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Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, December 12, 2005, at 2 p.m.

House of Representatives

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2005

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 8, 2005.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RAY LAHOOD 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: Lord God of prophets and saints, ever attentive to Your people, hear the prayers of this Nation and bless the United States of America, all its citizens, all those who work in the three branches of government and all who serve in the military.

Upon the dome which augments this building, Lord, there stands in classical feminine style a bronze Statue of Freedom. She is dressed in flowing drapery symbolic of the outpouring of plenitude which You have showered upon this land. Her headdress of eagle feathers pays tribute to our Native roots and crowned by stars bearing witness to the flag and the heavens.

She is Your creation, a beacon of hope and symbol to all who search in their souls for the lasting freedom You

offer all Your beloved children. May we hear again today Your clear and assuring message saying to the heart of this Nation, "I alone am the Lord" and "The Lord is with you." 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 Washington (Mr. BAIRD) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BAIRD 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 10 one-minute speeches on each side.

AMERICA'S SUCCESSFUL ECONOMY

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, the latest economic numbers show that the Republicans' pro-growth economic policies are working. In November, the U.S. Consumer Confidence Index rose almost 15 points from the previous month, which bodes well as we enter the holiday shopping season.

The White House has projected that the economy would record a growth rate of 3.5 percent for 2005. In addition, the number of Americans filing first-time job claims fell to a new 7-month low, and the unemployment rate is holding steady at 5 percent.

Finally, nearly 4.5 million jobs have been added in the last 2½ years. This encouraging economic news demonstrates that the Republican plan of low taxes and restrained Federal spending is a winning combination.

Last month, we passed the Deficit Reduction Act, which is a plan to help reform government and yield savings for American taxpayers. Democrats, on the other hand, continue to push their tax-and-spend policies, a plan which is neither good for the family checkbook nor the American economy.

Republicans will continue to push for pro-growth policies to ensure that all Americans can realize the American Dream.

PRESIDENT BUSH'S SPEECHES ARE OUT OF ORDER

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Yesterday, the President gave his progress in Iraq speech.

□ 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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However, in Najaf, security is not being provided by the U.S.-trained Iraqi troops, but by the militia of radical Shiite Muslim Muqtada Al-Sadr.

In Mosul, the President said 50 percent of the people voted. But 56 percent of those who voted, voted against the constitution that the Bush administration was promoting.

On May 1 of 2003, the President stood on the deck of an aircraft carrier and gave his "mission accomplished" speech. Last week he gave his "secret plan for victory" speech. Yesterday, he gave his "making progress" speech.

I think I know the problem here. Whoever has been writing the President's speeches owes him an apology. They badly mixed up the sequence over the last few years. First, he was to give his "plan for victory" speech, then he was to give his "making progress" speech, then he was to give his "mission accomplished" speech.

I have here a copy of his "get out of Iraq" speech.

CONGRATULATING ST. XAVIER HIGH SCHOOL

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, today I have the honor of congratulating Cincinnati's St. Xavier High School, one of Ohio's most athletically successful and academically accomplished institutions on its first Ohio High School Division I State football championship.

St. X defeated powerful Massillon Washington 24-17 in the final game, Massillon having previously won 22 State football championships. My wife, Donna, and I had the good fortune to attend many of St. X's games this year and last year since our son, Randy, is in the band.

St. X was great. They went 15-0 this year. USA Today in their national poll ranked them number nine in the whole country. I think they should have been number one.

Even more impressive, this is St. X's 36th State title in all sports, the most of any high school in the State. I am proud to say that this is the fourth consecutive year that Ohio's Division I football champs are from my congressional district. St. X joins Colerain and Elder high schools in making that possible.

Congratulations to Coach Steve Specht, his staff, the players, parents, alumni, fans, and of course the band. You were amazing. Go Bombers.

SUCCESS OF CLARK COUNTY'S INTER-SERVICE WALK AND KNOCK FOOD DRIVE

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

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday December 3, I was proud to join more than 4,350 volunteers to conduct the largest single-day food drive in the State of Washington.

