

lines and help lines to ensure that VA resources in this area are being utilized effectively and efficiently.

The bill also creates a new chiropractic services program within the VA, at thirty separate medical centers. The plan is to have this new program operating nationwide within five years.

Finally, this bill establishes a national commission on VA nursing for the purpose of improving recruitment and retention of nurses within the VA Health Care System.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation provides several much needed improvements to the system that delivers medical care to the veterans of our Armed Forces. The VA health care system offers some of the finest specialist care in the world, particularly for those veterans with spinal cord injuries and those requiring prosthetic devices. VA research in these fields is a cutting edge and second to none. I am pleased that this legislation offers additional options to these specialty care veterans to facilitate their day-to-day living.

Moreover, the VA nursing staffing issue has reached acute proportions. This bill seeks to create an institutional response to this staffing shortage which attempts to offer a long-term solution to this critical problem.

For these reasons Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to lend their wholehearted support to this important legislation.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2792, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HANSEN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kansas?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2792, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL DAY OF RECONCILIATION

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 184) providing for a National Day of Reconciliation, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 184

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring). That on a day of reconciliation selected jointly by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate, and with the Chaplain of the House of Representatives and the Chaplain of the Senate in attendance—

(1) the two Houses of the Congress shall assemble in the Hall of the House of Representatives at a time when the two Houses are not in session; and

(2) during this assembly, the Members of the two Houses may gather to humbly seek the blessings of Providence for forgiveness, reconciliation, unity, and charity for all people of the United States, thereby assisting the Nation to realize its potential as the champion of hope, the vindicator of the defenseless, and the guardian of freedom.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE).

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this is a resolution that calls for the two Houses of Congress to assemble in this Chamber at a time when the House and the Senate are not in session and that during this assembly the Members of the two Houses may gather to humbly seek the blessings of Providence for forgiveness, reconciliation, unity, and charity for all people of the United States, thereby assisting the Nation to realize its potential as a champion of hope, the vindicator of the defenseless, and the guardian of freedom.

That is pretty much the sum and substance and essence of this resolution. I think given all we have been experiencing over the last few weeks, it is clear that the purposes of this resolution are very good indeed and would be beneficial to our Nation.

The author of the resolution is the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), our majority whip; and I understand we have now 72 cosponsors, with good bipartisan representation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the author of the resolution.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time; and I thank my good friend from California for bringing this resolution to the floor. This is a resolution that is coauthored by me and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL).

Mr. Speaker, we have seldom seen a time in which it would have been more fitting than the present moment for America's leaders to come together as a unified body before God and demonstrate that we seek grace, guidance, wisdom, and reconciliation for our Nation.

In the work ahead, the old labels and divisions over which we have quarreled must be set aside to accomplish the larger purpose to which we are called as a Nation. We believe that this resolution has the capacity to draw us together and to cultivate the meaning, direction, and inspiration needed to achieve our special potential in the destiny of nations.

I have from time to time disagreed vigorously with my colleagues across the aisle. We have had honest disagreements and crossed swords over both practical and philosophical points. But I speak from my heart when I say that my firmest friends and most committed adversaries can all join me in supporting this initiative, because it is solely designed to advance the Nation towards a goal that all of us share.

Every Member should approach this resolution with fresh and open eyes. This resolution is without any partisan aspect, motivation, or effect. Its aim is the betterment of every American as our country draws closer to the high aspirations our Founders outlined for us.

It was specifically drafted to include everyone and to exclude no one. The National Day of Reconciliation acknowledges that we are all equal before God and, consequently, it is tailored to accommodate the specific face of every Member. It is ecumenical in substance and universal in its aspirations. Everyone can confidently embrace the spirit and purpose of reconciliation we advance with this proposal. We make way for all faiths.

