

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Wednesday, February 7, 2001

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

### DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,  
February 7, 2001.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DAN MILLER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

### PRAYER

Imam Bassam A. Estwani, Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center, Herndon, Virginia, offered the following prayer:

All praise is for God, the Lord of the worlds.

The compassionate, the merciful.  
Master of the day of judgment.

O God, You alone we worship and You alone we call on for help.

O God, guide us to the straight way. The way of those whom You have blessed; not of those who have earned Your anger, or of those who have lost the way.

We pray that You guide this noble body of men and women to seek justice and equality for all. For as You said:

O mankind. We created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know and honor each other. Indeed the most honorable of you in the sight of God is the most righteous. 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. MURTHA 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.

WELCOME TO IMAM BASSAM A. ESTWANI, DAR AL-HIJRAH ISLAMIC CENTER, HERNDON, VIRGINIA

(Mr. THOMAS M. DAVIS of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMAS M. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Mr. Imam Bassam A. Estwani for joining us today as the guest chaplain and offering this morning's prayer. He is the chairman of the board of the Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center, which is one of the Nation's most active and influential mosques, located in the 11th Congressional District, which I represent. He has participated in many international conferences that focus on Islam and religious values in America. He has been instrumental in bringing members of different faith communities together to promote social justice.

Mr. Estwani is a native of Syria. He has a law degree from the University of Damascus. He studied Islamic law in Damascus and at the University of Cairo. In Kuwait, Mr. Estwani participated in the publication of the Encyclopedia of Islamic Jurisprudence. In Lebanon, he established an Islamic publishing house that produced more than 200 titles in a number of different languages. He also participated in and sponsored relief and literacy programs for orphans and the homeless in this country and overseas.

The American Muslim community is growing, both in Northern Virginia and around this country, numbering over 6 million Americans today. I am very proud to represent one of the largest concentrations of American Muslims, who have chosen Northern Virginia as their home; and we are just very, very proud to have you offer the prayer today.

### BETTERING RURAL HEALTH CARE IN AMERICA

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

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, as co-chairman of the Rural Health Care Coalition, I want to thank my good friend and the former cochairman, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE), for all of his hard work on behalf of rural health care. His leadership will be missed, but I am sure my colleagues will join me in representing the gen-

tleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) as co-chairman of our Rural Health Care Coalition.

Just 2 days ago, I had the opportunity to visit Cape Fear Valley Medical Center in Fayetteville, North Carolina, along with Senator JOHN EDWARDS from North Carolina, to talk about the impact that the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 has had on the quality of care. While I am pleased that those of us in Congress have taken significant steps over the last 2 years to stop cuts in Medicare, we have much more to do to ensure that all citizens, no matter where they live in America, have access to quality health care.

The voice of rural America needs to be heard and to be heard loudly in these halls of Congress. I encourage all of my colleagues here in the Congress to join our efforts to make sure that, as we talk about and work to improve health care, that we are improving it for all Americans everywhere, so that no one is left behind.

### TIME TO GIVE BACK THE BUDGET SURPLUS TO AMERICA'S FAMILIES

(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, many Nevadans have come to me and said, Jim, I just can't make ends meet. We are paying more and more in taxes. How are we supposed to save for our retirement, pay off our mortgage, or even send our kids to college?

Well, Mr. Speaker, these concerns are real. According to the Census Bureau, the average household today pays almost \$9,500 in Federal income taxes every year, and that is twice what it paid in 1985. By conservative estimates, the Federal Government will have a record-breaking surplus this year of \$5.6 trillion.

Now it is time to grant the hard-working Americans the tax relief they so deserve and need. The tax relief package that President Bush has outlined will give \$1,600 back to the average working American family of four. This \$1,600 could pay their mortgage for a month, help pay off a credit card debt, or the tuition at a community college for one year.

The surplus was created by the tax dollars of the American people. It belongs to them. There is no excuse for Congress not to give the hard-working Americans what they want, what they need and what they deserve, a tax

□ 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.