

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Wednesday, February 24, 2010

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

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

With the psalmist who sang through turbulent times, let us pray for our military and the Nation.

"I love You, Lord, my strength, my rock, my fortress, my savior. My God is a cave where I take refuge; my shield, my protection, my stronghold. The Lord is worthy of all praise, as I call out to be saved from all enemies.

"The Lord came to me because I stood aright. My hands were clean in his sight. You proved loving to those who love you. You show Yourself righteous with the righteous. With the sincere You show Yourself sincere, but the cunning You outdo in cunning; for You save a humble people, but humiliate the self-righteous.

"You, O Lord, are like a lamp. My God enlightens my darkness. With You, I can break through any barrier; with my God, I can scale any wall."

Both 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 her approval thereof.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN 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 agreed to without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 158. Concurrent resolution expressing support for the designation of an Early Detection Month for breast cancer and all forms of cancer.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the fol-

lowing title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 30. An act to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to prohibit manipulation of caller identification information.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 1-minutes on each side of the aisle.

PHILADELPHIA TRANSPORTATION GRANT WILL CREATE JOBS

(Ms. SCHWARTZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SCHWARTZ. One year after its enactment, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is creating jobs, about 2 million nationally, and making smart investments in communities across the Nation.

Last week, the City of Philadelphia received a \$17.2 million grant to develop an integrated, multicounty bicycle and pedestrian network. This network will be a unique asset to the Philadelphia region and will transform biking and pedestrian greenways in our region.

Residents will benefit greatly from this network of trails and street improvements, using them to commute to work, to go to school, to the local grocery store, and it will create new opportunities along the North Delaware Riverfront in my district for recreation as well as for residential and economic development. The fact that this project was one of just 61 projects funded out of 1,380 applications demonstrates the substantial need for such infrastructure investments nationally.

My Democratic colleagues and I are working for innovative solutions to create jobs, to promote clean and safe communities in which we live and work and raise our families.

ANNIVERSARY OF BROTHERS TO THE RESCUE SHOOTDOWN

(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, the cause for freedom suffered a deep loss yesterday with the death of political prisoner Orlando Zapata Tamayo, the latest victim of the Cuban tyranny.

And today we sadly commemorate the 1996 murder by the Cuban regime of

Carlos Costa, Armando Alejandro, Mario de la Pena, and Pablo Morales. As they searched for those who were risking their lives in the Atlantic in pursuit of freedom in the United States, Cuban military jets mercilessly shot them down in international airspace.

Some choose to ignore the brutality of the Cuban dictatorship, introducing a bill this week to lift parts of the embargo that would reward the regime.

Instead, I ask that we honor the memory of those lost to the cause of liberty in Cuba and redouble our efforts to turn their dream of a free Cuba into a reality.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, we were so hopeful as this Congress opened and seemed on track to enact comprehensive health care reform to provide access to health care for every American.

Today, I am extremely disappointed to stand here to voice my consternation and frustration over the unequal, unjust, and inexcusable treatment of the millions of Americans living in the U.S. territories that we see in the President's proposal on health care reform.

Rather than working to provide quality, affordable care to all Americans, it would leave roughly 4.5 million, a disproportionate number who would desperately want and need health care coverage, leave them out in the cold without access to the health care exchange; without the same consumer benefits that other Americans would receive; without adequate Medicaid funding; and, thus, without the same comfort and security that comes with knowing that you and your family will have the quality health care when you need it, every time you need it.

The men and women in the U.S. territories are the same as those from California to Vermont, from Florida to Wyoming who love this Nation, who bravely serve in war to defend it, and who deserve to be treated as first class citizens in every aspect of our democracy.

This proposal fails them and, by extension, fails every American who believes in equality and fairness. I call on my colleagues, as we move forward, to honor the worth and the dignity of every American.

☐ 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.

INSULT SPEECH IS A CRIME IN THE NETHERLANDS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in the Netherlands, it's against the law now to hurt somebody's feelings. Don't dare offend anyone or the speech police will cart you off to the courthouse and try you for the violation of the insensitivity laws.

Dutch lawmaker Geert Wilders made a documentary movie of real terrorist acts, real radical Islamic clerics encouraging violence in the name of hate; now, Wilders is on trial for insulting Islam. He is charged with discrimination and incitement to hatred.

The Dutch Ministry of Justice has stated, "It is irrelevant whether Wilders might prove his observations to be correct. What's relevant is his observations are illegal."

