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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC, *October 23, 2007.*

I hereby appoint the Honorable LINCOLN DAVIS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 25 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 9:50 a.m.

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

CLEAN WATER ACT

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, last week we observed the 35th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, and it was an important observation here on the floor as we dealt with the impact that that new law had, the heightened awareness and the progress that resulted. Back in 1972 when the law was enacted, only one-third of our waterways met water quality standards. Two-thirds did not. In the course of that 35 years, we have reversed that: Now there are only one-third that don't meet the goal. But the fact is that there still is one-third that are not in compliance with our basic water quality standards.

When we look under the ground, the situation is even worse. There are over 72,000 miles of sewer pipe and water main that are over 80 years old. It is one of the reason large sink holes open up and swallow trucks in American streets, why the American Society of Civil Engineers has given our water infrastructure a D-minus grade.

All of this is compounded by the stress from global warming, as we see not just the ice caps shrink but the snow pack being reduced, we watch evaporation being accelerated as a result of the elevated temperatures, and we see that thirsty crops need more water because of the global warming. Agriculture of course is 90 percent of our water commitment.

Now, there is going to be more friction, more problems over time with Water and Agriculture. We have some of our programs that have been enacted that are just plain silly. We continue to grow heavily subsidized cotton with subsidized water in the desert, something that long since should have been phased out. The New York Times Magazine this weekend featured the Southwest United States water problems, especially centered on the Colorado River and the demands that are rising there. But this tremendous problem is not limited to the southwest. On the front page of this morning's paper we see the Georgia delegation in Congress is suggesting that they deal with their severe drought and water supply problems by ignoring the environmental regulations of the Endangered Species Act, upsetting not just environmentalists but their friends downstream. It is a problem we are familiar with in the Pacific Northwest, where we have a severely water stressed Klamath River Basin, where the Federal Government as in most all instances has been part of the problem as we promise more water to more diverse users than nature can deliver.

It is time for us to revisit, not just the celebration of the 35th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, but revisit our commitment that is embodied in that Act and where we are going over the next 35 years.

It is important that we deal with very real problems of environmental quality requirements to save fish and wildlife and protect eco systems and, indeed, human life. We are watching the problems of diminishing supplies as we mine fossilized water in ancient underground aquifers. Global warming of course is going to make all of these problems more complex, more severe, and harder to solve.

Every Member of Congress needs to do more than just celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. I would hope that, in the months ahead, every one of us does an assessment at home to find out how bad the situation is with our local water supply, storm water, sewage, and drainage. Are we one of the over 1,000 communities with combined sewer overflow problems? How is it going to be paid for? What is the planning that needs to take place? Every one of us should be insisting that we shift to basinwide framework for analyzing and solving water problems, not just looking at isolated instances.

It is time for us to be serious about a funding solution. In 1978, the Federal Government provided 78 percent of the funding for our water quality problems. Today, that is just 3 percent. Even that 3 percent is as uncertain, as it is inadequate. It is time to establish a water trust fund, like the Highway Trust Fund, to help be a partner with State and local communities in meeting water quality needs. Finally, we need to begin addressing the ultimate question of who is going to get the water

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and why, beyond just some historic accident and water rights policy no longer adequate for today's challenges.

I strongly urge my friends in Congress to reflect on the 35th anniversary of the Clean Water Act by getting serious today with our constituents at home about what we are going to do for the next 35 years of clean water.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 6 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. DEGETTE) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Bobby L. Johnson, First Assembly of God, Van Buren, Arkansas, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, today we come humbly and thankfully to You. Humbly, for allowing each of us to be in our positions and thankfully, for Your guidance at this time.

None of us knows what this day holds, but we trust You to see us through every decision we make. Help us to realize that it is by Your hand that we are free and well. Grant us wisdom to know the right thing to do in every decision. Give us the strength to follow through with what is right regardless of the consequences.

Within the hands of these public servants rests the destiny of this great Nation. Help this great body to bring peace to our Nation and the world. Give them the wisdom of Solomon, the strength of Samson, the faith of Abraham, and the ability of David to accomplish the challenges we face. In Jesus' name, Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BOOZMAN 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.

WELCOMING THE REVEREND BOBBY L. JOHNSON

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce a good friend, a man who ministers to the men and women of western Arkansas, a man of God, our guest chaplain, the Reverend Bobby L. Johnson of Van Buren, Arkansas. He has been pastor of First Assembly of God in Van Buren since June of 1980. Since then, the church has grown from over 200 at Sunday School to over 2,000, placing it among the fastest growing Sunday Schools in Arkansas and the Nation.

His mission is bringing the Word to the people through his extensive outreach, from mobile ministry to television and over the Internet. A graduate of both the University of Central Arkansas and Evangel College in Missouri, Pastor Johnson has taught public high school and pastored three other churches in Arkansas.

It is my honor to welcome Pastor Johnson to the House of Representatives and thank him for his service to his calling and to the people of Arkansas.

SCHIP

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

Mr. KAGEN. Madam Speaker, our Nation's values are reflected in how we spend taxpayers' hard-earned money. Yesterday, rather than encouraging us to invest in the good health of our children here at home, the President asked for permission to spend $200 billion in Iraq. Well, it is okay to ask and it is okay to respond by saying, ''No, thank you.'' The health of our Nation's children is more valuable than making more of a mess in Iraq.

My friends, enough is enough. It is time to spend our tax dollars right here at home. Last week, 44 Republicans joined the Democratic majority in attempting to override the President's veto of the State Children's Health Insurance Program, known as SCHIP. This issue is not going away. We will prevail. It is a matter of how long it will take.

Here are some facts to keep in mind: SCHIP saves tax dollars by sending children in need to the doctor's office, not to the costly emergency room. And over 90 percent of those in SCHIP earn less than $41,000 a year. There is a better way of doing things in America. By working together, we will find it and guarantee access to health care for all those in need.

RUSH LIMBAUGH LETTER RAISES MILLIONS

(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. Madam Speaker, last week, America's number one radio personality, Rush Limbaugh, auctioned off for charity a letter shamefully signed by a group of 41 Democratic Senators. The letter to Limbaugh's employer attacked Rush for comments blatantly distorted by Media Matters regarding persons who had lied about their service in the military.

I am happy to report that the Senate letter of infamy was auctioned for $2.1 million, an amount Rush says he will generously match. That brings the total to $4.2 million.

The money will be donated to the Marine Corps-Law Enforcement Foundation. This charitable organization provides financial assistance to the children of fallen marines and law enforcement officers. I wish to commend Rush for overcoming what was clearly a political ploy to chill his first amendment rights of free speech. Rush took an abusive power by Democratic leadership and turned it into something positive. Between Rush Limbaugh and Senate Democrats, America knows who really supports our troops.

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

DEMOCRATS TRYING TO EASE THE PAIN OF MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES BY MAKING COLLEGE AFFORDABLE

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

Mr. CLEAVER. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to address the House. I am excited to be a Democrat. I always take pleasure in giving reasons for why I am a member of the Democratic Party.

Since taking control of Congress, Democrats have worked to pass legislation that will help families once again live the American Dream. Over the last 6 years, college costs have shot up 40 percent, putting higher education out of reach for most Americans. I have one son in college today, and I can tell you I am excited over the fact that we passed, and the President did, in fact, sign the College Cost Reduction Act of 2007. This law is the single largest increase in college aid since the GI Bill. It strengthens the middle class by cutting interest rates in half and subsidizes student loans over the next 5 years. We are also able, in this bill, to increase the maximum Pell Grant scholarships by $500.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased and I am excited to be a Democrat.

SCHIP

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