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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Reverend Ricky Atkins, Pastor, Courtney Baptist Church, Yadkinville, North Carolina, offered the following prayer:

Dear God, today as this session opens, we pray that Your presence will be before us and everyone who serves in the decision-making process of our Nation. We pray for direction which will lead our Nation to be a strong and unified Nation and continue the legacies of our forefathers. May we be granted this day decisions which will be pleasing to You and decisions which will change the course of history.

We pray for all our military personnel. We lift them before You today and ask for their protection as they perform their duties. May grace abound with them as they, in harm's way, defend our country. We pray for those who are in need across our Nation, people who are without the basic needs to survive. May they receive relief by Your hand, which will be beneficial to them. Guide us this day. 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 California (Mr. CARDOZA) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CARDOZA 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.

WELCOMING THE REVEREND RICKY ATKINS

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and privilege to introduce our guest chaplain, Reverend Richard "Ricky" Atkins, the head pastor of Courtney Baptist Church in Yadkinville, North Carolina, in the Fifth District.

Reverend Atkins is a vital part of the religious community in northwest North Carolina's rural mountain region. Prior to leading 350 members at Courtney Baptist Church, he served at Zephyr Baptist Church in Dobson, North Carolina, from 1995 to 2000, and at Oak Grove Baptist Church in Madison, North Carolina, from 2000 to 2005. He graduated from Fruitland Bible Institute in 2000 with an associate's degree in biblical ministries.

Reverend Atkins was born and raised in Mt. Airy, North Carolina. He is the son of Tommy and Rebecca Atkins, whose support was instrumental in helping him get to Washington today. Reverend Atkins and his wife, Debbie, currently reside in Yadkinville with their two children Alison and Lee.

Reverend Atkins' life has been one of service to God and his community. Throughout the years he has brightened and enriched the lives of many others. It is an honor to have him serve as our guest chaplain. I hope that his words of prayer will remain with all of us as we do the people's work today.

ON THE CHILDREN'S SAFETY AND VIOLENT CRIME REDUCTION ACT, H.R. 4472

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

Mr. KELLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Children's Safety and Violent Crime Reduc-

tion Act, because it is a commonsense way to protect our schoolchildren from pedophiles. Isn't it a matter of common sense to allow a local school district in Orlando, Florida, to do criminal background checks on coaches, janitors and teachers who work with our children to make sure they are not convicted pedophiles from Georgia or some other State?

Isn't it common sense to protect young schoolchildren in the first place by keeping these pedophiles locked up with lengthy prison sentences?

Isn't it common sense that coddling repeated sex offenders with self-esteem courses and rehabilitation doesn't work, and that locking them up works?

It is high time that we crack down on molesters by implementing these commonsense reforms. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 4472 today.

PORT SECURITY AND REPUBLICAN FAILURES TO SECURE OUR NATION

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

Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, when the Bush administration learned that the American people wanted to allow the United Arab Emirates to operate U.S. ports, they were outraged. That outrage should be extended to this administration's pathetic record on securing our ports and our coastlines.

Since September 11th, according to the U.S. Coast Guard, the Republican Congress has shortchanged America's seaports by more than \$4 billion in security improvements. It is because of this serious lack of funding that only 6 percent of the cargo coming into our ports is ever checked. Port security is so bad that in December, the 9/11 Commission gave this administration a

□ 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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grade of D for checked baggage and cargo screening.

House Democrats have tried to increase port security funding on this House floor four times over the last 4 years, and House Republicans have defeated our efforts every single time.

They are not through. Once again this year President Bush is proposing eliminating port security grants by rolling them into the larger program. This forces port officials to compete for funding against rail and mass transit programs. It's time that Republicans wake up and see the serious threat that is existing at our port facilities in America.

YALE: U.S. MILITARY NEED NOT APPLY

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

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, the Forum for Academic and Institutional Rights, a group of mostly elitist east coast universities and law schools, moaned and groaned all the way to the Supreme Court, claiming they should not be forced to allow United States military recruiters on their campuses in order to keep their Federal funding. Monday the Supreme Court unanimously ruled against their ridiculous rant.

In a time when our Americans in uniform are fighting a global war on terror, these arrogant elitist intellectuals are making a mockery of national defense by not allowing recruiters in their historic halls. These schools willingly take billions in Federal dollars, but reject the military that protects them.

