

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Friday, November 19, 1999

The House met at noon.

The Reverend Dr. Ronald F. Christian, Chaplain, Lutheran Social Services, Fairfax, VA, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, we speak our words of gratitude from hearts that sense Your goodness.

You open Your hand and You satisfy the desire of every living thing, and so we raise our thankful song, for again the fall harvest has provided us with granaries that are overflowing.

The good Earth has produced bountiful fruits and seeds, and we are all blessed because of it.

So this day we are a chorus of Your grateful recipients, and we sing as so many have sung through the years.

Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices.

Amen.

### THE JOURNAL

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

Mr. PEASE 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 Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 235. Concurrent resolution providing for a conditional sine die adjournment of the first session of the One Hundred Sixth Congress.

The message also announced that the Senate had passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a joint resolution of the House of the following title:

H.J. Res. 82. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2000, and for other purposes.

### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

### THOUGHTS ON THE FIRST SESSION OF THE 106TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, as the first session of the 106th Congress concludes, I think it is proper to give this legislative body my thoughts on what the House has accomplished this year and what is left to accomplish next year. Together we have enjoyed many victories and some disappointments.

When I became Speaker last January, the House needed some serious work. The distrust and bitterness and rampant partisanship of both parties threatened to undermine the public support of this House. We had Members who would not even talk to each other, let alone work with one another.

Given that situation, last January in this very spot I said solutions to problems cannot be found in a pool of bitterness. Solutions can be found in an environment in which we trust one another, and we trust one another's word, and where we generate heat and passion, but where we recognize that each Member is equally important to our overall mission of improving the life of America's people.

We have made progress in putting that bitterness behind us, because we decided to go to work. Members of the minority cosponsored six out of the ten top bills introduced by the majority.

Our greatest achievements this year had bipartisan support: The budget bill that we just passed, the Social Security lockbox bill, the appropriations bills, the missile defense bill, the Education Flexibility bill and the Financial Services Modernization Act. Both parties must continue to promote their views and their philosophies, but we must never sacrifice the common good of the American people on the altar of partisan competition.

We have proved that when we work together, we get our work done. This year, we passed the budget on time for only the second time since 1974. By completing our budget on time, we were able to complete all 13 appropriations bills without dipping into the So-

cial Security Trust Fund, doing that for the first time since 1967. For the second consecutive year we passed a balanced budget. That is the first time that has happened since 1960.

The appropriations process was hard work and took longer than I wanted to take, but, thanks to the dogged determination of the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), and the rest of the Committee on Appropriations, we completed the work of the House; and, by doing so, we made great progress in preparing America for the next century.

We had four goals at the beginning of this Congress: Protect retirement security for the next century, improve national security by bolstering our armed services, reform our education system so that all of our children can go to a good school in a safe environment, and promote economic security and fairness by paying down debt while giving tax relief to American families.

We have made progress in all four areas. Our budget stopped the raid on Social Security for the first time in 30 years. Why do we care so much about protecting Social Security and the surplus? Let me give you three reasons.

First, it helps to strengthen the Social Security system far into the next century. That means baby-boomers can have the peace of mind that Social Security will be there for them.

Second, when we protect the Social Security surplus, we also pay down the Nation's debt. Think about how good you feel when you pay off your home mortgage or your car loan. When we take responsibilities for our Nation's debt, we ease the crippling burden of our debt on our children and our grandchildren. Our budget discipline has allowed our government to make the largest debt reduction payment in the history of this Nation.

Third, when we protect the Social Security surplus, we stop the government's spending spree. We have torn up the government credit card and said that now it is time for a new era of fiscal responsibility.

Retirement security also includes vital programs like Medicare, and I am pleased that we were able to take steps to restore vital funding for Medicare. The health care bureaucrats misinterpreted the Balanced Budget Act guidelines and began slashing Medicare reimbursements to nursing homes, hospitals, and other health care agencies.

We believe that Medicare must be more efficient, yet still responsive to

□ 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.