support the social security and medicare "safe deposit box".

the speaker pro tempore. under the speaker's announced policy of january 19, 1999, the gentleman from florida (mr. stearns) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

mr. stearns. mr. speaker, tomorrow we will consider legislation to ensure we will no longer use the social security trust fund for any other purpose than for what it was intended for.

now, my colleagues might ask, "why is this necessary?" the answer is quite simple. despite repeated efforts over the years, we have not been able to stop perpetual raids on the social security trust fund. we have attempted to stop this violation of the trust fund going as far back as 1950.

now, that year we enacted legislation, the budget enforcement act, which removed social security taxes and benefits from the budget and from calculations of the budget deficit. that was done to prevent social security from masking the true size of the deficit and to protect it from budgetary cuts.

the rationale was that if this was done, congress would not use social security in devising the nation's overall fiscal policy. historically, the social security trust fund board has invested surplus social security revenues in u.s. government securities. these investments are honored just like investments from the private sector. interest is earned on the monies invested, and returned to the trust fund to help offset long-term obligations to future beneficiaries. it was felt that without such an enforcement mechanism, this practice would continue.

mr. speaker, it was then that social security surplus social security trust fund and medicare for this and future generations. we can pass h.r. 1259, stop this practice which started when president lyndon johnson unified the budget in 1969. it was then that social security and the other federal trust funds were officially accounted for in the entire federal budget.

so this "safe deposit box act" establishes the submission of separate social security budget documents by excluding outlays and receipts of the old-age, survivors, and disability program under the social security act, thereby, mr. speaker, preventing social security surpluses from being used for any other purpose other than for the social security trust fund and the medicare program.

so i urge my colleagues tomorrow and this week to support h.r. 1259.

recess

the speaker pro tempore. pursuant to clause 12 of rule i, the chair declares the house in recess until 2 p.m. accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 41 minutes p.m.), the house stood in recess until 2 p.m.

after recess

the recess having expired, the house was called to order by the speaker pro tempore (mr. pease) at 2 p.m.

prayer

the chaplain, the reverend james david ford, d.d., offered the following prayer:

we pray, gracious god, that your spirit of comfort and serenity will be with the seekers of peace who turn to you with their life's concerns. we remember the refugees of the world and all those who suffer pain or hunger or fear for the days ahead. remind us all, o god, that when the resources of the world are not with us, we can rely on your grace. and when people must walk through the roads of danger and hostility, we earnestly pray that your healing power and your reconciling spirit will be with them whatever their need or trouble. o loving and eternal god, bless us and all your people, now and evermore. 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 new york (mr. serrano) come forward and lead the house in the pledge of allegiance.

mr. serrano 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.

chinese espionage

mr. wicker asked and was given permission to address the house for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.

mr. wicker. mr. speaker, this headline from the new york times says it all: china stole nuclear secrets for bombs. although the bipartisan cox report on chinese espionage will not be officially released until tomorrow, we already know enough that all americans should be outraged.

according to chairman cox, the threat to our security from this major intelligence catastrophe will not be years into the future but within the next few months. look to the chinese communist government to begin testing nuclear icbms within a few months, using united states nuclear secrets. while our law enforcement officials were asleep, our national security was compromised. it is not just attorney general janet reno. the entire clinton-gore administration owes the united states public an explanation for this outrage.

two forms of violence

mr. serrano asked and was given permission to address the house for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.

mr. serrano. mr. speaker, the debate goes on in this country as we try earnestly to find solutions for the problem of violence in our schools and throughout our society. at the same