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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

Chaplain Scott Crosley, 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, Kentucky, offered the following prayer:

Dear Lord, today we pray for productivity, for purpose and for passion. We ask, Lord, for Your encouragement for those who need it, for Your direction for those who need it, and for Your discernment for those who need it.

Your word promises that "he who stands firm to the end will be saved." Today, I pray for the leaders in this room, that You, Lord, would help them to stand firm in You. Help their dependence to be upon You and their persuasion to reflect You.

As it reads in Ephesians, chapter 3: "I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His spirit in your inner being."

It is in His name that I pray Rakkasan and 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 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.

WELCOMING CHAPLAIN SCOTT CROSLY

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking Chaplain Scott Crosley of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) for delivering today's opening prayer. Chaplain Crosley serves as the battalion chaplain for the First Battalion 187th Infantry Regiment, the "Leader Rakkasans."

These soldiers only recently returned to Fort Campbell from Iraq. While they were deployed in Iraq, I had the opportunity to visit them at forward-operating base Summerall. The Leader Rakkasans engaged in close combat with insurgent and terrorist enemies. They worked to train Iraqi army and police units, and they continued the work of building Iraqi civil society to offer a better future to the next generation of Iraqis.

Chaplain Crosley came to the Army late in life, moving his family from his native California and heeding a call to tend to the spiritual and emotional needs of soldiers at war.

In this time of deployment, his efforts helped soldiers deal with the stress of combat, separation from their loved ones and, above all, the loss of nine brother warriors in action.

Mr. Speaker, we thank Chaplain Crosley and the soldiers of the 101st Airborne for their great service to our great Nation.

END THE WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, one week ago, the American people sent a message to this Congress; that message had to do with Iraq. Were the American people asking us to send more troops? No, they want the troops to come home. Were they looking to expand the war? No, they want to end the war.

There is only one way to end this war: cut off funds. The White House

doesn't believe Congress will exercise this power. That is why the President is determined to stay in Iraq through the end of his term. He may have let go of Rumsfeld, but he is not going to let go of the war. The President is trapped, trapped by lies, fabricated intelligence, pretensions to empire, desire for oil and prophetic illusions.

The truth shall set the President and the Congress free; the truth that it was wrong to go into Iraq. It is wrong to stay there. It is time to bring our troops home. It is time to get the world community involved in a transition to help secure the Iraqi people. The truth is we broke Iraq, but we can't fix it by staying. We can fix it only by admitting we were wrong and paying for reconstruction financially but not with the lives of our brave troops.

It is time to cut off the funds; time to end the war against Iraq; time to bring our troops home; time for a new energy policy; time to reconnect with the world; time for hope, not fear.

WHY THANKSGIVING DAY?

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, in 1621, the Pilgrims held a 3-day festival giving thanks to the Lord for a bountiful harvest. They celebrated with the Indians, who had also suffered through a previously hard winter. This feast would become the birth of our national holiday of Thanksgiving.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt made the fourth Thursday of November the official Thanksgiving day, which we celebrate Thursday next. For the first 150 years, Thanksgiving was celebrated whenever the Colonists believed it was necessary to do so. President George Washington stated in the first Thanksgiving proclamation authorized by Congress in 1789: "It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to be grateful

□ 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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for His benefits and to request His protection and favor. I recommend to the people of the United States a day of public Thanksgiving and prayer to show the many favors of the Almighty and especially the opportunity for this form of government.”

So as this Nation, Mr. Speaker, seems to move toward a secular country, we would do well to remember the purpose of Thanksgiving and the words of the Good Book, which says: “Unless the Lord watches over the city, those that guard the walls do so in vain.”

And that’s just the way it is.

DEMOCRATS DESIRE TO BETTER SECURE THE HOMELAND

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

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, no issue that Congress deals with is more important than our national security. As Democrats prepare to take control of the Congress this January, we are ready to move forward with an agenda that I believe will better secure our homeland and help us finally to restore our credibility abroad.

Today our Nation is actually less safe than it was before the 9/11 terrorist attacks. According to our most professional experienced intelligence analysts, the number of terrorist attacks and recruits are up worldwide. Many of our enemies are stronger. Their reach is greater. Their weapons of mass destruction are more developed, plentiful and available.

