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No. 52

## House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDEN).

### DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,  
April 3, 2008.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TIM HOLDEN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### PRAYER

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

Divine source of eternal light and everlasting life, we offer You praise and thanks for the blessings You give us as families and as a Nation. Forgive us our narrow-minded self-centeredness. With a vision of faith, help us to see the goodness around us. May we truly recognize the actual needs of our brothers and sisters in the human family and establish bonds of solidarity in the community of nations.

Deepen our belief in the religious sincerity of others, our belief in representative government and our belief in Your divine Providence. Show us how to strengthen our collaboration with others and manifest our true destiny as a Nation in world history. For You are our sovereign Lord now and forever. 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 gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CARNAHAN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CARNAHAN 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.

### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain requests for up to five 1-minute speeches on each side.

### ECONOMIC DISASTER UNWINDS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. The economic disaster continues to unwind. Of course, there was reckless lending, bad investment, cheating and, yes, bad borrowing. But the major failure was of this administration and Congress over the last 7 years. I commend Chairman FRANK for his understanding and resisting the rush to less regulation and oversight, while there was far more risk taken on in our economic system.

There is a seriously flawed Senate package moving its way forward. We must remember the people who need help the most, by reforming bankruptcy laws so that we do not favor the speculator over the homeowner. Above all, we must not reward the people who got us into this mess and profited overwhelmingly along the way. American people deserve better; not just the almost 8,000 per day facing foreclosure, but the tens of millions whose neighborhoods will be harmed as a result.

### CONGRATULATIONS TO MASON COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TEAM

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

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of the Mason County High School boys' basketball team. The Mason County Royals won the Kentucky State Boys' Basketball Championship on March 22, 2008, at Rupp Arena in Lexington.

The Mason County Royals defeated the Covington Holmes Bulldogs 57-48 in the championship game. Tournament MVP Darius Miller scored 19 of his game-high 24 points in the second half of the championship, to lead the Royals to victory. This year marked the 12th time in 28 years that the Mason County Royals advanced to the Sweet Sixteen Tournament and the second time the team has won the Kentucky State Championship. The young men on this team are not only championship-caliber players, by but all accounts, students and leaders who are a credit to their community.

Finally, I want to congratulate the coaches and fans who support the team. Coach Chris O'Hern guided the Royals to victory. The team also received tremendous community support, evidenced by 17,000 fans that traveled to Lexington to attend the game.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in congratulating the achievement of the Mason County Royals on their State championship. It's an honor to represent this team in the United States Congress.

### FARM BILL CONFERENCE

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

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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Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, get this. The Secretary of Agriculture has publicly stated that he is not enthusiastic about increasing spending for nutrition programs above the \$9.5 billion currently being discussed as part of the farm bill conference. I have news for the Secretary. Families going to food banks aren't enthusiastic about their struggles. People applying for food stamps aren't enthusiastic about the tough choices they are forced to make because their food stamp benefit isn't keeping up with the price of milk. Seniors aren't enthusiastic about having to take their medicines on an empty stomach.

The Secretary should get out more into the real world and meet with some of these families. \$9.5 billion is simply not enough, not when families are choosing between food and heat; not when the minimum food stamp benefit is still \$10 a month, unchanged since 1977; not when the price of milk eats more of the food stamp dollar today, than last year, simply because food stamps aren't indexed for inflation.

The farm bill conferees should do the right thing and properly fund the nutrition title. Anything less is shameful.

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#### PARDON BORDER AGENTS

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the Constitution gives the President absolute authority to grant a pardon. He has exercised that power 157 times. Last week, he pardoned 15 more people convicted of everything from importation of drugs to bank fraud and other crimes.

But two people not on his pardon list are Border Agents Ramos and Compean, who are serving 11 and 12 years for enforcing the law on the Texas-Mexico border. They were convicted of civil rights violations when they shot a drug smuggler bringing in \$750,000 worth of drugs to the United States.

