October 7, 2005

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

H8799

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title: H. Con. Res. 161. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for an event to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Million Man March.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Government Reform:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Speaker Dennis Hastert,
House of Representatives, Room H-209, the Capitol, Washington, DC.

Dear Speaker Hastert: This letter is to resign my seat on the Committee on Government Reform and all subcommittees under its jurisdiction as of September 30, 2005.

Sincerely, 
Ginny Brown-Waite,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF HON. TOM DAVIS AND HON. ROCOSE G. BARTLETT TO ACT AS SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE TO SIGN ENROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS THROUGH OCTOBER 17, 2005

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

THE SPEAKER’S ROOM,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

I hereby appoint the Honorable Tom Davis and the Honorable Rocose G. Bartlett to act as Speaker pro tempore to sign enrolled bills and joint resolutions through October 17, 2005.

DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the appointment is approved.

There was no objection.

TRIBUTE TO THREE JEFFERSON COUNTY, TEXAS, HEROES

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, when the second lady of the gulf, Rita, hit Jefferson County, Texas, first responders hunkered down to wait out the storm. They did not leave during this hurricane. After the storm, the first responders began working 12-hour shifts and slept in their cars. The county had and still has no power or water. The responders had food. So three local heroes took control.

Port Arthur police officer Marcelo Molfino, Port Arthur fire fighter David Barclay and a lawyer by the name of Everett Sanderson of Nederland, Texas, took control. Molfino and Barclay worked 48 straight hours looking for meat and finding it before it got thawed. Sanderson opened up his boat, old damaged restaurant and used a generator to cook up red and green tape, legal or political, or respecting national and international law. These three heroes got her done.

FEDERAL RESPONSE TO NEW YORK TERRORIST THREAT LACKING

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the mayor of the City of New York announced that there was a credible threat of a terrorist bomb attack against New York City's trains.

The FBI concurred, and then we heard that the Department of Homeland Security disagreed and said that the threats were not credible.

Madam Speaker, what is going on? We are spending billions and billions of dollars on homeland security, and our Federal officials cannot seem to get it straight. First we had these ridiculous color-coded alerts. Now our FBI and Department of Homeland Security cannot agree on credible threats.

Today, part of Pennsylvania Station in New York City had to be evacuated. President Bush should summon Secretary Chertoff and ask some very hard questions. This Congress ought to investigate why our Federal officials cannot seem to get their act together with regard to homeland security.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS LEAD FOR FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

(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. Madam Speaker, all levels of government have recently learned the critical importance of saving and planning for a rainy day.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita were a sudden wake-up call for our Nation. As the Federal Government begins to pay for the costs of these devastating disasters, Congress must adhere to a responsible plan and a strict budget. If we do not use this opportunity to reform the spending habits of the Federal Government, our children and grandchildren will inherit tax increases and unimaginable deficits. They do not deserve to suffer the harsh consequences of earlier generations' fiscal irresponsibility.

Yesterday, House Republican leaders introduced a bipartisan plan that will increase mandatory savings, decrease discretionary spending, offset reconstruction costs, and will eliminate wasteful government programs. By using our resources to provide for our Nation's needs, this plan will protect the future of American citizens and strengthen our economy.

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

WILLIAM BENNETT

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

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, during a recent radio broadcast, conservative critic William Bennett said the following: "If you wanted to reduce crime, you could abort every black baby in this country and your crime rate would go down."

But Mr. Bennett's hypothesis, as absurd and racist as it is, does not tell the real story.

According to the Department of Justice national crime statistics of men and women behind bars, approximately 43 percent are black, 38 percent are white, and 19 percent are Hispanic. Whites, however, make up 70 percent of all persons arrested, and 60 percent of those are arrested for violent crime.

So why the disparity between whites arrested and whites convicted? Could it have to do with the fact that poorer defendants, often people of color, are more likely to receive substandard legal representation and harsher sentences?

Madam Speaker, getting justice in America seems to have a lot more to do with the color of your skin and the color of the green in your pocket. Now, that is not virtuous.

