

APPOINTMENT OF HON. FRANK R. WOLF AND HON. TOM DAVIS TO ACT AS SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE TO SIGN ENROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS THROUGH DECEMBER 5, 2006

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

WASHINGTON, DC,  
November 15, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable FRANK R. WOLF and the Honorable TOM DAVIS to act as Speaker pro tempore to sign enrolled bills and joint resolutions through December 5, 2006.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the appointment is approved.

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON TODAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule is dispensed with today.

There was no objection.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I regret that, due to a doctor's appointment yesterday, I was unable to vote on H.R. 6314, a bill extending certain authorities to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out important services that assist America's veterans, and H.R. 864, the Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to both H.R. 6314 and H.R. 864. Veterans who have fought to preserve the freedom and liberty enjoyed in this country deserve our relentless support and commitment. I will continue to show this commitment and pursue legislation such as my bill, The Healthy Vets Act, which would require the VA Secretary to contract with local doctors and hospitals on a case-by-case basis to provide medical services including primary care for those veterans who live far away from VA facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to clarify my position regarding H.R. 6314 and look forward to fostering efforts to improve the lives of veterans and their families.

□ 1200

BUSH INITIATES IRAQ POLICY REVIEW

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, headline today, Bush initiates Iraq policy review separate from Baker's group. Now, this might be good; it might be bad. Remember, the Bush administra-

tion ignored the advice of the State Department Middle East experts about postwar Iraq. He actually ignored the intelligence agencies, the real experts, as opposed to the phony group DICK CHENEY put together. Is he now again going to end-run real experts who are going to give us real choices on how to extricate the United States from Iraq, get our troops out of the middle of a civil war and begin to have those people take care of their own problems?

Only time will tell, but this does cause tremendous concern that suddenly he is going to appoint yet another group in his own administration. It seems like he may want to counter-balance or pick and choose among the real recommendations. Hopefully, they are not going to give us another vacuous document like they did a year ago, the so-called national strategy for victory in Iraq, which has been an abysmal failure.

NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

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

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Saturday, November 18, as National Adoption Day and to celebrate all adoptive families.

On the Saturday before Thanksgiving, courtrooms across this country will come together to dedicate the resources of our judicial system to finalize adoptions of kids currently in the foster care system.

In the 5 years since National Adoption Day was established, it has truly grown into a national celebration. Last year, 3,300 adoptions were finalized as part of 227 nationwide events. These finalized adoptions are cause for celebration. This is a time to commemorate those families that have decided to make a difference in the life of a child.

I commend these families and hope that the children across the Nation will find a place to call home this Saturday as part of National Adoption Day.

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In the 5 years since National Adoption Day was established, it has truly grown into a national celebration. Last year, 3,300 adoptions were finalized as part of 227 nationwide events.

Unfortunately, despite the declining number of children waiting in foster care, there are still 118,000 children seeking adoption.

This is simply unacceptable. It is our duty as a prosperous Nation to unite and ensure these children find safe, loving homes.

Six years ago, my wife and I decided to expand our family and open our home to two foster care children.

Like many adoptive families, we faced many challenges during this process. But these experiences have only made our family stronger.

The adoption process is often complicated and riddled with paperwork, meetings, and home studies—important factors when accessing the ability of a family to care for a new child—but they can also discourage qualified parents from embarking on the adoption process.

The foster care community has been working with Congress and State governments across the country to streamline the adoption process and focus on limited resources, such as requiring frequent home visits and experienced caseworkers.

As Members of Congress, it is our job to be the voice for foster children and make sure their dreams are recognized. We owe it to them to streamline the adoption process to ensure positive outcomes for these kids.

It is important that we continue to make this process more accessible to families so that these children can be welcomed into loving homes.

Despite the obstacles that we still need to overcome, this is a time to celebrate those families that have decided to make a difference in the life of a child.

I commend these families and hope that children across the Nation will find a place to call home this Saturday as part of National Adoption Day.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE AMERICAN WARRIOR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Saturday we celebrated Veterans Day. Veterans Day is a holiday, but it is more of a memorial. It is a day we honor those who served. It started because of the end of the war to end all wars, World War I, and on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, the First World War stopped, and because of that, since then we honor all veterans who have served.

Memorial Day is the day we honor those who served and died. Veterans Day is the day we honor those who served and lived.

In this House of Representatives today, in the 109th Congress, about 25 percent of Congress has served in the military. In 1950, in the fifties, about 65 percent were veterans; 111 Members of Congress served during the Vietnam era, 78 of whom served in the Vietnam era, and 20 of those saw combat. We have our own SAM JOHNSON, who was a Navy pilot during Vietnam, was shot down and spent 7 years in the Hanoi Hilton prisoner-of-war camp.

We have in this House of Representatives at least eight Members who have sons or daughters serving in Iraq or Afghanistan. We have Senator INOUE of Hawaii who was a Medal of Honor winner. All of these people served and served with honor.