

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Thursday, March 8, 2001

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, Holy One of Israel, only by Your prophetic Spirit do we come to understand ourselves and our children.

Our behavior no more than our prayer reveals the whole of us. Enable us to uncover the many layers of our own being before You. And may we always rejoice in the self-revelation of others.

The work of Your Spirit upon us and within us is an awesome doing; so personal, so patient, so caring, so loving. Make us more attentive to Your movement within us through personal prayer and reflection. May we respond to Your inspiration with alacrity and gratitude.

Help us to recognize the work of Your Spirit in others, and guide us by this same Spirit to listen deeply to others, especially our children. You are our saving Lord, now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. 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. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker 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. 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The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.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. Will the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HILL) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HILL 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. There will be five 1-minute notices on each side.

TAX RELIEF IS ABOUT JOB SECURITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

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

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, President Bush has proposed a package of tax relief that includes across-the-board tax relief for everyone. His plan even takes 6 million Americans off the tax rolls all together. It is a fair and balanced proposal that will certainly benefit hard-working Americans and offer them more flexibility on how they want to spend their money.

One thing America offers is opportunity for all. That is why our plan does not seek to redistribute wealth, like some Democrats wish to do. We realize that everyone who pays taxes ought to get relief. There must be an incentive for Americans to create jobs and businesses. Freedom and capitalism is why our country is the world's greatest Nation.

Our legislation gives back some of what taxpayers have overpaid to the government so that they can get a new washer and dryer or get their children new school clothes or even pay some of the college tuition or car bills that cost so much nowadays. The bottom line is that it is the taxpayers' money. They can spend it much better than anyone in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans are going to provide tax relief to all Americans. The President and leaders in Congress are trying to reach out to the opponents of our plan in order to foster a bipartisan agreement without compromising the needs of the taxpayer.

TIME FOR A NATIONAL SALES TAX

(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, I will vote today for President Bush's tax cut. But cutting taxes, income taxes, is not enough. It is time to replace the income tax with a national retail sales tax.

Think about it. Our income Tax Code rewards dependency, subsidizes illegitimacy, penalizes work and achieve-

ment. Beam me up. It is time to let freedom truly ring in America. And I ask my colleagues, who can truly be free in America if the government controls our income and our labor? America should control their own financial destiny.

I yield back the fact that the income tax levied on all citizens is a Communist idea first proposed by Karl Marx and now practiced in the United States of America.

VOTING FOR ACROSS-THE-BOARD TAX RELIEF

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

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the President included maximum debt reduction, strengthening Social Security and Medicare and a \$1 trillion budget reserve to pay for things that may come up, like agriculture.

I am also very pleased that he is strengthening our families by lifting the burden of death tax that makes it hard to pass on the farm or family business to the next generation, addressing the marriage penalty and doubling the per-child tax credit.

But today we vote on an across-the-board tax relief for our families. As I travel around southwest Minnesota talking to families and farmers and small businesses, they tell me that we need to give the economy a boost right now to keep it moving in the right direction. This will provide real money that families can use to pay down credit card debt or to spend a little less time working for the government and a little more time with their own families.

It is because of this that this Kennedy will be voting for across-the-board tax relief today.

BUDGET FIRST, TAX CUT LATER

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

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, the House will take up and consider a major tax cut today without ever having first adopted a budget to see if the tax cut will fit within that budget. No American family, no business would engage in major spending without first adopting a budget.

The Congressional Budget Act of 1974 requires the Congress to adopt a budget

□ 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.

resolution before votes on tax cuts. The 33 members of the Blue Dog coalition in the House will lead the fight today for a budget first, asking this House to commit to the letter and the spirit of the Budget Act.

Democrats want the largest tax cut we can afford, but we do not know how much we can afford until we first have a budget debate and determine what the budget resolution of this Congress provides for. Then we will know how big a tax cut we can afford.

HONORING JANET RAY WEININGER

(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, I am pleased to honor the compassion of Janet Ray Weininger, founder of Wings of Valor, a charity which provides humanitarian assistance to the people of Nicaragua. Organized by Janet in 1998 as a result of the horrific natural disasters in Central America, Wings of Valor brought food, clothing, shelter and assistance to the most remote towns and villages in Nicaragua.

