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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Reverend Lou Sheldon, Traditional Values Coalition, Washington DC, offered the following prayer:

Loving and living Lord, we greet You in the name of Jesus Christ. Our hearts and minds stand in awe of Your creative order of all things.

Please convert our hearts to believe and obey Your ways as taught in the Holy Scriptures.

We know that life is so short and Your desire is for all people to come to a saving knowledge of Your redeeming grace and have a personal relationship to You.

Forgive us for our sins and lead us to reject temptation in our lives. May we become sensitive to those with whom we work, especially our wives, children, and family. Give us strength to help the helpless and love the hurting ones.

May we learn from Your Holy Word what is morally right and what is morally wrong. May we come to fully understand that the nation whose God is the Lord is the nation that shall be blessed. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

Mr. OBEY. Mr. 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 Chair's approval of the Journal.

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

Mr. OBEY. Mr. 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 5, rule I, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. TRAFICANT] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TRAFICANT 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.

WELCOME REV. LOU P. SHELDON

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

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to welcome my dear friend, Rev. Lou Sheldon. We are all very blessed to have Reverend Sheldon with us today.

I want to thank him for his uplifting words of prayer for today's session. Indeed, we must pray each day for the strength to uphold the spiritual and moral principles that have guided our great Nation.

Since his ordination, Reverend Sheldon has pastored churches for more than 20 years. Today, he works tirelessly to educate and inform the 31,000 churches with whom he is affiliated. He has been a wise counselor and good friend to me.

His dedication to the Almighty and his strong moral convictions are an inspiration to us all. All of us are grateful for your good work and dedication to the Almighty.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHAMBLISS). The Chair will receive fifteen 1-minute on each side this morning.

ENDING WELFARE FOR LOBBYISTS

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, the Wall Street Journal reports that by almost a 3-to-1 margin, the American people agree tax dollars should not be used to fund groups to lobby the Government. I certainly agree with that principle, and I believe that as part of our reforms, we have got to end welfare for lobbyists.

People in groups have every right to petition their Government. They ought to do more of it. But the American people should not have to pay more and more taxes so that some lobbying group that receives money from the Federal Government can spend more and more money up here lobbying to receive more and more money to come up here to lobby for more and more money. That is a vicious spending circle. It has got to stop. No wonder previous Congresses have been unable or unwilling to balance the budget.

Those trying to fight this much-needed reform say it is draconian. But 96 percent of the nonprofit groups who have not abused the process would not be offended. Let us pass this legislation now.

INDEPENDENT COUNSEL TO INVESTIGATE THE SPEAKER

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

□ 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.



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Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, the Ethics Committee investigation into allegations against Speaker GINGRICH makes the O.J. trial look like swift justice.

Since the beginning of this Congress, the Ethics Committee has been meeting to discuss the various charges against Mr. GINGRICH. The complexity of the charges coupled with the fact that they are leveled against the highest ranking Member of the House are two reasons why this inquiry has dragged on. They are also two reasons why we need an outside counsel to take over.

For several months, government watchdog groups like Common Cause and Public Citizen have been calling for the appointment of an outside counsel in this case. They believe, as I do, that the appointment of a fully independent, outside counsel is the only way to assure a fair, thorough, nonpartisan investigation of the Speaker. It is the only way to lift the ethical cloud that hangs over this House.

LOBBYING REFORM

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

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I just want to stand today and agree with my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. CHABOT], who just told us about the importance of ending the subsidies that the American taxpayers pay for groups to lobby.

It is a critical issue. We are talking about lobbying reform. Currently, we are talking about PAC reform. These are important issues that should be discussed, but we should not have a fear because a group says you are stifling my voice.

Let us make it clear in this debate. This is an important issue. These are government dollars, taxpayers' dollars, that are going into these advocacy groups.

