

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Monday, March 15, 1999

The House met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PEASE).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 15, 1999.

I hereby appoint the Honorable EDWARD A. PEASE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

Let us pray using the words of David C. Roberts: God of our fathers, whose almighty hand leads forth in beauty all the starry band of shining worlds in splendor through the skies; our grateful songs before Your throne arise.

Refresh Your people on their toiling some way; lead us from night to never ending day; fill all our lives with heav'n-born love and grace until at last we meet before Your face. 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 North Carolina (Mr. JONES) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina 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 a concurrent resolution of the following title, in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 5. Concurrent resolution expressing congressional opposition to the uni-

lateral declaration of a Palestinian state and urging the President to assert clearly United States opposition to such a unilateral declaration of statehood.

OPPOSE H.R. 45, NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY ACT OF 1999

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, the question of the day is can this Nation afford the cleanup cost of a nuclear waste accident under H.R. 45, the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1999.

Well, a 1985 Department of Energy contractor report concluded that a severe accident involving a rail cask would result in the release of radioactive materials sufficient to contaminate a 42-square-mile area.

If it occurred in a rural area, the estimated cost of cleanup would range from \$176 million to \$19.4 billion and would require up to 460 days to complete.

Cleanup after a similar accident in a typical urban area would be considerably more expensive and time consuming, perhaps around \$9.5 billion just to raze and rebuild the most heavily contaminated single square mile.

Mr. Speaker, guess who picks up the tab for these expensive and deadly accidents? That is right. It will be the American taxpayer. Realize these figures cannot include the intangible cost of human life or the disastrous effects it could have on our children, our communities, and our homes.

Before nuclear waste is shipped through my colleagues' districts, think about the consequence, and oppose H.R. 45. It is a bill we cannot afford to live with.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.

REBECCA MASON'S PETITION FOR CHRISTIAN VALUES

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

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I have the honor of representing a very special part of North

Carolina. I represent the Third District, which includes 18 counties in the eastern part of the State.

We have beautiful beaches, sprawling farmland, a strong military presence, and wonderful people who I am sure any one of my colleagues would be proud to represent.

As I travel throughout the District, I am reminded that, despite whatever problems may face our Nation, there are communities that still cherish the Judeo-Christian principles this great Nation was founded upon, the same values that make our Nation and our citizens strong.

I am proud of each and every citizen of eastern North Carolina, because the majority have a great respect and admiration for the Bible and the Constitution.

Because of this, I very rarely like to single out any one person. However, I am recognizing a very special 10-year-old girl from Goldsboro, North Carolina. Rebecca Mason and her family attend Rosewood First Baptist Church in Goldsboro.

One day Rebecca learned some frightening statistics about the rate of crime and violence in our Nation's neighborhoods. I am proud of Rebecca, not simply out of her concern for a problem, but in our actions to address the problem.

Rebecca could not understand why more adults of faith were not fighting to combat these issues. So with the support of her family and her church, she developed a petition to alert us to the same statistics that prompted her to act. Her petition calls upon all Americans to stand up for the morals and values we learn from the Bible.

I could tell my colleagues about Rebecca's petition, but I think the words of a child are often more powerful than our own. Mr. Speaker, she wrote, "The people of America are crying out for a return to Christian values. Drug and alcohol abuse are plaguing our Nation. More people have died in alcohol-related crashes than have died in all the wars the United States has ever fought. America is leading the way to teen pregnancy, illiteracy and divorce. Since 1973, over 30 million children have been murdered in the name of convenience. Teenage runaways are on the rise, and America averages one teenage suicide every 1 hour and 45 minutes. Suicide is the third leading cause of death to those under the age of 25.

"With the restriction of prayer in school, our Nation has gone on a downhill slide. The only way to put our Nation on the right path is to turn toward

□ 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.

God. We, as Christian Americans, would like to ensure the rights of our children to pray freely in schools. We would like to have increased regulations on drug- and alcohol-related crimes and the repeal of legal abortions in America. It is time we all make a stand for God and Christian values. By signing this petition, you will show your concern on these issues to our local, State, and national leaders."

Mr. Speaker, Rebecca's petition reminds me of one of my favorite Bible verses. It is from Isaiah, book 6, verse 8; and it reads, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here I am; send me."

Mr. Speaker, Rebecca is serving as a messenger to remind my colleagues and I that this country was founded on Judeo-Christian principles.

I am proud of Rebecca and all the young people like her who work to remind us that, during difficult times, we need to draw strength from our faith and return to the values that make America strong.