Democrats have an agenda for real security at home and overseas. It is time that we require the Iraqis to take responsibility for their country, and to begin the phased redeployment of U.S. forces out of Iraq. At the same time, we Democrats believe that we need to double the size of Special Forces to destroy Osama bin Laden and terrorists networks like al-Qaeda, we need to rebuild a state-of-the-art military capable of projecting power wherever necessary. That is an agenda that will better protect our Nation and is worthy of strong bipartisan support.

THE THREAT OF IRAN

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address a growing threat to the United States and global security: Iran’s nuclear ambitions pose a grave threat, not only to world stability but also to our close ally, Israel, the only stable democracy in the Middle East, and American interests of peace and prosperity throughout the region.

Just yesterday the Associated Press confirmed that Iran has continued its experiments to enrich uranium in defiance of the U.N. Security Council.

Led by a tyrannical dictator who denies the existence of the Holocaust and vows to wipe Israel off the map, the

President of Iran is out of touch with reality and poses an immediate security threat to its neighbors and the progress of democracy in the Middle East.

We must stand firm and united in our resolve to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear state. President Ahmadinejad seems bent on the destruction of Western civilization. He says Iran will never give up its right to enrich uranium and produce nuclear fuel. The consequences of a nuclear Iran would be catastrophic and must be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, our commitment to our allies and for peace in the Middle East must not be shaken by Iran’s nuclear weapons ambitions. I urge my colleagues to work together to stand in unity against this gathering threat.

RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE

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

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, the minimum wage, as you know, has not been raised in the last 9 years and is currently at its lowest level in the last 50 years when adjusted for inflation. Yet Republicans have continually refused to raise the pay of these full-time workers who struggle to make ends meet.

During the last 6 years, by the way, 5 million people now live in poverty. Last week the American people spoke out for the Democratic majority in Congress, because they agreed that no one in the Nation who works hard should be denied a livable wage. In fact, over 70 percent of Latinos work at minimum wage to support their children.

These are hardworking Americans, and they deserve better treatment and fairness. Now the American people have spoken and call for immediate action to raise the minimum wage. Within the first 100 hours of the Congress, Democrats will pass a pay increase for those workers who need it the most. It is only fair. How can we as a Nation justify giving millionaires tens of thousands of dollars in tax breaks while we continue to force more than 6 million Americans to live with just \$5.15 an hour?

Mr. Speaker, thanks to the election results, we will see a much-needed raise in the minimum wage for all Americans.

A LITTLE SCHOOL WITH A BIG HEART

(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 Friday in Saluda, South Carolina, 400 elementary school students gathered at a football field while a military helicopter landed in the middle.

Why such a big treat for such a small school, you may wonder? Hollywood

Elementary teacher Anna Frye learned of the Flags For Soldiers Project, headed by Alpha Troop Commander Captain Jason D. Hennigan, and wanted to involve her students.

The project is to raise money to purchase 500 American flags, one for each soldier serving in a Cavalry Squadron of the 82nd Airborne Division. During the past several weeks, these students donated their snack money and paid a fee to participate in dress-up days so they could contribute to this cause.

Captain Hennigan’s father, Daniel Hennigan, a retired Army officer, was so touched by the school’s gesture that he arranged a special celebration on Veterans Day. As American soldiers continue to fight for our freedoms around the world, we can all learn a lesson from the students at Hollywood Elementary.

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

AMERICAN PEOPLE SUPPORT DEMOCRATIC AGENDA

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last week the American people voted for change here in Washington. They were not happy with the party controlling both Capitol Hill and the White House. They want checks and balances, but more than anything, they want us to work together to address the concerns they face every day.

The agenda that Democrats laid out over the last year is an agenda that all of us here in Washington should be able to support. If you want to help millions of hardworking Americans who have not received a pay raise in 9 years, you will join us in increasing the minimum raise in January. If you want to help more teenagers get a college education, you will join us in making it more affordable by cutting interest rates in half on college loans.

This is the agenda that the American people supported last week when they went to the polls. In January, we will begin to implement this agenda, and I hope that our Republican colleagues will join us in this effort.

COLLEGE LOAN INTEREST RATE CUTS

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

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday, Americans voted for a new direction in America. Among those voting were 10 million young Americans between the ages of 18 and 29 who were no doubt upset by the soaring costs of college tuition and the rise in student loan interest rates put into effect by Republicans in this body.

This year alone Republicans raised student loan interest rates by 7 percent and cut \$12 billion out of the higher