The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CULBERTSON).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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


I hereby appoint the Honorable John B. BEREUTER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of Janu-
ary 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 par-
ties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to no to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

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

PROJECT IMPACT

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, numerous natural events of the past few months, including the earthquake in the State of Washington and Trop-
ical Storm Allison of just recent days in Texas and Louisiana, have underscored our need for disaster prepared-
ness.

What we have learned from these events is that we can in fact save lives and money by making investments up front to protect our communities. What we have learned is that what we do in the beginning by hardening the sites, preparing people’s responses, moving out of harm’s way, has an over-
whelming payback, a payback not just in money but in lives saved and injury and human misery avoided.

As was pointed out in yesterday’s Washington Post, spending money in disaster mitigation pays off. It has often been cited that in the great flood of 1993, Charles County, Missouri, suf-
fered $26 million in damages. However, the same area, after a significant

buyout and a similar flood 2 years later, cost only $30,000 in damage. Our friends at the Federal Emer-
gency Management Agency believe that in the past 8 years the buyout pro-
grams of the Federal government have received a 200 percent rate of return in investment in disaster mitigation.

It is frustrating that, in the wake of these tragedies, the Bush administra-
tion and its Office of Management and Budget have proposed cutting funds for several of these Federal mitigation programs, including FEMA’s Project Impact.

Mr. Speaker, I have had significant opportunity to interact with the men and women working with Project Im-
pact. This was one of the creations of former Director James Lee Witt that has in fact earned him international recognition.

I have seen that, contrary to the ad-
ministration’s assertion that Project Impact has not proven effective, I have seen Project Impact leverage even a modest Federal investment in my own community to be a lynchpin for addi-
tional commercial investments, as well as careful planning and consideration by local government.

I had an opportunity last fall to ad-
dress the Conference of Project Impact Volunteers. One of the most important aspects of this program is the develop-
ment of the human infrastructure to aid in disaster mitigation. It is hard to imagine a Federal investment doing more than to produce these dedicated volunteers making the difference in making these programs work.

Project Impact is not a grant pro-
gram. It provides seed money to build disaster-resistant communities. It is a commonsense approach to help com-

munities protect themselves. It offers expertise and technical assistance. It puts the latest technology and mitiga-
tion practices into the hands of local communities, and most important, it brings people together to understand how they can solve their own problems.

Started just 5 years ago with seven pilot projects across the country, there are now 2,500 Project Impact business partners, including Federal agencies like NASA, that are working in 250 Project Impact communities.

Mr. Speaker, Joe Allbaugh, a long-
time friend and Bush appointee, the new Director of FEMA, has pointed out that he is deeply impressed by the “swift and tangible results,” his words, of buy-out programs and other efforts to mitigate the cost of disasters before they strike. I know from the news ac-
counts that he has taken his budget concerns to the bean-counters at OMB who need to understand the potential benefits of continuing this program.

I must commend the Bush adminis-
tration for understanding the potential of using reform in other contexts. I ap-
preciate and applaud their putting money in the budget that signifies re-
form of the National Flood Insurance Program.

The gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) and I for the last 2 years have been working to reform the flood insurance program so it is no longer subsidizing people to live in areas where it is repeatedly shown that it is dangerous and inappropriate.

I hope the administration will build on this notion of reform that they are proposing in flood insurance and carry it over in Project Impact. We cannot afford to lose it.

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 8 minutes a.m.) the House stood in recess until 10 a.m. 

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Lawson Anderson, Canon Pastor, Episcopal Diocese of Ar-
kanas, Little Rock, Arkansas, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray. Gracious God, as we pre-
pare in the week ahead to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of this Re-
public, we commend this Nation to Your mercy and forgiveness. We pray that being guided by Your providence we may live securely in Your peace.

Grant to the President of the United States, to the Members of this Con-
gress, and to all in authority wisdom and strength to know and to do Your will. Fill them with the love of truth and righteousness and make them ever mindful of their calling to serve this country in Your fear. Guide them as they shape the laws for maintaining a just and effective plan for our govern-
ment.