



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, MAY 21, 2007

No. 83

House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SALAZAR of Colorado).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 21, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN T. SALAZAR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD) for 5 minutes.

SAFE ACT RE-INTRODUCTION

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, to help address domestic violence in our country, I rise to announce the re-introduction of the Security and Financial Empowerment Act, or as it is better known, the SAFE Act. Domestic violence is a personal and social tragedy that negatively impacts all of our society.

On average, every day in our country, more than three women are murdered by their husband or boyfriend, and nearly one-third of American women

report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives.

The physical and psychological consequences of domestic violence are exacerbated by the less obvious economic consequences. For example, one of the key reasons survivors stay in or return to an abusive environment is because they are financially dependent upon their abuser to provide for them and their children. As a result of the abuse, employed women often lose their jobs due to frequent tardiness or absenteeism or because their abuser stalks and harasses them at work.

To help break this cycle of violence, I have introduced the SAFE Act with representative TED POE.

The SAFE Act would provide employed survivors of domestic violence with greater employment protections and increased economic stability.

Specifically, the SAFE Act would enable the survivors of domestic violence to pursue legal assistance, medical care and meet other immediate needs associated with violence in their lives without the fear of losing their job.

If survivors of abuse are fired or forced to leave their job as a result of the abuse, the SAFE Act makes them eligible for unemployment benefits. The SAFE Act also helps employers address the negative impact of domestic violence in the workplace.

While it is true that domestic violence is a personal tragedy, it is also true that it has costly negative consequences to employers who pay an estimated \$3-13 billion a year in sick leave, absenteeism and lost productivity.

The SAFE Act helps businesses save money by helping to reduce absenteeism and lost productivity and by enabling businesses to retain valuable and experienced employees, thereby avoiding the high cost associated with training new staff.

In summary, the SAFE Act empowers survivors of domestic violence. It

protects the bottom line of business, and it improves the quality of life of our American society.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the many advocacy groups for their support of the SAFE Act and for the work they do every day to end domestic and sexual violence in our country.

And I sincerely thank Representative POE for his cosponsorship, and I look forward to working with him and my colleagues in Congress to pass the SAFE Act and empower women against the violence in their life.

FOOD STAMP CHALLENGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) is recognized during morning-hour debate for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, today is my final day on the Food Stamp Challenge, an initiative where public officials eat for 1 week on a food stamp budget, \$21 for the week. That is \$3 a day, or \$1 per meal. This amount reflects the national average of the food stamp benefit.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the Food Stamp Challenge is to raise awareness of the crucial role the food stamp program serves in the lives of 26 million Americans each month, including over 450,000 in my State of Massachusetts.

Three of my esteemed colleagues, Representatives JO ANN EMERSON, JAN SCHAKOWSKY and TIM RYAN, joined me in taking the challenge over the past week. And although we may be less energetic and perhaps crankier than when we started the challenge nearly a week ago, each of us has learned a great deal.

Certainly my wife, Lisa, and I have gained valuable insights from our experience on a very tight budget. We have much more sympathy over how the lack of energy and the hard choices of

□ 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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H5475

how to stretch the budget and put food on the table might also stretch one's patience and stress a marriage. We can imagine the worry and pain of parents if we had to feed our children on this kind of budget.

These are just a few of our reflections over the past week. Yet truly our most valuable lesson came from the scores of individuals who reached out to us to share their personal experiences struggling to put food on the table for their families. Whether they posted comments on our blog or called my office and spoke with my staff, these individuals taught Lisa and me about how hardworking Americans manage to provide for themselves and their families in spite of inadequate food stamp benefit levels.

They talked about having to make tough trade-offs between paying utility bills, buying clothes for their children, addressing medical needs and purchasing food. They also described the trade-off between eating to be healthy or eating to be full. These kinds of trade-offs are unfair and unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, America can and should do more for low-income individuals and families working hard to survive each and every day. One way we can do that is through the Feeding America's Families Act, a bill that I introduced earlier this month with my colleague, Congresswoman JO ANN EMERSON.

