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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

Pastor Wes Davis, Riverton Friends Church, Riverton, Kansas, offered the following prayer:

Father God, maker of heaven and Earth, You are Lord of all things created and sovereign over this great Nation. We humbly bow before You this day to thank You for Your mercies being new every morning.

It is because of Your great mercy that we would again ask for Your blessing and Your favor over these women and men who gather here as representatives of our Congress. Please extend to them Your mercy and Your grace and remind them that You love them.

Your scriptures tell us, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." May these, Your people, sharpen one another today as their ideologies clash together, as one philosophy grates against another philosophy different than their own. Help them to see this diversity, not as tearing, for these are not people of sheer fabric. For they have been forged stronger by the rigors of politics and public scrutiny. But help them see this clashing and grating as an opportunity to sharpen thought, to cut through rhetoric and to pierce conscience for the benefit of humanity.

May their actions and decisions of today not become future apologies, but may they be a statement of this Congress' character, their firm resolve, and a hope for a better America.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIRES) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SIRES 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 3541. An Act to amend the Do-not-call Implementation Act to eliminate the automatic removal of telephone numbers registered on the Federal "do-not-call" registry.

WELCOMING PASTOR WES DAVIS

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Kansas (Mrs. BOYDA) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Madam Speaker, Rev. Wes Davis left the beaches of California in the early 1990s to pastor a small church in Kansas in the town of Riverton. He helped to construct the building that is the Riverton Friends Church in Cherokee County, and he helped to grow the congregation from about 100 to nearly 400 people. He did this while sharing his knowledge and faith from around the world, from Haiti to Liberia to Hungary.

In addition to being a pastor, family man, and missionary, Pastor Davis is the executive director of STOA Ministries. STOA in Greek means "porch." In Solomon's day, people gathered on area porches to discuss theology and their faith. Wes Davis is a man of faith who has made the world his porch, always striving to help others learn God's grace.

Pastor Wes Davis, thank you for expanding your porch to the Halls of Congress today.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 1-minute speeches on each side.

LOOMING INFRASTRUCTURE CRISIS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, for the first time in American history, the highway trust fund is running a deficit this year. What is the solution from this administration? Well, instead of having a comprehensive approach to dealing with the shortfall, they just want to steal some money from the mass transit administration account and walk away. This will only delay the problem for 1 year, and it will push mass transit into deficit the next year, instead of a practical solution to fix the looming transportation trust fund crisis.

This is consistent with their consistent underinvestment in our Nation's infrastructure. It is why the American Society of Civil Engineers has rated our infrastructure a D minus, and estimates it will cost us \$1.6 trillion over the next 5 years to repair water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure, a crisis not just for the Federal Government but even worse for State and local governments.

A hundred years ago, Teddy Roosevelt had a vision for a national conference to develop a plan to deal with the Nation's infrastructure. It is time for this Congress to revisit that concept, maybe have a transportation vision for this century.

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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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HONORING THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL

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

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, December 14, 2007, the varsity football team from Thomas Jefferson High School in Jefferson Hills, Pennsylvania, won the Class AAA State football championship in Hershey, clinching the Jaguars' second title in 4 years. With a final score of 28-3, the Jaguars finished a perfect season. Zach Decicco, Thomas Jefferson's quarterback, threw for 137 yards and two scores, ran for 11 yards and a score, and picked off a pass on defense.

Coach Bill Cherpak became just the third head coach in western Pennsylvania history to achieve a perfect win record in more than one appearance at the State championship game in Hershey.

Thomas Jefferson High School and the West Jefferson Hills School District also excel in academics, ranking in the top 20 of Pennsylvania's 501 school districts.

Congratulations to coach Bill Cherpak and the Thomas Jefferson High School Jaguars for being champions on the field and champions in the classroom.

BUSH BUDGET HAS MISPLACED PRIORITIES

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

Mr. McNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, our national budget should invest in our future. Unfortunately, the President's final budget is more of the same, missed opportunities and misplaced opportunities.

