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, last month, Ayman Zawahiri, al Qaeda's number two leader, said that the terrorist mission was to "expel the Americans from Iraq." Yesterday, this statement was echoed when Democratic Congressman JOHN MURTHA called for U.S. troops to be withdrawn from Iraq.

Instead of proposing winning solutions for the Global War on Terrorism, some Democrats are throwing up their hands and waving the white flag of surrender. As our brave men and women in uniform continue to protect our country, NANCY PELOSI, JOHN MURTHA, and other Democrats should have learned from last week's mass murders in Jordan that we face a global enemy, following the bus bombings in London and New Delhi.

As a 31-year veteran and the father of a son who served in Iraq, I know our troops and brave Iraqi patriots are making tremendous progress protecting American families. Americans recognize we will face the terrorists on the streets of Iraq or we will face them again in America.

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

DEMONSTRATING THE COURAGE OF OUR CONVICTIONS

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, the American people want this Congress to debate the war in Iraq. We should have had a debate before we entered into this war. Instead, we rushed into it.

Yesterday, Congressman JACK MURTHA, a man of conscience, a decorated Vietnam veteran, one of the leading advocates for the military here in the United States Congress, stood up and told it like it is, that the situation in Iraq is getting worse, not getting better, and we, our huge U.S. presence, is a major part of the problem. We have become the focus. We have become the people who are being attacked.

Congressman MURTHA deserves credit. Rather than engaging in a debate, what we hear from the other side and from the White House is more and more smear tactics, those who claim they are somehow being unpatriotic. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Dissent in the face of policies that you disagree with is patriotism. To remain silent as you see this country going down the wrong path is not patriotism, it is moral cowardice.

I praise Congressman JACK MURTHA for having the courage of his convictions and standing up and leading the way to get us out of this war in Iraq.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2528, MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 564 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 564

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2528) making appropriations for military quality of life functions of the Department of Defense, military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, 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 Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

House Resolution 564 waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration, and it provides that the conference report shall be considered as read.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 564 and the underlying conference report for H.R. 2528, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2006.

Today, this House has the opportunity to pass a conference report that will provide \$45.4 billion to fund the very important needs of our servicemen and women, our veterans, and our military infrastructure.

This conference report provides an all-inclusive look at the programs that are related to the quality of life of those who currently serve America in the armed forces, their families, and those men and women who have sacrificed so much for our freedom in the past.

Mr. Speaker, by providing \$45.4 billion, this conference report actually marks an increase of \$3.1 billion from fiscal year 2005, and it is an increase of \$300,000 from the President's request.

The bill funds the Department of Veterans Affairs at \$22.5 billion, \$1.7 billion above the fiscal year 2005 enacted level, and \$575 million above the 2006 budget request by the President. Particularly important is the funding for veterans' medical services that includes for the very first time \$2.2 billion strictly allocated for specialty mental health care on top of a doubling for funding of mental health research.