In Amsterdam, truthful insult speech is a crime. What kind of free society says truthful speech can be illegal?

Freedom of speech is a universal human right granted by God, especially if the speech is political or religious or truthful. All who believe in the human right of free speech should be offended and insulted by the insensitive words of the Amsterdam courts.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1015

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, American families in my district are struggling to make ends meet and pay for health care services. Unemployment is 16 percent. Foreclosure is the fourth in the Nation.

The proposal released by President Obama this week is a step towards a healthier future for families and small businesses. Health cost coverage should be a right, not a privilege for the few. That means no loss of coverage when you get sick; coverage for as many people as possible that is affordable; do away with unfair practices like discrimination of preexisting conditions and caps on coverage; lower drug costs for seniors and lower premiums for early retirement; and better access and stronger protection for women. Health care reform will create jobs and bring down the deficit.

In my State of California, Anthem Blue Cross proposed to raise their premiums with double-digit percentages. This must stop.

I urge my colleagues to work to achieve health care reform. Let's not work with piecemeal solutions that will go nowhere, but solve the problems once and for all.

WHITE HOUSE SUMMIT

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, instead of inviting Republicans to a conference table with a blank sheet of paper, the President's decided to introduce the same trillion-dollar Washington takeover of health care the public has already rejected. In Texas, we call that paying for the same real estate twice, and the American people aren't buying it.

They have been trying to tell the President in every way possible to stop the backroom decisions and secret deals. This week's so-called "bipartisan" summit is just more of the same.

Instead of pressing the reset button, the President's hosting a photo op. Using the illusion of bipartisanship as a political tool is wrong. It's not fooling anyone. If the President and Democrat leadership are serious about coming together on health care reform, then let's get out the of corral and start from scratch.

HEALTH CARE INSURANCE INDUSTRY FAIR COMPETITION ACT

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

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today the House is going to consider the Health Insurance Fair Competition Act. This bill will level the playing field by repealing the health insurance industry's unfair advantage and helping encourage competition by bringing down costs for families and businesses.

Everyone knows that competition drives our economy. Fair competition is what encourages innovation, ensures quality service, and drives costs down, and that applies to health insurance, too. Unfortunately, health insurance companies are exempt from these fair competition rules. This is like your neighborhood pharmacy calling up its competitor down the street and deciding to set all of their prices at the exact same amount. You can't do that. It's not fair to consumers, and no other business in the United States is allowed to act that way. What's fair for every other business in this country is certainly fair for the health insurance industry.

Today's bill makes commonsense changes, and I look forward to voting for it to make sure health insurance companies can no longer get away with price-fixing and other anti-competitive practices. Let's level the playing field.

HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

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

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, the same team that brought America the job-killing, tax-hiking cap-and-tax legislation appears to be at it again. Just last week Representatives WAXMAN and MARKEY began committee action aimed towards giving the EPA unprecedented power to enact oppressive regulations on hydraulic fracturing—the technology that allows producers to reach natural gas, which has been proven safe for over 60 years.

This action would have a far-reaching negative impact on energy producers and consumers alike, particularly in formations such as the Haynesville Shale in my district which depends on hydraulic fracturing. In 2008, the Haynesville Shale pumped \$4.5 billion into Louisiana's economy and created over 32,000 jobs.

Adding additional layers of regulations to hydraulic fracturing would not only result in sharp increases in costs to small and independent producers, it would dramatically decrease output and job creation. Production could grind to a halt and billions of dollars in Federal and State revenue would be at risk.

We need to get away, again, from this crazy scheme.

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, IS A GREAT CITY

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, recently Forbes magazine ranked what they called the most miserable cities in the country. Memphis, Tennessee, was third on that list. They considered certain issues but they didn't consider others.

They didn't consider the best barbecue in the United States of America; some of the greatest music; Beale Street; the great tourist center; gorgeous sunsets on the Mississippi River. They didn't consider the people of Memphis and the creativity that's emanated from there; Fred Smith and the greatest delivery of goods in the world, a system of freight delivery unrivaled; St. Jude's Children's Hospital that provides the gift of life and research into cancer and Nobel prize winners.

Opportunities for innovation are prevalent in Memphis. In music, Sam Phillips and Elvis Presley created rock-and-roll. And Willie Mitchell and Isaac Hayes and David Porter, and Stacks and Soulful.

I invite Chris Buckley, my friend, and Forbes magazine to come to Memphis and visit for themselves. Memphis has also got a great optometry school. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Maybe they'll leave with 20/20 vision.