

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania 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 has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1886. An act to prevent trafficking in counterfeit drugs.

The message also announced, that pursuant to the provisions of S. Con. Res. 35 (One Hundred Twelfth Congress), the Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, appoints the following Senators to the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies:

The Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID);
The Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER); and
The Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER).

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

PORTS CAUCUS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last week, Congresswoman JANICE HAHN (CA) and I hosted the inaugural event for the bipartisan congressional PORTS Caucus.

The PORTS Caucus currently includes a bipartisan group of 42 Members of Congress, representing 19 States and two territories.

I represent several ports in southeast Texas, and I am pleased that our Nation's ports now have a voice in Congress. Ms. HAHN represents ports on the west coast.

Ports are critical to our national security and our economic security. They are America's link to the rest of the world, whether it's the food we eat, the car we drive, the light bulb we use in our homes, or the clothes we wear. Every American household is impacted by some activity at our ports.

The PORTS Caucus will raise awareness and educate others about the major issues important to American ports.

I look forward to working with Congresswoman HAHN, and I want to thank her for thinking of this idea; I look forward to working with other Members of Congress to ensure economic growth in America.

And that's just the way it is.

GIRL SCOUTS OF RHODE ISLAND

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Girl Scouts of Rhode Island, a program that strives to help young girls become model citizens.

In honor of the 100th anniversary of the Girl Scouts of America, as well as National Women's History Month, I'm pleased to recognize the contributions that the Girl Scouts have made in Rhode Island where it has reached 9,400 girls through its 770 troops in the past year.

More than just going door to door selling Thin Mints and Tagalongs to their friends and neighbors, the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island provide young women and girls across our State with the opportunity to take part in a group that builds girls of honor, confidence, courage, and character who make the world a better place and giving them a foundation for success later in life.

The Girl Scouts of Rhode Island should take great pride in the work they do every day.

I congratulate the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island on their incredible work.

CBO PROJECTS HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT UNTIL 2014

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last month the Congressional Budget Office released a report which stated that our Nation's unemployment rate is not expected to dip below 8 percent until 2014, which reveals the President's policies have failed and destroyed jobs. America is experiencing the longest stretch of high unemployment since the Great Depression. The study also concluded that if every American searching for employment were counted, sadly our unemployment rate would be around 15 percent.

When the President lobbied for his economic plan, he promised that our unemployment rate would not exceed 8 percent. Instead, February marks the 36th month where the unemployment rate has been above 8 percent. This is a tragedy for American families.

House Republicans are focused on putting American families back to work. I urge the President and the liberal-controlled Senate to take immediate action of the dozens of job-creation bills that have passed the House with bipartisan support.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last Friday, March 2, 2012, marked Texas Independence Day.

It was 176 years ago that the Texas Declaration of Independence was ratified by the convention of 1836 at Washington-on-the-Brazos, Texas.

A military dictatorship took over Mexico, abolishing the Mexican Constitution. The dictatorship refused to provide trial by jury, freedom of religion, public education for its citizens, and allowed the confiscation of firearms. The last one being the most intolerable, particularly among Texans.

Failure to provide these basic rights violated the sacred contract between a government and its people. Texas did what we still do today, stood up for our rights. In response, the Mexican Army marched to Texas, waging a war on the land and the people, enforcing the decrees of the military dictatorship through brute force and without any democratic legitimacy.

As future Texas President and Governor Sam Houston, along with other delegates, signed the Texas Declaration of Independence, General Santa Anna's army besieged the independence forces at the Alamo in San Antonio.

Yesterday, March 6, 176 years ago, 4 days after the signing, the Alamo fell with Lieutenant Colonel William Barrett Travis, former Tennessee Congressman David Crockett, and approximately 200 other Texas defenders.

In a dramatic turnaround, Texans achieved their independence several weeks later on April 21, 1836. Roughly 900 members of the Texas Army overpowered a larger Mexican force. I'm proud to represent the San Jacinto Battlefield and State Park.

God bless Texas and God bless America.

THE JOBS ACT

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, today we're considering a bipartisan legislative package called the JOBS Act, Jumpstart Our Business Startups. This is what our constituents want us to do, and they want to see us get it done.

The JOBS Act is a legislative package designed to move our economy and restore opportunities for America's primary job creators, our small businesses, start-ups, and entrepreneurs. These measures create capital formation, will spur the growth of start-ups and small businesses, and pave the way for more small-scale businesses to go public and create more jobs.

As I said, this has broad bipartisan support. Of the six bills, only 32 Members voted "no" on all six of these bills as they moved through the House and the committee.

In his State of the Union, the President asked us to send him a bill that