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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 106th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Wednesday, April 5, 2000

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GILLMOR).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 5, 2000.

I hereby appoint the Honorable PAUL E. GILLMOR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

PRAYER

The Reverend Jim Fisher, Chaplain, U.S. Coast Guard, Washington, DC, offered the following prayer:

“Oh beautiful for heroes proved, in liberating strife,

“Who more than self their country loved, and mercy more than life!

“America! America! May God thy gold refine,

“Till all success be nobleness, and every gain divine!”

El-Shaddai, Almighty God of many heroes, present and past,

The manifestation of human strife may appear today in this sacred Hall. Challenges may be offered, retorts may be heard. For petty angers and egos, forgive, O Lord.

Cast upon each member of this noble assembly, each a hero of our homeland, the radiant countenance of Your Holy Face. Cause every member here to reflect anew upon their deep and abiding love for our Nation, and every inhabitant thereof.

May their unity and commitment become a source of inspiration for this divine dream we call America. 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 Illinois (Mr. PHELPS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PHELPS 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.

CONSIDERING MEMBER AS FIRST SPONSOR OF H.R. 2077, SEQUOIA ECOSYSTEM AND RECREATION PRESERVE ACT OF 1999

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I may hereafter be considered as the first sponsor of H.R. 2077, a bill originally introduced by Representative Brown of California, for the purposes of adding cosponsors and requesting reprints pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 15 one-minutes per side.

CHAPLAIN JAMES R. FISHER

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

Mr. PHELPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give thanks and recognize Chaplain James R. Fisher of the United States Coast Guard, who has just delivered the opening prayer this morning in the United States House of Representatives.

I would first like to thank Chaplain Coughlin of the House for extending this prestigious invitation to Chaplain Fisher. Chaplain Fisher is a resident of Mt. Carmel, Illinois, which is in my district, and was the son of a United States Air Force career officer.

Chaplain Fisher received his bachelor's degree from Virginia Tech and went on to attend North Park Seminary in Chicago and Yale Divinity School in Connecticut for his religious education.

In 1983 he was ordained in the Evangelical Covenant Church in Chicago, Illinois. He also served as a missionary in the Yupik Eskimo Village of Mountain Village, Alaska.

Chaplain Fisher has a long and distinguished Naval career. He was commissioned in 1983 and has served on the U.S.S. *Suribachi* and the U.S.S. *Essex*; been stationed at the Marine Corps base at Camp Pendleton of California; Naval Air Station in Sigonella, Sicily, in Italy; and is currently the deputy chaplain of the Coast Guard in Washington, DC.

Throughout his service in the Navy and Coast Guard, he has received many awards too numerous to mention in these remarks.

Chaplain Fisher's proudest accomplishment, though, has been his marriage to Lori Christian since 1977 and the three sons they share, Jacob, Caleb and Josiah.

Mr. Speaker, it has been my pleasure to introduce Chaplain Fisher, and I am very honored to do so.

TRIBUTE TO 2000 CENTRAL CABARRUS HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TEAM

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

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor and pleasure to rise today to pay special tribute to an outstanding group of student athletes from Concord in North Carolina's Eighth District.

□ 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.

Several weeks ago, the Central Cabarrus High School men's basketball team completed a truly amazing season by winning the North Carolina High School 3A Basketball Championship.

The Vikings successfully completed the near impossible, defeating favored Greensboro Dudley. Led by seniors Mickey Mickens, David Hardy, Clayton Russell, Dough Naumann, and sophomore Nathan Cranford, Coach Scott Brewer's Vikings stepped up to the challenge.

These players are not only winning on the basketball court, they are also excelling in the classroom. Eight of the players' grade point averages are over 4.0 and the team's average is 3.71. Clearly, these young men excel in the classroom as well as on the basketball court.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the students, teachers, parents, head coach Scott Brewer, his assistant coaches, and the 2000 North Carolina State 3A basketball champions, the Central Cabarrus High School Vikings.

This is a tribute to their entire school and their team work.