HONORING THE MILLIONS OF AMERICANS OF GERMAN HERITAGE

(Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the millions of Americans of German heritage and their ancestors who emigrated from their native lands to come to the shores of this country.

The first German American Day was declared by Ronald Reagan back in 1983 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the first group of German-speaking settlers who arrived in the American colonies. German settlers and immigrants have played a vital role in our Nation's history since its very beginning. Great American icons, too, people like Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, and Casey
Stengel in sports, and John Steinbeck, Kurt Vonnegut, and the inimitable Doctor Seuss in literature claim German heritage.

Madam Speaker, I urge the House to pay tribute to this Great German American Heritage Month, to the many Americans of German descent who continue to contribute to the vitality of my State of New Jersey and to these United States of America.

REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS OF THE LAKE GEORGE BOATING ACCIDENT

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

Mr. MCCOTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to offer my condolences to the loved ones of those who were lost in the Lake George, New York, boating accident and offer my heartfelt sympathy to those who survived.

Seven of the individuals who perished were from my hometown of Livonia: Caryl and William Gilson, Louise and Charles Greenwald, Margaret and William Nadvorinski, and Marge Perry. Avid members of the Livonia Travel Club, these fine people had contributed to their community and their country as mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, veterans, volunteers, and friends and neighbors. Truly, they will all be missed.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing our sorrow and offering our assistance to all involved and affected by this tragedy.

CELEBRATING THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF "IT'S ACADEMIC"

(Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call attention to and honor the 45th anniversary of the Nation's leading and longest-running educational television program, the Emmy-winning show, "It's Academic.

"It's Academic" is a nationwide, weekly high school competition that began in Washington, D.C. Since its inception 45 years ago, "It's Academic" shows have spread to other cities. During the current school year, 27 high schools in my congressional district will compete against the brightest students from public and private schools throughout the District of Columbia region. These students will be coached and encouraged by dedicated teachers and principals on a wide variety of academic subjects and the challenges of a competitive format under the television lights.

Every Saturday morning, viewers tune in to watch local high school students compete in their knowledge of math, literature, history, and current events. In many schools, students compete for the opportunity to be on the show. Not only do they enjoy the camaraderie with their peers in learning challenging information and developing team skills, but they get the added bonus of being on television and performing under pressure, something many students on the football team and the drama club can simply envy.

American Heritage Month is more than showcasing intelligent students. All the students, including members of the losing teams, receive scholarship money from the corporate sponsors, which in my area has been primarily Giant Food.

In a recent editorial, The Washington Post said of the show: "All the disturbing news about declining test scores and failing schools, this homemade Saturday morning staple serves as a welcome reminder of what is right with education."

Madam Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree and look forward to the partnership between "It's Academic" and our communities and schools for many more years to come.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. SCHMIDT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California?

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I request unanimous consent to assume the time of my colleague from California.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

AVIAN FLU: WE MUST ACT NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call attention to and honor the 45th anniversary of the National Center For Disease Preparedness at Columbia University, recently told The New York Times that a flu pandemic was the "next big catastrophe that we can reasonably expect, and the country is phenomenally not prepared for this."

Yesterday, Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt acknowledged our lack of preparation, but seemingly tried to absolve the administration by saying that "no one in the world is ready" for a flu pandemic.

That may be true, but some countries have taken greater steps to prepare than the United States. At present we have only 2 million doses of Tamiflu, an antiviral medication that has been shown to be effective against the H5N1 flu virus. The Australian Government, on the other hand, has stockpiled 3.5 million courses of treatment, white Britain has ordered enough of the drug to cover a quarter of its population.

Clearly, we are lagging behind other developed countries in preparing for an outbreak here. And as ABC's "Primetime" reported last month, the Roche Company, which produces Tamiflu, is filling orders on a first-come, first-served basis. The United States, I am sorry to say, is nowhere near the top of the list.

Quote: "Do we wish we had ordered it sooner and more of it? I suspect one would say yes," admitted Secretary Leavitt. When asked why the U.S. did not place orders for Tamiflu sooner, the Secretary told ABC: "I can't answer that. I don't know the answer to that."

The American Government has finally begun to take action to prepare to confront a pandemic. The Department of State is hosting a meeting of...