In his farewell address, George Washington said, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports."

Even at 10 years of age, Rebecca Mason recognizes the importance of faith and morality. She represents the strength and character that promises a bright future for our Nation. I am thankful that Rebecca has allowed me to be part of her efforts. That is why I am here today to share with my colleagues what concerns our children have about the future of our Nation.

Whether it begins with Federal, State, or local leaders, the teachers in our schools, or the families in our communities, we must all take responsibility for the future and help our children learn the importance of morality and faith. But we need to act now. Our children are asking for our help.

I hope that concerned people of faith will join me in signing Rebecca's petition for Christian values. It is time that we show our children we care about the future and we work together to return to the values that strengthen this Nation and its citizens.

DRUG PROBLEMS OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I thank the leadership for allowing me time to address an issue which is very, very important. The Nation has certainly understood the gravity of the problem of drugs within our commu-

nities, within our States, and throughout the whole country. It is a problem that I certainly have recognized in my years of service to this Congress as well as in the local community.

But I think, like most citizens, I have more or less assumed that this was a problem that individuals like ourselves could not deal with in any effective way, that we had to rely upon our law enforcement agencies, our Federal Bureau of Investigation, our DEA agents, and the Justice Department, and, in some instances, the State Department to come to grips with this very, very critical and persuasive problem.

Not until this year at the beginning of the 106th Congress did I come face to face with the reality that I did indeed, as one Member of this Congress, have a great responsibility for the development of the policy and the course of action and the emphasis and the direction that we would take with regard to the drug problem within our United States.

I left the 6-year term, left service of the Committee on the Budget in the House of Representatives and returned back to my committee previously known as the Committee on Government Operations, now known as the Committee on Government Reform, and found myself being named the ranking minority member of the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources.

Under that jurisdiction, it became my responsibility not only to formulate human resource policies and directions and oversight, but to take a very critical look with the rest of my subcommittee on the overall problems of drug usage within the United States.

First, an immediate responsibility came in being invited to join the chairman of the subcommittee on an extensive field trip through El Salvador, Panama, Peru, Bolivia, and on through Mexico in order to investigate the whole problem of the trafficking of these narcotic drugs into the United States.

It was a very interesting field trip, and I learned a great deal. I learned where the drugs were coming from, where they are being produced, how they were entering into the traffic, by sea and by air and over the land, and to some extent what the individual countries were doing with respect to this whole traffic issue.

Some countries I felt had done a great deal. Peru, in fact, was probably the outstanding example of where a changeover in national leadership made all the difference in the world in terms of their being able to handle the traffic that was flowing through their country into the United States.

Colombia was another place that we visited and met with the president of that country and learned from them the monumental steps that that coun-

try had taken. Of interest in Colombia is, in fact, that several years ago, Colombia had been decertified because the leadership of the Congress felt that their efforts to try to curb the traffic and to do something about the offenders and all of the drug lords was minimal at least, and so the decision, under the wishes of the Congress at that time, was to decertify that country in order to emphasize the fact that the United States felt they could do more.

In fact, the consequence was that that country did more and did a very aggressive job in arresting and curbing the traffic from Colombia to this country. So they have now come back into a cooperative venture with the United States in trying to help us deal with the problem.

The issue, therefore, that the Congress now faces is that every March 1, the President of the United States must make a recommendation to the Congress as to whether all of the countries with whom we have relationships should be certified in terms of their enactment, pursuit, administration, and enforcement of a drug policy which helps the United States to deal with the traffic coming from that particular country.

□ 1415

The big debate this year, as has been in the past, is whether Mexico should be decertified or not. And we visited Mexico. We spent 3 days there discussing the matter with their leadership and trying to understand what, in fact, that nation was doing in terms of curbing not only production and the harvesting and the growing of these various drug producing plants but also what they were doing in the criminal enforcement area in picking up these narco-traffickers and putting them in prison and enforcing their own national laws, irrespective of our laws, which many of them had also violated and for whom outstanding arrest warrants had been issued without any particular results.

So we are now back here in the Congress and one of the major issues that we have to decide and debate is what to do about Mexico. And the question before the Congress is whether, in our opinion, the country of Mexico has done enough, has maintained a substantial pressure within all the criminal elements in their country that has created this enormous traffic of drugs flowing from Mexico to the United States.

It is a very difficult issue because, as we debate the issue of decertifying, we are questioning their sovereignty, we are in fact intervening in internal politics. But I think it is important to remember that this crisis situation within the United States is something of deep concern to the people of the United States. And while it attempts, it appears, to be invasive of another