Our goal is to have every Member join us in seeking reconciliation. Our victory is to see every Member and Senator taking part in keeping and practicing with their own personal faith, judgment, and beliefs. Our fondest wish is for every elected representative to gather and petition God for his blessing, stewardship, and forgiveness. We want to approach him to reconcile our country.

While we are all welcome and encouraged to take part, no one is obligated under this resolution to do anything at all. The National Day of Reconciliation compels no action of any kind. Participation is entirely voluntary.

Let me reiterate that point to dispel any misguided concerns. Members can support this resolution with the certain knowledge that it places no obligations on anyone. All it will do is to permit Members and Senators to come together voluntarily in private fellowship within the House Chamber to seek repentance and reconciliation for our Nation. What we seek is an open climate of communal prayer and repentance.

So many of us have gathered meaning and direction for our own lives through power of prayer. Both Houses of Congress acknowledge this by beginning each legislative day with an invocation.

We started work on this resolution many months ago. We were looking for a way to reconcile our country. Recent events have only deepened our conviction that reconciliation is needed and necessary. In the wake of September 11, the imperative underlying a National Day of Reconciliation takes on a heightened sense of urgency and weight.

In the past, the American governments have responded to periods of danger and uncertainty by seeking God's blessing and forgiveness.

One of our greatest Presidents healed a horrible national wound by leading us toward the pathway to reconciliation. He explained that by embracing our founding principles and seeking God's blessing, our Nation could overcome a great crisis. Abraham Lincoln held the Nation to account in 1863 as he urged Americans to reflect on all we had inherited and what was expected of us. He said:

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other Nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God.

We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.

Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and reserving grace, too proud to pray to the God thus!

It behooves us, then to humble ourselves before the offended power, to confess our national sins and pray for clemency and forgiveness.

Abraham Lincoln was right. If we want America to be united under the fellowship of reconciliation, we must humble ourselves before God and ask to be healed and brought together.

We have heard suggestions that other spaces within the Capitol would be more fitting and appropriate venues than the House Chamber. I could not disagree more strongly. Please let me explain why.

Our House Chamber is the symbolic heart of American democracy. It is right here that we do our work. It is here that decisions bearing heavily on our destiny are decided. It is here that all three branches of our government assemble during moments of great national gravity.

From right up there, Presidents speak to America. And in here we can come together to demonstrate to the country that America's leaders have the strength, compassion, and courage to seek guidance and forgiveness. We should not be afraid to admit that America's work requires God's interest, assistance, and guidance.

Our purpose in introducing this resolution is threefold. We believe that by setting aside a day for the leaders of our Nation to come together in prayer, we will enhance our unity, send a powerful petition for guidance and wisdom, and, by humbly gathering, send a strong message to the American people that their leaders earnestly wish to bring about a national reconciliation so that we can go forward as a united people.

Members should also know that this resolution raises no constitutional bar-

riers. It has been vetted thoroughly and poses no challenges to law.

To alleviate another concern, Members should know that we intend the entire scope of the Day of Reconciliation to occur without TV broadcast. Members should have no fear that this format could breach their privacy. Privacy in worship will be respected by this gathering because it will not be recorded. It is a chance for America's leaders to approach God.

We know we have all fallen short of our potential. We know that our Nation has also failed to achieve all that it could. Members can take a firm step toward realizing those twin objectives by supporting this resolution.

Remember, all we ask is that willing Members be permitted to gather to humbly seek the blessings of Providence for forgiveness, reconciliation, unity, and charity for all the people of the United States, thereby assisting the Nation to realize its potential as the champion of hope, the vindicator of the defenseless, and the guardian of freedom.

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A national day of reconciliation will be good for each of us as elected officials and men and women, but it will be even better for America. It is time to come together, and I believe that this resolution will be an immeasurable help in solidifying our country.

So, Mr. Speaker, for that reason I ask Members to support the resolution.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL).

