

When not being a parish pastor, Rev. Meador enjoys officiating high school and youth athletics and playing golf.

Welcome, Nathan.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. After consultation among the Speaker and the majority and minority leaders, and with their consent, the Chair announces that, when the two Houses meet in joint meeting to hear an address by His Excellency Bertie Ahern, Prime Minister of Ireland, only the doors immediately opposite the Speaker and those immediately to her left and right will be open.

No one will be allowed on the floor of the House who does not have the privilege of the floor of the House. Due to the large attendance that is anticipated, the rule regarding the privilege of the floor must be strictly enforced. Children of Members will not be permitted on the floor. The cooperation of all Members is requested.

The practice of reserving seats prior to the joint meeting by placard will not be allowed. Members may reserve their seats by physical presence only following the security sweep of the Chamber.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of Thursday, April 24, 2008, the House stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 7 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1053

JOINT MEETING OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE TO HEAR AN ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY BERTIE AHERN, THE PRIME MINISTER OF IRELAND

The Speaker of the House presided.

The Majority Floor Services Chief, Barry Sullivan, announced the President pro tempore and Members of the U.S. Senate who entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, the President pro tempore taking the chair at the left of the Speaker, and the Members of the Senate the seats reserved for them.

The SPEAKER. The Chair appoints as members of the committee on the part of the House to escort His Excellency Bertie Ahern, the Taoiseach, Prime Minister of Ireland, into the Chamber:

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER);

The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN);

The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL);

The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON);

The gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY);

The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY);

The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL);

The gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY);

The gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY);

The gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY);

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHRNER);

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT);

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. PUTNAM);

The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MCCOTTER);

The gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN);

The gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MCCRERY);

The gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH);

The gentleman from New York (Mr. KING);

The gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH); and

The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FERGUSON).

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The President pro tempore of the Senate, at the direction of that body, appoints the following Senators as members of the committee on the part of the Senate to escort His Excellency Bertie Ahern, the Prime Minister of Ireland, into the House Chamber:

The Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID);

The Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN);

The Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY);

The Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY);

The Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD);

The Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY);

The Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY);

The Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL);

The Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN);

The Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN); and

The Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS).

The Majority Floor Services Chief announced the Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, His Excellency Jerome Mendouga, Ambassador of Cameroon.

The Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seat reserved for him.

The Majority Floor Services Chief announced the Cabinet of the President of the United States.

The Members of the Cabinet of the President of the United States entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

At 11 o'clock and 8 minutes a.m., the Majority Floor Services Chief announced His Excellency Bertie Ahern, the Prime Minister of Ireland.

The Prime Minister of Ireland, escorted by the committee of Senators and Representatives, entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and stood at the Clerk's desk.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

The SPEAKER. Members of Congress, I have the high privilege and the distinct honor of presenting to you His Excellency Bertie Ahern, the Taoiseach, Prime Minister of Ireland.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY BERTIE AHERN, THE PRIME MINISTER OF IRELAND

Prime Minister AHERN. Madam Speaker, Senator BYRD, Members of Congress, Senator KENNEDY, Chairman and Past Chairman of the Friends of Ireland, Mr. NEAL and Mr. WALSH, my distinguished predecessor as Taoiseach, Ambassador Bruton, distinguished guests:

Thank you for your kind introduction. Your invitation to address this joint meeting this morning honors my country and honors me also. It reaffirms the enduring bonds of friendship and esteem between our two peoples and between our two republics. Those bonds have been built and nurtured and refreshed over the centuries. America and Ireland have something that goes beyond a friendship between countries. To be an Irishman among Americans is to be at home.

So, Madam Speaker, I stand here before you as a proud son of Ireland. And I stand with you as a steadfast friend of the United States of America.

I know, Madam Speaker, like so many others assembled here, you share many links with Ireland and with County Wicklow in particular. A famous son of Wicklow, the son also of an American mother, Charles Stewart Parnell, stood in this place 128 years ago, the first Irish leader to do so. Parnell turned to the United States, as have many Irish leaders since, as we strove to emulate the achievements of America and to vindicate the principles that inspired your Founding Fathers: the principles of liberty, of equality and of justice.

In the early part of the last century, Eamon De Valera came here seeking help as Ireland struggled for her independence. In more recent times, many Irish leaders have come here in the quest for peace in Northern Ireland. Whenever we have asked for help, America has always been there for us—a friend in good times and in bad. From the very outset, Ireland gave to America Presidents, patriots and productive citizens of a new nation. Beginning with the Irish-Scots in the 17th and 18th centuries, they came from all corners of our island and from all creeds. The Irish helped to build America. The very bricks and stones in this unique building were quarried and carried by the hands of Irish immigrant laborers.