The United States Government gave the drug dealer complete immunity for his crimes to testify against the agents. Then the Justice Department hid from the jury the fact that the drug dealers smuggled in another load of drugs shortly before the trial. The U.S. Attorney made a backroom deal with the smuggler for his testimony and got the tainted testimony they bartered for.

Last session, this House passed legislation to prevent taxpayer money from being used to incarcerate Ramos and Compean, but they are still in prison. Because of the U.S. Attorney's actions of deception in this trial, and the fact that the agents were just doing their job, are grounds for the President to pardon both of the border agents immediately.

And that's just the way it is.

#### HONORING PFC ANDREW HABSIEGER

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

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Private First Class Andrew Habsieger, who died serving our country in Iraq. On Easter Sunday, March 23, he was one of four soldiers killed by a roadside bomb in Baghdad. He was scheduled to return home to his family in 2 weeks. Andy was just 22 years old.

In Festus, Missouri, friends and family remembered him as a loving child and standout high school football player. Andy proudly served the U.S. Army as an infantryman and was inspired to fight for his country after the terrible attacks of September 11.

On March 22, 2005, Andy wrote me requesting assistance in joining the Marine Corps because of experiencing migraines while growing up. Andy ultimately joined the Army. Looking back on his letter, I am reminded of his steely determination to serve his country. That he did.

The weekend Andy died marked the 4,000th American soldier killed in Iraq. My heart goes out to Andy's parents, Michael and Brenda Habsieger, as well as his brother, Jacob, who is also in the Army. We must never forget our Nation's fallen heroes. PFC Andrew Habsieger will not be forgotten and his service will inspire generations yet to come.

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#### THE COOPER-WOLF SAFE COMMISSION ACT: BIPARTISANSHIP REQUIRED

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

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, last week the annual Medicare trustees report concluded that consideration of reforms to ensure the financial security of Medicare must occur in the near future. The report states, "The sooner the solutions are enacted, the more flexible and gradual they can be." As lawmakers, we are obligated, on economic and moral grounds, to tackle this enormous issue.

Newspaper headlines in the days following the release of the report say as follows, "Should political stalemate end, entitlement solution possible"; "Entitlement reform cannot wait on politics"; "Budget experts left and right urge action on entitlements."

Every day that the Congress doesn't act, nor the administration, we miss an opportunity for our children and our grandchildren to get this country moving. Congressman COOPER and I have a bill called the SAFE Commission. It's a bipartisan bill.

I am also, Mr. Speaker, disappointed that Secretary Paulson has failed to address this issue. He said he feels like

he is playing solitaire. Secretary Paulson, there are 74 cosponsors in the House, 40 Republicans, 34 Democrats that are waiting for you to do something. Secretary Paulson, if you leave this administration with failing to do that, you will regret it.

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#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to others in the second person.

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#### REPORT FROM THE FEDERAL RESERVE

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Ben Bernanke, was before us at the Joint Economic Committee. Chairman Bernanke noted many negative factors for the current economy, increased unemployment claims, increased food and energy prices, and it has reduced Americans' confidence in the economy.

Recently, we have all seen news reports about the Federal Reserve's unprecedented actions aimed at increasing liquidity, stabilizing credit markets, and protecting a Wall Street investment bank from bankruptcy. Despite these dramatic measures, liquidity remains limited, and with only news reports to go on, the American public seems unsure about whether government is acting in their best interest.

The Federal Reserve needs to start clearly informing the American public about the impact of its actions. This openness would encourage sensible economic policy, bring stability to the markets, and help restore individuals' confidence in the government and in our economy.

Millions of homeowners are struggling to make mortgage payments or have already lost their homes, and they do not feel like their government is helping them. The Federal Reserve needs to clearly communicate better to the American people.

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#### OBAMA

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, in a recent speech in my home State of Pennsylvania, one of the candidates for President referred to the possibility of his daughter conceiving a child as a "punishment." In referring to his own two daughters, he said, "I am going to teach them first about values and morals, but if they make a mistake, I don't want them punished with a baby. I