HELP BRING OUR CHILDREN HOME BY PASSING H. CON. RES. 298

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

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell the House about Joseph Cook and his children Daniel and Michelle. Their story is one of the most heartwrenching I have ever heard. In 1992, Joseph's ex-wife took his children to Germany on what was supposed to be a brief visit. Shortly after they left, he was told by Christiane that she was not coming back and that he would not see his children again. Christiane had been suffering from depression, had checked herself into a clinic, and placed Daniel and Michelle into the German foster care system. The German foster care system made no attempt to contact Joseph.

In 1993, Christiane returned to the United States but left Danny and Michelle in German foster care. Mr. Cook went to Germany with a full custody order in 1994, but the German courts have refused to return his children and the foster family has been extremely uncooperative.

Mr. Speaker, Danny and Michelle are being left to languish in a foster care system when they have a father who loves them and desperately wants to be with them.

Joseph Cook served in the United States Army, and I am urging this House to serve him in return. Pass H. Con. Res. 298 and help bring our children home.

FOUNDATION FIGHTING BLINDNESS MAKES CONGRESS AWARE OF EYE DISEASES

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, representatives from the Foundation Fighting Blindness are visiting congressional offices this week to discuss the importance of funding research initiatives at the National Eye Institute.

This week my colleagues received a set of paper glasses which may help them to understand what individuals suffering from retinitis pigmentosa and macular degeneration see.

Isaac, Daria and Ilana Lidsky, young adults from my congressional district, are among the over 6 million Americans who suffer from these retinal degenerative diseases. Another 9 million Americans have pre-symptomatic signs of retinal degeneration and as the baby-boomer generation ages, diseases such as these are poised to skyrocket.

Promising experiments have already been discovered in retinal transplantation and in gene and pharmaceutical therapies. However, additional funding for the National Eye Institute is urgently needed to advance these promising treatments to clinical trials.

I urge my colleagues to consider how life is viewed through the eyes of those going blind and to consider an increase to the National Eye Institute at a percentage higher or equal to the other institutes of the National Institutes of Health.

FOURTH ANNUAL U.S./MEXICO BORDER CONFERENCE

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

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, today and tomorrow I, along with my colleagues that represent districts along the border, are cohosting the Fourth Annual U.S./Mexico Border Conference. Each year we bring together leaders on both sides of the U.S./Mexico border to look at the problems that exist along our border, to develop solutions, and to convey these solutions to policymakers of our Nation.

The border today looks much how the rest of the Nation will look in 20 years. We are a young, growing, dynamic population that is facing problems and experiencing unique issues that perhaps the rest of the Nation needs to focus on.

If our problems are not addressed now in the border region, we run the risk of impacting the entire Nation as well as affecting the critical tourism and trade relationship between the United States and Mexico.

At the conference, we are focusing on four major areas: education and the

workforce, health and environment, economic development and infrastructure, and border security.

I urge my colleagues to join me and our other colleagues in learning more about the border and provide the direction and leadership that is needed.

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PEOPLE OF WESTERN SAHARA

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today out of concern over reports that the United Nations may decide not to hold the referendum for self-determination for the people of Western Sahara.

Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that, quote, "All peoples have the right to self-determination," end quote. Both sides, Morocco and Western Sahara, in the U.N. Settlement Plan and Houston Agreement, agreed to self-determination for the Sahrawi people.

The U.N. has spent approximately \$500 million on peacekeeping in the settlement plan over 10 years and \$30 million on humanitarian aid in the same time period. It would be a shame, no, a disgrace, to waste \$530 million.

The credibility of the United Nations and the United States would be further eroded if they are willing to give up on the stalled agreements. The U.N. should remain committed to the peace agreement.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Western Sahara deserve the same respect and support of the people of East Timor or any other country. A free, fair, and transparent referendum must go forward.

ONLY IN AMERICA, ONLY IN AMERICA

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, today Congress will debate two bills. The first bill is partial birth abortions. The second bill is wildlife and sport fish restoration.

Unbelievable. Kill the babies but save the trout and the tit mouse. Beam me up. In fact, beam me up, Scotty.

See, I believe that Congress and America can and should save both the babies and the wildlife. Think about it.

I yield back an old street saying: Only in America, Mr. Speaker.