At Yale University, officials are actually willing to accept a foreign student that served as spokesman and former diplomat for the Taliban. It is a shameful and sad day when Americans willing to risk their lives for their country are kept off their campus, but an alleged former terrorist operative is welcomed with open arms. At least the Supreme Court got it right this time. Unfortunately, Yale University did not.

That's just the way it is.

URGING CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT OF IRAQ

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, since last month's bombing of the holiest Shiite shrine, the sectarian violence we all feared has begun to engulf Iraq. But while Iraq is on the brink of civil war, all the administration gives us are mixed messages and finger-pointing.

The U.S. Ambassador to Iraq says the country is nearing civil war and that we have opened a Pandora's box by toppling Saddam Hussein. Yet General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has a totally different

view. Over the weekend he said, "I wouldn't put a great big smiley face on it, but I would say that things are going very, very well from everything you look at."

Meanwhile, Secretary Rumsfeld puts the blame squarely on the press: "From what I've seen thus far, much of the reporting in the U.S. and abroad has exaggerated the situation."

Which is it? A Pandora's box? The brink of war? Or an exaggerated news story only to sell papers and boost ratings? Yet instead of demanding answers from the administration, this Congress has turned a blind eye.

It is time for this hear-no-evil, see-no-evil Congress to open its eyes and ears. Americans want more than mixed metaphors and finger pointing. They want a policy. They deserve real answers, and it is our job to find them. We need new priorities for America rather than the same old policies that have gotten us here.

THE ECONOMY AND FISCAL RESTRAINT

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, we are going to keep coming down here telling the story of America's economic progress, and it is a great story. This majority is working for America, and one of those ways is we have tremendously low unemployment. This economy has created millions of new jobs, and we are expecting growth this first quarter of somewhere higher than 4 percent. Those numbers are coming out Friday. We are looking forward to it. It is remarkable. It is almost as remarkable how little attention the mainstream media has given to this data, to this great economic news.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to supporting legislation to make permanent the Bush tax relief package that has helped drive this growth. And I hope our colleagues across the aisle will start to lead the message: higher taxes do not lead to more jobs.

ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES

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

Ms. BEAN. Madam Speaker, today I rise to speak about the Energy Star Homes Act. Across my district my constituents have told me about the challenges they face in paying for the rising cost of heating their homes. In response to those concerns, I have introduced this legislation to provide an incentive to help Americans deal with this increasing burden.

Under the Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star Program, homes are independently verified to be measurably more energy efficient than average houses. Americans who meet the guidelines of this program should have

access to a tax credit to make the process of building an energy-efficient home more affordable.

My legislation will help to encourage Americans to save money and to save energy. By lowering demand for fossil fuels, we can also decrease pollution and our dependency on foreign sources of energy. I encourage my colleagues in the House to cosponsor this important legislation.

SEX TRAFFICKING AND THE OSCARS

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, the front page of Monday's Washington Post carried a heart-wrenching story about sex trafficking in the Washington, D.C., area. The story detailed unspeakable tragedies, including the story of a 14-year-old girl forced into sexual servitude in order to meet her pimp's demand of earning him \$500 a night at \$50 per sex act.

Oddly enough, that wasn't the only front-page story Monday that mentioned pimps. Right above that story, The Post also reported that the song "It's Hard Out Here for a Pimp" was honored with an Oscar this year for being the best original song in a movie.

Should we really be shocked to read of the sexual horrors taking place on our streets when our most popular cultural awards show is handing out awards for songs that glorify prostitution and sexual violence?

This is outrageous and disgusting. Music that glorifies the men responsible for such atrocities, like exploitation of women and children, should be condemned, not celebrated with an Oscar.

PORT SECURITY: REPUBLICANS ARE NOT INTERESTED IN SECURING PORTS

(Mrs. JONES of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise simply to complain again as others have about port security in the United States of America. We cannot afford to outsource our homeland security, and that is exactly what the Bush administration wants to do with the United Arab Emirates.

On Monday, March 20, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in Cleveland, Ohio, at Idea Stream, 1375 Euclid Avenue, I will be hosting a town hall meeting on port security in my congressional district. Everyone is invited, and we have free parking.

The UAE deal has highlighted to the American people how vulnerable our ports remain more than 4 years after 9/11. They simply can't believe that only 6 percent of the cargo that comes into our ports is ever inspected before it is