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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina].

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 13, 1995.

I hereby designate the Honorable CHARLES H. TAYLOR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

In our best moments, O God, we are aware that Your Word points the way to the purposes of life—those standards of peace and justice and fairness and freedom that should be the heritage of all. Yet we know too that we are expected to use the abilities that we have received to conceive and design programs that bring righteousness to people and to extend the gifts of living to our communities and to our world. As You have entrusted to us this responsibility, O God, so give us the wisdom and the grace to be good messengers of Your Word and discerning stewards of all Your gifts. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 15 1-minutes per each side.

SOME FRIENDLY ADVICE FOR THE DEMOCRATS

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

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, last week the contest for California's 15th Congressional District was a national test of whether Americans had grown weary of this Congress' effort to balance the budget, reform welfare, and save Medicare from bankruptcy. One Democrat political consultant said, "This is a test run, the sample for the campaigns of next year."

This morning you would need a magnifying glass to find the results of what was only days ago a special election of national significance. Maybe it is because the Democrats ended up losing a seat they held for decades after waging one of the most negative campaigns in recent memory.

I have some friendly advice for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. Stop the character assassination. Stop basing your campaigns on fear and fiction. Stop the boiler room operations that call senior citizens at night to scare them into voting Democrat.

Instead, tell people what you stand for. If my colleagues believe a bigger Federal Government is the key to prosperity, make their case.

If you think the proper role of government is to redistribute income through the tax system, make your case. I know that most Americans may not agree with that point of view in this day and age, but at least it makes for a honest public debate.

Tom Campbell told the voters of California what he stood for. He told them he wanted to come here to help balance the budget for the first time in 30 years and to save Medicare for the next generation. In the end, the people rejected the hatred and the negative attacks, and voted for a positive vision of the future. Do your party and the Nation a favor, and learn from his success.

PRESIDENT CLINTON, STAND STRONG ON MEDICAID COVERAGE FOR THOSE WHO ARE ENTITLED TO IT

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, Democrats favor a balanced budget, but they also want to make sure the priorities such as Medicare, Medicaid, the environment, and education are protected during these budget negotiations. The President drew the line last week when he vetoed the Republican budget bill and unveiled a new plan of his own, but one of the things that President Clinton stressed is that we must have a Federal guarantee of Medicaid coverage for those low-income Americans, pregnant women, children, the disabled, who right now do have health care coverage under Medicaid.

Mr. Speaker, during these budget negotiations one of the most important things that must happen is that we

□ 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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guarantee health care for those low-income citizens. The Republicans' plan to eliminate that guarantee, and send money to the States in a block grant and give them the discretion to decide who will be eligible for Medicaid, and whether anyone, or what categories of people would be eligible for Medicaid is certainly the wrong way to go, and I want to commend the President and ask him to stand strong on the notion that we must guarantee Medicaid coverage for those who are entitled to it today.

STILL NO EXIT STRATEGY

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

Ms. DUNN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I returned from Bosnia. Even a short visit left me with two powerful reactions. Seeing Sarajevo evoked a strong emotional response. The devastation is indescribable; it is surreal. Anyone seeing that firsthand would want to help end the suffering. The people want peace.

My second reaction was analytical. As a Member of Congress, my job is to try to strip away the emotion and ask legitimate questions so I can analyze the President's decision to deploy ground troops.

Here is what I found: First, we have no clear mission; second, the expectations of our troops are all over the map, some even expect our troops to be assigned the deadly task of finding 6 million land mines; and third, we still have no exit strategy at all.

Mr. Speaker, this is troubling beyond words. Our troops are being placed between warring factions on the unrealistic assumption that peace will suddenly break out in the next 12 months after centuries of fighting.

I implore the President, before signing an agreement in Paris, please define the mission, clarify the expectations, and develop a credible exit strategy. It is the least that should be done for the troops we are committing to this impossible task.

WHY WE NEED TO GET INVOLVED IN BOSNIA

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

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, why get involved in Bosnia? The answer is that America's interests, values, and leadership are at stake. But we should ask the question, "What if we don't?" Then we surrender our leadership role. And we must ask the question, "Are we still prepared to lead?"