Janet was appalled by what she saw and what she heard from friends there, so she knew she had to do something to help bring relief. She gained the help of the Air Force Reserve unit at Homestead, Florida, and with their assistance was able to gather needed provisions and distribute them to the people of Nicaragua.

Three years later, Wings of Valor continues to minister to the needs of the Nicaraguan people; and because of her continued and selfless charity, Janet Ray Weininger deserves the recognition of the U.S. Congress and, indeed, the American people.

WRITE A BUDGET, THEN GIVE TAX CUTS

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

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, a politician's first instinct is to promise everything to everybody. It is a lot easier for politicians to say yes to everybody and put off the tough choices until later. That is why this House set up a budget process that forces us to make tough choices between our competing priorities. It is the same process every responsible American family and business follows. Before they start spending money, they sit down and figure out how much they have.

In a perfect world we would have all the money we needed to take care of all our priorities. But this is not a perfect world. We have to make tough choices. If we want to give people bigger tax cuts, we will have to take some money out of Social Security and

Medicare. If we want to pay down more debt, we will have to restrain spending or tax cuts.

Let us do the hard work first. Let us write a budget, laying out our priorities, then let us give people tax cuts. President Bush and the Senate are debating tax cuts within a budget framework and we should be doing that in the House as well.

SUDAN PEACE ACT

(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, even now, in the 21st century, atrocities are being committed in other countries that boggle the mind, and not always by individual terrorist groups. They are also being committed by governments.

Yesterday, I joined my colleagues, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), in announcing the reintroduction of the Sudan Peace Act. What is going on in the Sudan is as bad as anything ever committed by any government anywhere: slavery, actual slavery, rape campaigns, starvation campaigns, intentional bombings of churches, schools, hospitals, markets, and villages are happening. This is how the radical Sudanese Khartoum regime intends to put down the Christians, the Animists in the south.

The world community has completely failed to stand up to the Sudanese government. Our former Secretary of State, Madelyn Albright, said the crisis in the Sudan "wasn't marketable." But yesterday, Secretary Powell indicated renewed, and I think heartfelt, interest in standing up to the Sudanese.

Let us pass the Sudan Peace Act quickly and work with this administration to bring peace in that war-torn land.

BUDGET FIRST, TAX CUTS LATER

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I gladly join my colleagues to ask this Congress to do what every American family does, at least those who do keep their heads above the water, and that is provide a budget and then determine how much they can spend—weekly, monthly and yearly for their families.

The projection of over \$5 trillion as a surplus is not a reality. We do not know what can happen tomorrow. And frankly, this fiscally irresponsible vote today does not answer the question of whether or not we have a budget to help students go to school with Pell Grants, to provide dollars for histori-

cally black colleges and Spanish-serving colleges or institutions of higher learning across the Nation or institutions serving native Americans.

Do we have the Medicare guaranteed-drug prescription benefit that our seniors need? Or are we giving the 1 percent of Americans, the wealthiest, the highest tax cut without again determining what we need in order to provide for investments in our nation? Do we have enough money for our veterans, who have given of themselves, and the many families of veterans, and those families left behind by our service people who have given the ultimate sacrifice? We need a budget before we need a tax cut.

AMERICANS DESERVE TAX RELIEF

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

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, working Americans deserve tax relief. The American family's tax burden has now reached its highest level since World War II. In fact, the average American will have to work 129 days to pay off their total tax bill. Mr. Speaker, no one, regardless of income level, should have to pay more than one-third of their hard-earned paycheck in taxes to the Federal Government.

Americans will send \$5.6 trillion more to Washington over the next 10 years than is needed to run the government. This surplus is the direct result of the diligence and hard work of the American people. The choice for this Congress is simple: keep the money for more Washington bureaucracy or return a portion of the surplus to working men and women. Mr. Speaker, I choose the people. Under the tax cut proposal, every American that pays income taxes will receive significant tax relief.

Mr. Speaker, this bill puts money back in the hands of Americans. Make no mistake, this is real tax relief for real people. Mr. Speaker, now more than ever Americans need to keep more of their hard-earned money in their pockets. The American people are overtaxed, and I look forward to voting today to return a portion of their money back to them. Taxpayers have earned it, and our slowing economy deserves it.

□ 1015

WHITHER THE TAX CUT

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

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, the American public is not fooled by the charade before us today. Many in this Chamber claim that we have a \$5 trillion surplus. The fact is this: We have