

and putting money back into the railroad retirement system out of the general fund.

Despite the payroll tax shortfall, the railroad retirement system remains technically solvent thanks to these generous taxpayer subsidies. The American taxpayer has bailed out the retirement system to the extent that those retirement funds now claim a \$20 billion surplus, not a \$90 billion deficit. So this bill that is proposed to come up takes \$15 billion out of the general fund next year and gives it to a railroad retirement board investment effort where they invest it and spend it for current retirees.

But the challenge is while we are passing these bills, we are reducing the payroll tax that these workers pay in and we increase benefits. We have increased benefits for widows, and we allow those workers to retire in the railroad system, under this proposed legislation that is coming before us, to retire at 60 years old with full benefits. Of course, on Social Security what we have done over the years is we have increased that, and now we are in the mode of taking that full benefit eligibility up to 67 years old for Social Security.

So in this railroad bill, we have reduced the tax they pay; we have increased the benefits. I hope everybody will study this issue very closely because if we are going to pass this kind of legislation, we should at least take American taxpayers off the hook in the future.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There being no further requests for morning hour debates, pursuant to clause 12, rule I, the House will stand in recess until 10 a.m.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 40 minutes a.m.) the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Monsignor John Brenkle, St. Helena Catholic Church, St. Helena, California, offered the following prayer:

Father, Your name is indeed Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. How fitting it is to begin all of our enterprises conscious of Your guiding Spirit and to give You praise when our affairs have ended well.

As we join together to begin today the work of making this Nation a land of peace and justice, may we humble

ourselves before You, acknowledging that who we are and what we do is Your gift, Your grace.

Help us always to remember that You have called us to be servants and that the greatness of our life as a nation and as individuals is to be measured by how generously and wisely we serve each other.

Let Your presence and Your blessings descend upon this Chamber and upon each of its Members as they begin this new day and may they at its end experience the rewards of a day well spent in the service of others. For this we pray. 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.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas 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.

WELCOMING THE REVEREND MONSIGNOR JOHN BRENKLE

(Mr. THOMPSON of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have such a truly genuine servant and good friend lead us in today's opening prayer. Father John Brenkle—Monsignor John Brenkle—has humbly and effectively served our diocese for over 30 years and has been pastor at the St. Helena Catholic Church for nearly 20 years.

He has worked tirelessly with local, State and Federal officials, housing advocates and the wine industry within the Napa Valley to improve farm worker housing in our area.

In addition to St. Helena, Father Brenkle has served the diocese by leading two other parishes and serving as a school principal. He has been both a forceful presence and silent leader and has the respect and the admiration of our entire community regardless of their religious affiliation.

I thank my colleagues for allowing him to lead us in prayer today.

CLONING

(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, the columnist Charles Krauthammer called legislation that we are going to consider today to permit cloning human embryos a "nightmare and an abomination." It truly is.

Some of those who support this proposal are so eager to clone human beings that they have taken to twisting the truth to promote their arguments. The latest thing they are saying is that cloned embryos are not really embryos at all. They say that if you use body cells instead of sperm to fertilize an egg, that that really is not an embryo.

Mr. Speaker, that is ridiculous. Take a look at this picture of Dolly the sheep. Everybody knows that Dolly is a clone. Dolly was made by fertilizing a sheep egg with a cell taken from the mammary gland of another sheep. It took 277 tries before they got a clone that worked. Now she is 5 years old.

Those who argue that cloned human embryos are not really embryos might as well argue that Dolly is not a sheep. That is ridiculous.

Cloning human beings is wrong. Eighty-eight percent of the American people do not want scientists to create human embryos for the purpose of experimentation, harvesting and destruction. We will be voting later today to ban all human cloning. Support the Weldon-Stupak bill.

IRS COMMISSIONER ROSSOTTI

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. The legal group Judicial Watch has charged IRS Commissioner Rossotti with conflict of interest involving a company he founded. Rossotti still owns stock in the company, his wife works there, and Rossotti buys software from this company for the IRS.

That is right. Rossotti buys from Rossotti. If that is not enough to roast