The Feeding America's Families Act would strengthen the food stamp program to better meet the needs of low-income Americans. It raises the minimum benefit from \$10 a month—an amount that has not increased since the 1970s—to about \$30 a month. It also indexes current benefit levels to the rate of inflation, ensuring that the purchasing power of food stamps remains constant.

Furthermore, because access to the food stamp program should be the right of every lawfully residing person in this country, the bill restores eligibility to all legal immigrants, a provision that was removed in 1996.

On Sunday, May 13, Mother's Day, the New York Times editorial stated that "bolstering food stamps must be Congress's top priority in this year's farm bill." Well, I could not agree more. My week on the Food Stamp Challenge has not only strengthened my conviction, I encourage all of my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 2129, Feeding America's Families Act, and other legislative efforts to bolster and improve our Federal hunger and nutrition programs.

The cliché tells us that where there's a will there's a way. But in this case, there is a very clear way. The question is, do we have the political will? I believe we do.

EVA R. BACA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCGOVERN). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) is

recognized during morning-hour debate for 5 minutes.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. Speaker, this morning as we stand here in our Nation's Capitol, family and friends in Colorado are gathered together to celebrate the life of a truly great American, a wonderful human being. The child of Mexican immigrants, Eva Baca was born on January 1, 1929 in Pueblo, Colorado. She graduated from Pueblo Central High School and attended Colorado State College. Ms. Baca, as a member of the first graduating class in 1965. As a widowed mother of two, she balanced motherhood and her studies while attending Adams State College, receiving her master's in education in 1968.

Upon graduation, Ms. Baca taught at Lakeview and Hellbeck Elementary Schools. She went on to get her principal's certificate, and in 1972 she took her first administrative position at the new Eastwood Heights Elementary School. There she instituted new reading programs for children from low-income families.

Eva Baca was a strong advocate for the community in which she lived and worked to provide opportunities and increased accessibility to Pueblo's isolated, east side neighborhood. In 1983, Eva Baca was named director of Title I programs for Pueblo School District No. 60, a position she held for a decade until her retirement. Eva Baca has been recognized throughout Colorado and across the country with various honors and awards. Everyone who had the privilege of knowing her has a wonderful story to tell.

Most recently, she received the lifetime achievement award by the Pueblo Latino Chamber of Commerce for her outstanding educational leadership and contributions to the lives of countless children in her community.

On Thursday, Eva Baca passed away in Pueblo. She was a loving mother to Joyce and Robert Anderson, and Gilbert Baca; a cherished grandmother to Karl, Megan, Lindsey and Nick. She was a fearless educator and dear friend.

In 1993, Eastwood Heights Elementary School, the school that she gave so many years of her life, was renamed in her honor. Today, 250 children attend Eva R. Baca Elementary School, a living tribute to a woman who spent her life focused on those around her.

John Lubbock wrote, "The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the wish to learn."

For the countless children that Eva Baca has given the wish to learn, we thank her.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 44 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CLEAVER) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

On this day, May 21, 1944, Judge Learned Hand gave a speech at "I Am an American Day" in Central Park, New York. In it he expressed his faith in You, O Lord, and Your designs for this country. He said, "Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies, there is no constitution, no law, no court can even do much to help it. While it lies there it needs no constitution, no law, no court to save it."

"What then is the spirit of liberty?" he asked rhetorically in 1944.

"I cannot define it," he said.

"I can only tell you my own faith. The spirit of liberty is the spirit which is not too sure that it is right . . ."

But he went on: "In the spirit of that America for which our young men and women are at this moment fighting and dying; in that spirit of liberty and of America, I ask you to rise with me and pledge our faith in the glorious destiny of our beloved country."

Lord, to this kind of act of faith we add our own prayer and hope today and say: "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 gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. FOXX 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.

HONORING CAPTAIN LARRY BAUGUESS

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the incredible sacrifice, patriotism and valor of the life of Captain Larry Bauguess of Moravian Falls, North Carolina. Captain Bauguess, an officer in the 82nd Airborne, fell in the line of duty last week as he left a meeting on the Pakistan and Afghanistan border and came under enemy fire. He was a man of true courage and principle who served our Nation with distinction with the United States Army since 1993.