Throughout Clark County, Washington, members of social service clubs and volunteers from all walks of the life gathered at 31 staging areas to canvass the entire county. I was pleased to join a young group of Brownies as we went door to door.

By 4 p.m. we had collected more than 114 tons of food at an approximate value of \$365,000. Collections will now continue through December 9, bringing the total to an expected 130 tons. In the 21-year history, Clark County Walk and Knock has collected more than 4.9 million pounds of food valued at \$6 million.

Walk and Knock is 100 percent volunteer, and 100 percent of any money donated by the public is used for the exclusive use of purchasing additional food. Organizers included members of the local Lions, Kiwanis, Rotary, Optimist and Sertoma clubs, as well as members of the Clark County Amateur Radio Club and the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America.

Local businesses donated valuable resources, and together we produced an incredible success. I am proud of the commitment of southwest Washington's citizens, and urge my colleagues to support their local food banks.

The organizers of Walk and Knock are members of local Lions, Kiwanis, Rotary, Optimist, and Sertoma clubs, members of the Clark County Amateur Radio Club, and the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America. Additional donated services were provided by Longshoremen Union Local 4, The Columbian newspaper, and Burgerville USA. Supportive funding was provided by Riverview Community Bank, all of the Clark County Les Schwab Tire Centers, Fred Meyer, Weyerhaeuser, US Bank, Columbia Credit Union, and British Petroleum.

AMERICA NEEDS PENSION REFORM NOW

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, traditional pension plans, once the legacy of a lifetime of work, are crumbling. And with time running short on our legislative year, action by Congress is necessary to protect the retirement of hardworking Americans.

Large and small businesses need changes to current law in order to have greater flexibility to help their employees plan for their financial security. Recently, Verizon Communications, a large, vibrant company, froze its pension plan for 50,000 employees. These defined benefit plans have not adapted to the times.

They have used the same formula since their inception, number of years worked multiplied by a certain amount of money. This formula does not account for a changing marketplace and does not result in the most benefit for workers.

Today, a retirement plan must be as dynamic as our society. Flexibility for employers and employees is impera-

tive, and the Pension Protection Act is a step in the right direction; and Congress should pass it this year.

I urge my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, to step up and help provide this needed reform now. Americans expect us to solve difficult problems, and pension protection is one that requires and deserves our attention.

THE CRISIS IN DARFUR

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, it is not often that we get everybody here in Congress to agree. But we do agree that Darfur's continuing nightmare is genocide. We have labeled it as such. We have all condemned it. The problem is we are not acting to stop it.

The foreign ops appropriations inexplicably dropped \$50 million in conference that would have gone to support peacekeepers from the African Union. We often use this opportunity here today to talk to the American people.

Well, today I am talking to the 8,000 men and women on Capitol Hill who make things happen in Congress. Do not go home unless you ask what your office, your committee, your boss, your Member of Congress is going to do to stop the murder, the rape, the destruction and the violence.

At the very least, work to restore the \$50 million in the defense appropriations so that 7,700 African Union peacekeepers can be on the job. 7,700 people for an area the size of Texas does not sound like too much. It is the least we can do as we enter the holiday season.

HOWARD DEAN'S COMMENTS ON IRAQ

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, Democratic Party chairman Howard Dean has taken his party's irresponsible rhetoric about our involvement in Iraq to a new low. In an interview earlier this week Mr. Dean said, "The idea that we are going to win the war in Iraq is an idea which is just plain wrong."

Dean's take on Iraq makes even less sense than his scream in Iowa. What does Mr. Dean think it does for the morale of our troops on the ground in Iraq when they hear the leader of one of their Nation's two major political parties say that he does not believe that they can get the job done.

Mr. Dean may not believe that our troops are up to the task in Iraq, but I and the overwhelming majority of my colleagues do. It is important our troops understand that. Our troops have freed 26 million Iraqis from the grip of a brutal and murderous dictator, set the stage for democratic elections in a country where this was once thought impossible.