In recent research, what was told us is that 70 percent of Americans want to see this changed. We have got to address this in the debate. This has to come before the Halls of Congress. We also have to make it clear that these groups should be advocates for their position. A lot of these groups I agree with. They would be free to advocate their position, but the taxpayers of this country should be free from paying for it.

UNCLE SAM IS NOT THE WORLD'S POLICEMAN

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, everybody wants peace in Bosnia, but that is not the only issue here. The issue is whether American troops should be the peacekeepers.

Now every time there is a problem in the world these foreign leaders bow down and call America the superpower. Yes, truly we are a superpower. But we are not the only power, ladies and gentlemen. I say, if peacekeepers are needed in Bosnia, where is Great Britain? Where is Italy? Where is Spain, ladies and gentlemen? All of a sudden did they become third-world pushovers? The Constitution did not make Uncle Sam the policeman for the world, and Congress should not make Uncle Sam the neighborhood crime watch leader, either.

I say, before one American gets sent to Bosnia, there must be a consent, approval, and authorization of the Congress of the United States of America.

A BALANCED BUDGET

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

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, what did my constituents send me to Washington to do? They sent me here to downsize the bloated Federal bureaucracy, cut spending, and most importantly balance the budget. And why do they want the budget balanced? Because of the benefits it will bring them.

A balanced budget means lower interest rates on home mortgages, car loans, and student loans. A balanced budget results in a stronger economy, which means more jobs. A balanced budget means that Government spending is under control and taxes will be cut rather than increased.

Mr. Speaker, for too long Washington bureaucrats have come up with excuse after excuse for not reigning in Government spending. But enough is enough. No more Washington gimmicks, and no more excuses. It is time to balance the budget. It is the right thing to do for America's future.

MEDICARE

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, yesterday my Republican colleague followed me here and talked about the difference between the debt and the deficit.

Well, I know very well the difference between the debt and the deficit. I know we have almost a \$5 trillion debt. The deficit, though, in 1992 under a Republican President was \$290 billion. For that year, that deficit.

Last year it was only \$163 billion. That is what I call progress, and it was not done during the 1980's. In fact, during the 1980's, our debt exploded to that \$4.9 trillion or whatever it is.

But the truth is really out. We need to balance our budget, but we do not need to do it on the backs of education or Medicare, and that is wrong. That is what the American people are saying in all the polls.

Mr. Speaker, the comments of our Speaker and also the leader of the other body last Sunday in the Washington Post demonstrate the true sentiments of the Republicans on the Medicare plan. Cut health care for seniors as much as necessary to pay for that tax cut, not balancing the budget but for a tax cut.

□ 1015

It is disgusting to see a PR campaign used to provide for a tax cut. Mr. Speaker, I hope the conference committee and the President will veto that plan.

WHY WE ARE HERE

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

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, with all of the speculation about whether the President will sign or veto the Congress' plan to balance the budget in 7 years, we need to remember why we need to balance the budget. A child born today must pay \$187,000 during her lifetime just to pay for the interest on the almost \$5 trillion national debt.

That is before paying for any government services—Social Security or Medicare for her parents and grandparents—or national defense for herself.

We have to balance the budget for our children's future. We have spent over \$5 trillion in Federal welfare programs since 1965 and Americans have concluded that the current welfare system perpetuates dependency and offers no hope for a better future.

We have to reform welfare because it is what Franklin Delano Roosevelt described as "a subtle destroyer of the human spirit."

While American families sent 2 percent of their income in taxes to Washington in 1950—today they send almost one-quarter.

That is why we must provide tax relief to families.

Without reform, Medicare will be bankrupt in 7 years with no legal authority to pay hospital bills for seniors.

These are the stakes.

Americans sent us to Washington to fix these problems.

I hope the President chooses to sign the only budget plan that will address these problems.

WHO PAYS FOR THE TAX CUT?

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

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, last week the Republicans voted to dramatically slash Medicare by \$270 billion, Medicaid by \$180 billion. They voted to raid the pension plans of