Mr. Speaker, our troops are going to enforce a peace, not start a war. There are risks, but manageable risks.

What if we do not? NATO will be destroyed. Is it worth preserving? Yes. Balkan stability is important for

Greece and Turkey. And what about Eastern Europe? What if Russia gets strong again and poses threats to Eastern Europe? How are they going to feel if we vote no today?

What happens if we do not vote with the President? War will break out again. There will be genocide, rapes, Srebrenicas.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a popular issue, and the President should not be accused of politics. This is a risk. This is America's moral leadership, and we should do the right thing and support our troops and support the President.

GINGRICH'S WAY IS NOT THE AMERICAN WAY

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, we all remember last month when Speaker GINGRICH closed down the Government because he did not like his seats on Air Force One. Well, here we go again.

Yesterday, an aide to Speaker GINGRICH says that Mr. GINGRICH is prepared to shut down the Government again, if he does not get his way on the budget. The problem is that GINGRICH's way is not the American way.

America does not support the Gingrich budget priorities. The American people do not want a balanced budget which devastates Medicare, education, and the environment, in order to finance a massive tax break to the wealthy.

So, Mr. Speaker, spare us the theatrics and give the American people an early Christmas present: a balanced budget which reflects our priorities, not yours.

CBO'S NEW PLOY: RABBITS POPPING OUT OF A HAT

(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, when it comes to the budget, Congress has seen it all: smoke, mirrors. We have read lips. We have even dated Rosy Scenario around here.

But now there is a new ploy. Rabbits, Mr. Speaker. The Congressional Budget Office just announced that they have found \$130 billion, \$130 billion that just popped up like a rabbit out of the hat.

Now let us see if this adds up. We have a \$5 trillion national debt, \$300 billion annual budget deficits, and a Congressional Budget Office that at the very last minute just happens to find \$130 billion that has been overlooked.

Beam me up, Mr. Speaker. Someone is inhaling around here all right. Someone is definitely inhaling. I say if they are going to find \$130 billion and pull it out of a hat like a rabbit, why do we not just hire David Copperfield, Congress, and furlough all these workers at the Congressional Budget Office?

I yield back the balance of these ploys.

GET YOUR HANDS OUT OF OUR POCKETS

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

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2539, the ICC Termination Act of 1995, which passed the House and Senate and is now in conference committee, has as its noble purpose the deregulation of the trucking and rail industries. The shipping industry remains regulated, and for offshore areas like Guam, our consumers remain a captive market for the shipping lines.

Buried deep in the details of H.R. 2539, in the Senate version, is a provision that would raid the wallets of consumers in Guam and other offshore areas. The shipping companies cut some sort of deal to allow, by statute, rates to increase by 7.5 percent every year for these port to port movements. They created a loophole to allow the rates to be increased in a zone of reasonableness, which is so wide you can drive a ship through it.

The shipping companies are not hurting for profits in the captive domestic offshore markets. They are literally rolling in dough. They charge four times more for a shipment to Guam than they do to Japan.

Shame on the American President Lines, Sealand, and Matson. They should get their hands out of our pockets.

KEEP THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OPEN THROUGH THE HOLIDAY SEASON

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, chestnuts roasting on an open fire, "Silent Night" humming in the background, and families embracing and loving during this holiday season. However, the Republican majority says no to all of that because they want to force another Government shutdown on the backs of working Americans. This will happen because of the Republicans' harsh refusal to stop the cuts of \$270 billion in Medicare and the \$182 billion cut of Medicaid. It is the American safety net for our children and seniors, and yet the Republicans want to force 9 million children and seniors off of a good health care. The Democratic budget plan, however, does continue to guarantee health care for our children, the elderly, and the disabled.

I would say to my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, that that is truly the spirit of this approaching season, and I would say to my colleagues again, Mr. Speaker, that we need to understand that the American people want to have the spirit of this holiday season to reflect on the least of those.