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No. 57

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 10, 2008.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY CUELLAR 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: Whether the darkness is fear, anxiety, prejudice, or mere confusion, wake us with Your dawn, O Lord.

Free us, that we may be children of light; bold in faith, humble in truth, and loving in service.

Empower us to reach out to all our brothers and sisters across this Nation.

May we walk with compassion, enveloped with the sense of unity as we approach a new day of universal understanding.

Lord, make us all heralds of good news, whether richly blessed or humbled by need. For You can strengthen us by the sheer determination to build Your kingdom with the help of one another, both 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.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote

on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California 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 up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM SHOULD END IMPRISONMENT, DETENTION AND HARASSMENT OF SIGNERS OF MANIFESTO ON FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY FOR VIETNAM

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission

to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 1089, which I introduced on Tuesday, calling for an end to the Vietnamese Government's imprisonment, detention and harassment of those who signed the Manifesto on Freedom and Democracy For Vietnam.

On April 8, 2006, 118 Vietnamese citizens signed a manifesto in support of peaceful action to bring democracy and basic human rights to the Vietnamese people. Thousands of Vietnamese people have since signed this document, refusing to be silent while their government continues to violate their human rights. In retaliation, the Government of Vietnam has jailed, detained and harassed those brave people.

I introduced this important resolution to mark the 2-year anniversary of the original signing of the manifesto and to highlight the ongoing human rights atrocities in Vietnam.

Not only does my resolution call on the Government of Vietnam to release peaceful advocates, but it also asks our State Department to establish a list of Countries of Particular Concern based on human rights violations, which would hold nations like Vietnam accountable.

PAYTON POE ALEXANDER—NEW TEXAN

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the miracle of birth is a remarkable, happy event. None of us pick our parents or the place from which we come. The good Lord makes those decisions, and some of us have the fortune of being born in America.

Yesterday, April 9, at 10:28 a.m. in the central Texas town of Waco, another child took his first breath of the

□ 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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crisp air of life, being born in the land of the free.

Payton Poe Alexander showed up tipping the scales at 9 pounds-1 ounce and a height of 22 inches. Not bad for his first day on earth. His mother, Kara, my daughter, and his father Shane, are right-thinking, God-fearing people. Payton's little 2-year-old sister Elizabeth, shall we say, is inquisitive.

Mr. Speaker, we all get excited when kids are born, because we see in those innocent eyes the hope of the world, the chance that this new child might make a difference for the rest of us.

My hope for my new grandson is that he grows up embodying the spirit of truth, justice and the American way, and that he plays football for the University of Texas and not Texas A&M.

And that's just the way it is.

OPPOSE THE BUSH COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

(Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the Bush Colombia Free Trade Agreement. Like many here, I would like to see our relationship with Colombia strengthened, but the NAFTA-style Colombia FTA would actually do more harm than good.

The Bush administration refuses to change its stubborn ways. By deciding to force the trade agreement through Congress without seeking support or input from the House leadership, the administration continues to demonstrate its lack of judgment and sensibility.

Despite many serious concerns about the Colombia Free Trade Agreement, this administration continues to believe that it can unilaterally demand and approve legislation as it pleases, when it pleases. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way.

Until the Bush administration understands that it must make fundamental changes in its approach to trade, this House will oppose its one-sided trade deals. We need trade deals that work for American working families. The Bush Colombia FTA is not it.

MR. CARTER—DON'T MEET WITH HAMAS

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

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, The Washington Post reports that President Carter will visit Syria next week to meet with a Hamas assassin, Khaled Meshal. The State Department lists Hamas as a foreign terrorist organization, and it is responsible for the murder of at least 26 American citizens: David and Nava Applebaum of Ohio, killed just before Nava's wedding; Alan Beer of Ohio; Marla Bennet of Cali-

fornia; Benjamin Blustein of Pennsylvania; David Boim of New York; Yael Botwin of California; Dina Carter of North Carolina; Janis Ruth Coulter of Massachusetts; Sara Duker of New Jersey; Matthew Eisenfeld of Connecticut; Tzvi Goldstein of New York; Judith Greenbaum of New Jersey; David Gritz of Massachusetts; Dina Horowitz of Florida; Rabbi Eli Horowitz of Illinois; Tehilla Nathanson of New York, age 3; Malka Roth of New York; Mordechai Reinitz of New York; Yitzhak Reinitz of New York; Leah Stern of New Jersey; Goldie Taubenfeld of New York; Shmuel Taubenfeld, 3 months old, of New York; Nachshon Wachsmann of New York; Ira Weinstein of New York; and Yitzhak Weinstock of California.

President Carter, the voices from the grave beseech you, do not meet with the man that ordered the murder of these American citizens.

I urge Members to sign our letter asking former President Carter not to meet with the killer of American citizens.

SUPPORT THE STOP OUTSOURCING SECURITY ACT

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, last Friday, the State Department decided to renew Blackwater's \$1.2 billion contract for another year. It has been over 6 months since Blackwater contractors killed 17 innocent Iraqi civilians, 16 months since the Christmas Eve murder in the Green Zone, and 35 months since a Blackwater helicopter dropped CS gas on a traffic jam in Baghdad. Yet there have been no arrests, no charges, no trials, no convictions, Nothing.

The Department of Justice, the FBI and State Department have remained completely silent about these investigations. Meanwhile, those contractors are still working side-by-side with our troops in Iraq.

But what is even more appalling is that our government has ignored those abuses and renewed Blackwater's contract. If you owned a company, would you rehire someone who has killed dozens of innocent people? The State Department's decision not only puts the lives of innocent Iraqi civilians at risk, but it threatens the safety of our troops and jeopardizes our mission in Iraq.

I urge my colleagues to sign on to my bill, H.R. 4102, the SOS, or Stop Outsourcing Security Act, and phase out the use of military security contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan.

WINNING IN IRAQ

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

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker up-

dated members of the House Armed Services Committee and Foreign Affairs Committee regarding the conditions on the ground in Iraq. Noting successes on the military and political fronts, both indicated reasons to be optimistic about the progress being made.

Having recently visited Iraq, I am not surprised to hear about these successes. Violence is down and reconciliation is happening. But the progress is fragile, a sentiment echoed by both Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus.

During the hearing, many of my Democrat colleagues asked about the cost of the war. Is it expensive? Yes, the cost is expensive. My question to them is, what will be the cost of defeat, and are you willing to pay for it?

HONORING ABBY LEVINE ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 90TH BIRTHDAY

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

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable and outstanding member of our community, Mr. Abby Levine. Abby and his wife Mildred have devoted their lives to addressing critical social, political and humanitarian issues.

Abby is celebrating an important milestone this week, the occasion of his 90th birthday. At nine decades young, Abby, in addition to his other commitments, is working to build a vibrant Jewish community among young people in South Florida.

Abby and Mildred helped establish the Levine-Weinberger Jewish Life Center at Florida Atlantic University, which has become the nerve center of Jewish life on campus. Abby and Mildred are also generous supporters of a number of other causes, including the Boca Raton Community Hospital, and their dedication to improving our community is deeply valued.

Madam Speaker, I join countless friends, family members and loved ones in South Florida in wishing Abby a wonderful birthday, and many more years of good health and happiness.

□ 1015

NEW EMPLOYEE VERIFICATION SYSTEM

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on November 1, the Nation's employment verification system, E-Verify, is going to expire.

E-Verify is a broken employment verification system that has helped grow the number of illegal immigrants in America to over 12 million. We have got to find new solutions.

Our bill, H.R. 5515, the New Employment Verification Act or NEVA, would