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

I had not realized that this resolution was coming up so quick. I do not have anything written, but I would like to say that I think it is an important piece of legislation. I was very glad to support it. I think the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) is absolutely right in what he said, the reasons for it. There has never been a time when I think that we need our leaders to stand up and pray and to be humbled before God, to humble ourselves before God and ask for wisdom.

The fact that this is being done when we are not in session I think is important. That means the cameras are not on us. That means the press is not here. So we are not doing it for pious reasons; we are doing it because we sincerely hope that Members will come here on their own in a voluntary way and humbly ask God for guidance and wisdom to do what we should be doing, not only as representatives of this country in our districts, but, what do you want us to do?

Oftentimes, in our deliberation as Members of Congress, as husbands, as individuals, we oftentimes, especially in America and among successful peo-

ple, we think that when there is a problem, we need to get together and we need to have a solution. We need to get some money; we need to start a program. But the fact is, oftentimes we forget to ask God what is on His mind, what does He want. It would be good that if we could close these doors, get everybody out of here except Members and come and pray and ask for wisdom, and I think it is appropriate. I think that it is not a new precedent that we are starting here, and I think that it is important that we pass this resolution.

There is a wonderful Scripture verse in the New Testament that says that, and I am paraphrasing, we are to pray for the kings and the leaders so that the people can live peaceful and tranquil lives in all Godliness and dignity. I think the reason why God asks the people to pray for leaders is not because they are better; it is because that they are leaders, and they have the power to make things good or make things bad.

When we look around the world today, there are a lot of things that are going on that are pretty rotten. There are probably 40,000 people that will die today, or close to it, from war and hunger and civil disturbance and lack of immunizations and lack of food and clean water. The kinds of conflicts that are going on in 40 different countries right now, even our own country, should tell people that we need to pray for our leaders.

They have this great saying in Africa that says that when the elephants fight, the grass dies, which means when the big people fight, when the leaders fight, the people perish, and they take it on the chin. That is why they ask for people to pray for their leaders. They also ask the leaders, us, people like us all over the world, to humble ourselves before God and ask for guidance and wisdom and to be the kind of people that God wants us to be.

I think this is what this resolution is all about. This is the reason why I went in on it. The only stipulation I made with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) was that we do it privately, to not do it in front of the TV cameras. We do not do it in public. We do not do it to bring publicity to ourselves. That is the worst kind of thing to do. I think this legislation addresses that.

For that reason, I support it and I hope the whole body supports it.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. SHOWS).

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I certainly support this resolution. I think it is something that every weekend that I go home I ask my constituents in our church, the Bethel Baptist Missionary Church, to pray for not only me and the decisions I have to

make, but to pray for the President and the other leaders in Congress. Because I really do mean that. I do not think there is anything stronger than prayer.

We have seen what it has done for this country during George Washington's time and President Lincoln's time, and FDR and World War I. What has always brought this country through is prayer and asking that we just help each other. I can remember some times in my own life that we have had prayer and that prayer has been answered. I think if the leaders come together, I think it is the right thing to do.

I can remember when the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) talked to me about this suspension bill coming to the House and, like the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) said, coming to the House floor and closing the doors and turning off the TV cameras, because some of us like to maybe perform for the TV and for the audience out there. But this ought to be from the heart. Because right now, we did not know at the time that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) was talking about this that we were going to be going through these tragic events we are going through right now. So I thank him for this, and I certainly support this suspension resolution.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 4½ minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the chief deputy whip and a cosponsor of this resolution.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, when people tell me, as they often do, I am praying for you, I almost always say to them, it is the most important thing you could do. Just as the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. SHOWS) mentioned, prayer does matter; and those of us who come today to support this resolution will be joined by others when this resolution is passed, to come to the floor specifically on that day to pray.

The tragic events of September 11 affected all the people in our country, including Members of Congress. Prayer is one way to heal our Nation and to heal ourselves.

