

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—*Wednesday, April 2, 2008*

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Reverend Elliott L. Foss, National Chaplain, American Legion, offered the following prayer:

God, bless America. Continue to shine Your face on us, as we need Your guidance and protection now, more than ever. God, bless America, our President, our national, State, and community leaders as they seek to serve our citizens.

God, bless America. Bless these folks here today. I ask You to give them grace and peace, that as they seek Your face, impart to them Your wisdom, Your courage, and Your hope, that they will do Your will at all times.

Please, God, bless America and our citizens who seek to live in peace and harmony as "One Nation under God." Encourage us to do the right thing, at the right time, for the right reason.

May Your love surround our military and their families each and every day and please, God, bless America and bring our troops safely home when all is done.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Madam 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 Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Madam 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The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.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 South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 980. An act to amend the Controlled Substances Act to address online pharmacies.

WELCOMING REV. ELLIOTT L. FOSS

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Madam Speaker, Members of the House, it's a great honor today to introduce my friend, the Reverend Elliott Foss, to the chamber and to the folks who are our visitors today. Elliott has been a friend of mine for a number of years, almost going on two decades, in fact. Elliott was appointed the National Chaplain of the American Legion on August 30, 2007, by the National Commander, Marty Conatser. The appointment was made following the closing session of the 89th National Convention in Reno, Nevada.

He is a retired U.S. Navy Command Master Chief and Hospital Corpsman from the Submarine Division, and served during the Vietnam War and through the Gulf wars. Elliott attended Candler Seminary School of Ministry at Emory University. He also served as pastor to churches in Maine, Virginia, Connecticut, Florida, and Georgia. He is a Georgia resident and is an ordained Southern Baptist Minister and Chaplain, even though he has been the minister in four different Methodist churches in my district.

Elliott is a member of the American Legion Post 317 in coastal Georgia, where he serves as Post Commander. Reverend Foss also has served as the 8th District Vice Commander and as Post 9 Brunswick Commander. Chaplain Foss serves as the Department of Georgia Chaplain for now 7 years. He has held numerous leadership positions at the post, State and national levels during the past 11 years.

He and his wife, Arlene, reside in Kingsland, Georgia. I first got to know him when he was the chaplain of the Seaman's House and worked with peo-

ple and sailors from all over the world and members of our own merchant marine. He is a great guy, a great man of the Lord, and we are very proud to have him as chaplain of the day today.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain requests for up to 15 1-minute speeches on each side.

THE DREAM OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING

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

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, on Friday, April 4, this Nation will observe the 40th anniversary of the tragic assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King was a great American who fought injustice; not just social injustice, but economic injustice. His beliefs 40 years later have not been fulfilled. His dream is still alive, but not fulfilled.

In his time, he fought a war and was against a war in Asia that this country was fighting and losing, and costing us much in terms of human sacrifice, as well as financial sacrifice. We see that same situation today, as we have the cost in Iraq taking away from our cities and our people. He fought for working people who were working hard but not moving forward. Today, we see working people in the middle-class continuing to having their power eroded and taken away from them.

I ask each person in this House and each person in America to think of Dr. King this week and to think of Dr. King every day and keep his dream alive and move this country forward with economic and social justice, for we need it more now than ever.

TAX AND SPEND HURTS ECONOMY

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, right now Americans are feeling the pinch from rising gas prices, health care costs, and food prices. There has been a slowdown in the growth of our economy. In light of this, it seems downright wrong for Congress to be proposing a budget that will raise \$683 billion in taxes, the largest tax increase in America's history. This will hit 116 million Americans, while spending billions more on wasteful government spending.

☐ 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.

American taxpayers will have to foot this bill if we do not stand up and protect their wallets from the Washington tax and spend machine. I support the Republican Study Committee budget, a plan that meets the needs of the American people, balances the Federal budget by 2012, fixes the AMT, addresses the runaway entitlement crisis, and does not raise \$1 of taxes on hardworking Americans. At a time when Americans pay too much at the pump, at the store, and at the hospital, it is wrong to ask them to pay more to the government.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

DEMOCRATS WANT TO WORK WITH REPUBLICANS TO HELP AMERICAN FAMILIES

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

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the American public is rightfully concerned about the future of our Nation's economy. Stagnant wages were already making it difficult for families to afford rising gas, home heating, grocery, and health care bills. Now, there is the added worry of losing their homes. The housing crisis could lead to more than 2 million homeowners losing their homes in the near future.

