The House met at 12:30 p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE
A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:
S. 295. An act to provide emergency relief to small businesses affected by significant increases in the prices of heating oil, natural gas, propane, and kerosene, and for other purposes.
S. 395. An act to ensure the independence and nonpartisan operation of the Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 106–554, the Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, appoints the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) to the Board of Trustees for the Center for Russian Leadership Development.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES
The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2001, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS CONVENES FIRST BIKE SUMMIT IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I came to Congress to make the Federal Government a better partner in the creating of more livable communities, communities that are safe, healthy, and economically secure. Today, transportation and energy are issues in every community across America. These problems are the results of countless individual decisions.

Mr. Speaker, this week a group of activists dedicated to making America a better place are gathering here in Washington, D.C. The League of American Bicyclists is convening the first annual Bike Summit. I would like to congratulate them on their efforts. As the spokesperson for the Bipartisan Congressional Bicycle Caucus, I am confident that this bicycle community is coming to Washington, D.C. to make their voice heard.

Cyclists have a long and effective history of advocacy in this country. At the turn of the century, bicycling was fun, fast, convenient; and it was modern. The problem was there was no good place to ride these new-fangled contraptions. As a result, there was increasing demand for new, safe bike routes. In response, the Good Roads Movement was launched here in Washington, D.C. after a successful effort to lobby Congress for a $10,000 grant to study the possibility of a paved-road system. Well, the rest is history.

The bike advocates from around the country who are waiting to get to school on their own. It is an excellent transportation choice for communities for adults; and it is an excellent way, if we do our part, to make our communities more livable, more safe and economically secure.

TAX RELIEF THIS YEAR
The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WELDON of Florida). Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to call the House’s attention to the current debate about retroactive tax cuts for all American families. Some of my colleagues may have missed some important developments over the past few days that reflect what I believe, Mr. Speaker, is a major shift in the conventional wisdom about President Bush’s tax cut proposal. Forgive me for being indelicate, Mr. Speaker, but everyone today seems to be singing the President’s tune.

Mr. Speaker, first our Democratic colleagues said that the President’s tax cut proposal was a risky scheme. My colleagues may remember last year that most of them voted against a tax cut that was just 70 percent of the total that they are now supporting as an alternative to the President’s plan. They may not want us to remember their old
position, Mr. Speaker, but the facts are plain. Their message on tax relief has definitely changed.

This weekend the President of the United States and even Senator KENT CONRAD both said, “We ought to act now on tax relief.” The momentum in the political debate continues to move in this direction, Mr. Speaker, namely toward larger, retroactive tax cuts this year. Even the toughest critics of tax relief said if you are going to use tax reductions as a method for economic stimulus, you must act quickly to have any effect whatsoever. Tax cuts will be meaningless to this year’s economy, Mr. Speaker, unless they take effect this year. Our faltering economy is not just about a jittery stock market. There is no need to be as phony as they are in the Senate about the benefits they promised that were not reciprocal but were one way. The American people have not been deceived and now on tax relief. The momentum in the political debate continues to move in this direction, Mr. Speaker, namely toward larger, retroactive tax cuts this year. Even the toughest critics of tax relief said if you are going to use tax reductions as a method for economic stimulus, you must act quickly to have any effect whatsoever. Tax cuts will be meaningless to this year’s economy, Mr. Speaker, unless they take effect this year. Our faltering economy is not just about a jittery stock market. There is no need to be as phony as they are in the Senate about the benefits they promised that were not reciprocal but were one way. The American people have not been deceived.

Mr. Speaker, this fire is cited in the United States Almanac because it is the worst industrial fire in the history of the Nation. Business at the time was only concerned with the bottom line. Fire inspections and precautions were woefully inadequate. The Triangle factory had never conducted a fire drill. That building was supposed to be fireproof. There was no oversight and there certainly was no OSHA. Mr. Speaker, we have all heard the debates of the past few weeks about protecting the workers. The employees were not in labor unions either, or just a few of them. There was no one there to protect them or speak for them. They were exploited and abused; and while we talk about working conditions in Honduras, in China, and well we should, right here in major suburbs and cities of this country, we know that the Department of Labor knows best about what goes on behind those locked doors right in the heart of New York City.

Mr. Speaker, in the wake of this tragedy people throughout the Nation demanded restitution, justice, and action that would safeguard the vulnerable and oppressed. It is unfortunate that it took events such as the Triangle Fire to demand change. There were massive protests by people angry at the lack of concern and the greed that had made the Triangle fire possible. As a direct result of this horrible fire, there was a substantial effort to alleviate the most dangerous aspects of sweatshop manufacturing in New York and throughout the nation. On February 17, 2001, the last survivor of the factory blaze, Rose Freedman, passed away at the age of 107. It is important that we not let the memory of the Triangle Fire be extinguished from our memories. It is for this reason that I have introduced House Concurrent Resolution 81 with my friend from New York, Mr. KING. This resolution recognizes the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the Triangle Fire.

Mr. Speaker, this past Sunday, March 25, came and went. March 25 is the 90th anniversary of the tragic Triangle fire, an event that changed the course of American history. On that day in 1911, a fire broke out at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory, located on the top floors of the Asch Building on the corner of Greene Street and Washington Place in New York City.

The fire swept through the top 3 stories of the building in only ½ hour. When the fire ended, 146 of the 475 Triangle factory employees had died. Not all died in the fire. Many jumped to their deaths from the 8th, 9th, and 10th floors rather than face the flames. It is cited in the U.S. Almanac because it is the worst industrial fire in the history of American industry.

Most of the Triangle factory workers were women. Most of the workers were recent European, Jewish or Italian immigrants, some as young as 11 years old. These young women had come to the United States with their families to seek a better life. But the harsh realities of working in a sweatshop was their reality.

Business at the time was only concerned with the bottom line. Fire inspections and precautions were woefully inadequate. The Triangle factory had never conducted a fire drill. That building was supposed to be fireproof. There was no oversight and there certainly was no OSHA. Most of the employees were not in labor unions. There was no one there to protect them from being exploited and abused. However, in the wake of this tragedy, people throughout the nation demanded restitution, justice, and action that would safeguard the vulnerable and oppressed. It is unfortunate that it took events such as the Triangle Fire to demand change. There were massive protests by people angry at the lack of concern and the greed that had made the Triangle fire possible.

As a direct result of this horrible fire, there was a substantial effort to alleviate the most dangerous aspects of sweatshop manufacturing in New York and throughout the nation. On February 17, 2001, the last survivor of the factory blaze, Rose Freedman, passed away at the age of 107. It is important that we not let the memory of the Triangle Fire be extinguished from our memories.

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In my mind, this resolution is very simple and very straightforward. I taught my students about the fire in just this manner when I taught history class. But apparently, for reasons that escape me, it is just too controversial for today. And that is a shame.

In 1911, the Triangle Fire brought attention to the many serious problems facing factory employees and paved the way for worker protection laws.

In the year 2001, we cannot even recognize the memory of the fire and its victims on the House floor. But even worse than not considering a simple, non-binding resolution, is that we are letting history repeat itself.

The truth is that young workers around the world are dying needlessly in burning factories.