I stand today in support of the resolution which allows Members of both bodies to have the opportunity to come to this floor, as has been often repeated, while the cameras are off for a day of prayer and reconciliation. This resolution provides an opportunity, a gathering place, for elected officials who wish to seek God's blessings and guidance for our country. It does not force any Member of this body or the other body to participate in a day of reconciliation; it merely makes this place available for that purpose.

Our Nation has a strong background in faith and worship by government of-

officials. It is a background that other speakers, including the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), have already talked about. George Washington established a day of thanksgiving and prayer as the first President. Every President since President Kennedy has said a prayer just outside the doors of this Chamber before entering the House to give the State of the Union address. The House Chaplain opens every session of Congress with a morning prayer. Above the podium, Mr. Speaker, are engraved the words, "In God We Trust." During the Civil War, President Lincoln set aside several days of national mourning and prayer. In the 1950s and in the 1980s, Congress passed resolutions providing for national days of prayer; and later, those resolutions became public laws.

By praying together to a higher being in all different ways that any Member of either this House or the other body would want to do, we unify our Nation; we heal our wounds; and we do, as I tell people so often, the most important thing we could do.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of those who have spoken, and I strongly urge the adoption of this resolution relative to national reconciliation.

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Speaker, it was before the events of September 11 and its aftermath that a diverse group of House Members—including, Democrats and Republicans, Members from different regions, different backgrounds, and widely, differing viewpoints—began discussing the idea of drafting a resolution that focuses this often-contentious body and the country at large on the higher purpose that unites us all as American citizens and as children of God.

Little did we know how profound the need for such a focus would soon be.

The resolution we consider tonight asks that we seek the blessings of Providence for forgiveness, reconciliation, unity, and charity for every American in order to fulfill our country's purpose in bringing hope to the defenseless and freedom to the oppressed.

Our country is, in fact, the hope and inspiration of countless millions of people held in oppressed circumstances throughout much of the world.

At times, we Americans differ bitterly over policies. We have our own struggles over justice and opportunity for all. For more than two centuries, we have fought to make the promise of our Constitution a reality for every citizen, regardless of race, religion, gender, or national origin.

Yet, through it all, no country in the world has made a greater contribution or greater sacrifice to advance the cause of freedom and human dignity.

Tonight, our Nation and the free world face one of the greatest tests in our history. Let us stand together, in reconciliation and unity, as the "champion of hope, vindicator of the defenseless, and the guardian of freedom," here in America and across the world.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HANSEN). Are there further requests for

time? If not the question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 184, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROPERTY PROTECTION PROGRAM FOR POWER MARKETING ADMINISTRATIONS

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2924) to provide authority to the Federal Power Marketing Administrations to reduce vandalism and destruction of property, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2924

SECTION 1. PROPERTY PROTECTION PROGRAM FOR POWER MARKETING ADMINISTRATIONS.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—The Administrators of the Western Area Power Administration, the Southwestern Power Administration, and the Southeastern Power Administration may each carry out programs to reduce vandalism, theft, and destruction of property that is under their jurisdiction.

(b) *PROVISION OF REWARDS.*—In carrying out a program under this section, each Administrator referred to in subsection (a) is authorized to provide rewards (including cash rewards) to individuals who provide information or evidence leading to the arrest and prosecution of individuals causing damage to, or loss of, Federal property under their jurisdiction. The amount of any one such reward paid to any individual may not exceed a value of \$1,000.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT).

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the Power Marketing Administration's Western Area Power Administration, Southwestern Power Administration, and Southeastern Power Administration are responsible for maintaining and operating over 18,000 miles of high-voltage electrical transmission lines, providing an important contribution to the movement of electrical power across our country. They also have hundreds of substations and communications sites, most located in remote areas. These facilities have been subjected to increased incidents of vandalism.

This bill would give the agencies authority to curb this threat to Federal property and our Nation's power infrastructure by vesting them with the authority to pay rewards to individuals that offer information leading to prosecution of vandals. These rewards