Fortunately, we address some of the housing concerns in the bipartisan economic stimulus plan. In that package, we expanded affordable mortgage loan opportunities through the Federal Housing Administration, and expanded financial counseling for families who are at risk of losing their homes. This was a good start, but more needs to be done. As a member of the House Financial Services Committee, I look forward to working with Chairman FRANK to move through the committee his foreclosure prevention package.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming weeks I hope that we can once again come together as Republicans and Democrats in this important legislation.

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CONGRESS IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HIGH PRICES AT THE PUMP

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, as gasoline prices rise higher at the pump, the American driver is mad and the Congress blames the oil companies. But the real culprit is Congress. Gasoline prices are rising because Congress fails to have an energy policy that encourages the development of our own resources. Instead of making it easier to obtain crude oil, Congress has decided to subsidize the special interest groups

to produce unproven, unreliable, and expensive alternative fuels, like corn-based ethanol, which now may pollute the environment more than first realized. Not to mention this idea is bad for land management and increases the cost of agricultural products. So now we have high gasoline prices and higher prices for corn products worldwide, thanks to Congress.

We are the only industrial power in the world that refuses to take advantage of its own energy resources. Congress should lift the absurd restrictions on offshore drilling, allow drilling in ANWR and stop the expensive, unnecessary regulations. This will increase production, supply, and lower costs. Otherwise, we will continue to be held hostage by third world dictators, like Chavez, and the cost of crude oil will continue to grow.

And that's just the way it is.

ON FISA, THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY HAS THE TOOLS IT NEEDS TO PROTECT NATIONAL SECURITY

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, Washington Republicans are not leveling with the American people on the immediate effects of the expiration of the Protect America Act. Despite their fear-mongering, even the Bush administration admits that it still has the ability to continue all its wide-ranging surveillance for another 6 months.

Kate Martin, Director of the Center for National Security Studies, said, "If the government learns of new individuals plotting terrorist activities, it can immediately surveil such individuals, the court can issue an order within minutes of being asked, or the government can start surveillance without a court order under the existing FISA emergency authority."

Richard Clarke said, "The President misconstrued the truth and manipulated the facts. It was wrong to suggest that warrants issued in compliance with FISA would suddenly evaporate with congressional inaction."

Mr. Speaker, our intelligence community still has every tool available that it had under the President's Protect America Act. Republicans should stop their misleading fear-mongering.

PROTECTING THE AMERICAN DREAM OF OWNING A HOME

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, our mortgage market is experiencing housing finance challenges and a credit crisis. Foreclosures are hitting an all time high. My own State of South Carolina is ranked 39th

in the Nation for home foreclosures. Mortgage and financial challenges are placing heavy burdens on American families, and the situation has forced thousands of families to lose their prized possession, their home. One person losing their home, Mr. Speaker, is one too many.

As Members of Congress, can we lend money or give credit to people? No. But we can put these families and homeowners in touch with the right people, who can provide them with information on how to escape the mortgage rift.

During the break, I held homeowner education seminars and invited local mortgage lenders and nonprofits to give free one-on-one counseling sessions to constituents with mortgage questions. The event had wonderfully qualified people on hand who were able to give information away.

Let's try to protect the American Dream of owning a home. I encourage other Members to do the same.

THE COST OF STAYING IN IRAQ IS MAKING AMERICA LESS SECURE

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

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, the war in Iraq has now gone on for more than 5 years. Those 5 years have seriously hampered our military's readiness, and the human and financial costs grow greater by the day. Eighty-eight percent of our current and former military officers believe this war has stretched our military dangerously thin, and 60 percent say it has left us weaker than at any time since Vietnam.

Pete Geren, the Secretary of the Army, said, "We are consuming our readiness as fast as we build it," and the Army Chief of Staff, General George Casey, said, "The last six-plus years at war have left our Army out of balance, consumed by the current fight, and unable to do the things we know we need to do to prepare for the future." In addition to spending hundreds of billions of dollars on this war, the cost to care for our veterans and rebuild this Army will take us decades.

While our military is standing up and facing these challenges with great dignity and professionalism, there are some here who say we need to stay the course and stay in Iraq for 100 years. This is not sustainable. This is not a plan. This is not security. We need real leadership that understands the cost of staying in Iraq and not redeploying our troops is making America less secure and not more.

CONGRATULATING TYLER HANSBROUGH OF POPLAR BLUFF, MISSOURI

(Mrs. EMERSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1