The President's budget is fiscally reckless, adding \$1.6 trillion in deficit over the next 5 years instead of becoming balanced over that same period. But you won't hear that from the President. He claims that the budget is balanced by 2012, but that is only because he leaves out enormous costs, including the 5-year cost of fixing the alternative minimum tax and the full cost of the Iraq war.

When realistic costs are included, the budget runs into significant deficits over each of the next 5 years. This, unfortunately, is more of the same. The President took a 10-year surplus of \$5.6 trillion that he inherited and turned it into a \$3.6 trillion deficit. This budget continues down the same path by borrowing from our children and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats can simply not afford this fiscal recklessness. In the coming months, we will present a fiscally responsible budget that meets our pay-as-you-go requirements.

MEXICO THROWS ROCKS AND CRIES TEARS

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the border war with Mexico continues. On the Mexican side of the border, Mexican nationals hide on rocky hills and throw rocks at American border agents. These assaults have continued to increase and escalate to the point that the Border Patrol recently acted in self-defense and fired tear gas at the unruly mobs.

You see, these are the same Mexican nationals that later will illegally sneak into America when the Border Patrol isn't watching. After the most recent tear gas episode, the Mexican Government sent a self-righteous statement to the United States that said, even though "these incidents are a response to hostile acts against Border Patrol agents by Mexican citizens, the actions by U.S. authorities are unacceptable."

The Mexican Government seems to arrogantly support its rock-throwing nationals but doesn't want Americans to defend themselves.

Mexico needs to get its lawless house in order and control the disorderly mobs that lurk on the border. The United States should use every tool available to protect our borders from invaders, rock throwers, and drug smugglers. And if Mexico cries tears about it, too bad.

And that's just the way it is.

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES IN BUSH BUDGET

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

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, this week the President unveiled his final budget proposal, and like previous budgets, it fails to properly address the needs and concerns that are central to the everyday lives of our constituents.

Perhaps most troubling is the fact that the Bush budget continues the President's legacy of fiscal irresponsibility and leaves behind a \$407 billion deficit. The five largest deficits in American history have all occurred on the President's watch. When President Bush took office, the debt stood at \$5.7 trillion, and it is projected to stand at \$9.7 trillion by the time President Bush leaves office. This fiscal record ties the hands of the next generation, which faces growing obligations with increasingly limited resources.

The Bush budget also hurts Americans struggling to make ends meet by cutting Medicare and Medicaid, and the low income home energy assistance program. This budget also hurts our long-term efforts to prepare Americans for better jobs in the global marketplace by slashing important education and literacy programs.

Mr. Speaker, the American people do not want more of the same. This Democratic Congress will propose a budget alternative that takes America in a new direction.

HONORING DR. JOSEPH PATTON

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

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today I want to honor an individual who has a rich background in managing health care services and agencies within the State of South Carolina.

His experience and education in health care has placed him throughout locations in the South, affiliating him with dozens of communities and civic organizations.

As February recognizes Black History Month, I honor Dr. Joseph Patton, who has continuously reached out to provide knowledge, support, and service to benefit those in the community.

A native of Spartanburg, South Carolina, Dr. Patton is an ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church and holds an honorary doctorate degree for his services to the church and community.

Along with his service to his region, Dr. Patton has served overseas, is a veteran of the United States Army, and is currently a member of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

During Black History Month, I give recognition to Dr. Patton for serving as an educated leader of health, for being well known as a caring husband, father, grandfather, and mentor to those in the community.

DEMOCRATS WORK TO STIMULATE ECONOMY

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

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, when Democrats took control of Congress last year, we vowed to work on behalf of all Americans. Last year, we recognized that middle-class families were struggling to make ends meet, and so we worked hard to ease that economic crunch. We passed billions of dollars in tax relief to middle-income families. We increased the minimum wage for the first time in a decade, and we enacted an energy bill that will save the average family anywhere between \$700 and \$1,000 a year in energy costs, and help families better afford college.

This is a good start, but as economic indicators continue to head in the wrong direction, we worked with the White House and House Republicans on an economic stimulus package that will provide a real and significant short-term boost to this economy.

The House bipartisan economic stimulus plan is the most progressive package this decade. It will help jump-start