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House of Representatives

The House met at 11 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. LATOURETTE].

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 16, 1997.

I hereby designate the Honorable STEVEN C. LATOURETTE 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: We cry for freedom, O God, so we can use our consciences and practice our best intentions. We are grateful that we can know the gift of liberty to express our personal values and ideals. Yet we confess, O God, that we can use our liberties and freedoms to avoid the responsibilities of caring for each other, of making our own sacrifice so the pain and suffering of others might be eased. O Author of all of life, remind us that we are bound together in this world by the common creation of Your hand, and we are nurtured each day by the unity that we try to share. So teach us to use our personal freedom so we are responsible in ways that promote justice and mercy for us and for every person. This is our earnest prayer. 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 Kansas [Mr. TIAHRT] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TIAHRT 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. McDevitt, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed bills of the following titles in which concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 104. An act to amend the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982.

S. 522. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to impose civil and criminal penalties for the unauthorized access of tax returns and tax return information by Federal employees and other persons, and for other purposes.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Republican Conference, I call up a privileged resolution (H. Res. 114) and ask for its immediate consideration. The minority has been apprised of the contents.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 114

Resolved, That the following Members be, and they are hereby, elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

Committee on Banking and Financial Services: Mr. Manzullo, Mr. Foley, and Mr. Jones.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

TAX RELIEF

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was the filing deadline for Federal taxes and State taxes in Kansas. But tax freedom day in Kansas is actually on May 7. That is the day we finally pay our direct Federal, State, and local taxes, our direct taxes. Some think that is the day when they can quit working for the Government and start to work for themselves. But it is not. Still remaining are indirect taxes, hidden taxes. Nearly 40 cents on a dollar of gasoline, hidden costs in the form of taxes, 28 cents on a dollar loaf of bread, 48 cents on a dollar glass of draft beer, on and on it goes. Hidden taxes buried in the products we use every day, every day. Add those hidden taxes to the direct taxes, and Americans work more than 6 months for the Government and less than 6 months for themselves.

America needs tax relief today, Mr. Speaker.

PRIORITIES FOR WORKING MEN AND WOMEN

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

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, America does need tax relief today, but it does not need it for the top 5 percent in this country. The speaker the other day got up and suggested a \$300 billion giveaway to the top 5 percent. Where is it for the rest of the working people in this country?

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret why the Republican leadership refuses to schedule campaign finance reform. The wealthy donors who contributed to the Republican Party want tax breaks. According to an article that was in the Washington Times last week, they have told the Republican leadership

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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that they can forget about more money for their party unless they have these tax cuts for the wealthiest at the top.

What about providing health care for the 10 million kids who have no health insurance in this country? What about education for our folks? What about a tax break for education for those who want to go on to college? What about school-to-work programs for the 70 percent of our population who do not graduate from college?

Let us have priorities for working men and women in this country and their families and not for the wealthiest few in the Nation.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, now we hear it from the administration that brought American school kids hepatitis strawberries. They now want to handle kids' health care. Let me see if this makes sense. I am a father of four children. I do not want the Government getting involved in my kids' health care if that is the way they are going to handle the school lunch program. It is absurd.

Are we going to talk about campaign finance reform? Let us talk about the sweet deal for the Chinese leasing an American shipyard. What is the connection here?

Let us talk about American security. Let us talk about the \$235,000 in foreign funds given to the Democratic National Committee that had to be returned. Let us talk about Webster Hubbell and the money that was given to him when he resigned. Was it hush money or was it just a mere coincidence? Let us get into the Cuban drug dealers and the Chinese arms dealers who have been wine and dined at the White House. Is this the campaign finance reform we are talking about?

I am curious. I join Democrats in trying to get to the root of this.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 400, THE 21ST CENTURY PATENT SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT ACT

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

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we take up H.R. 400, the 21st Century Patent System Improvement Act, a bill supported by the entire Committee on the Judiciary and the vast majority of American inventors and developers of advanced technology.

I commend the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. COBLE], our subcommittee chairman, and the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK], the ranking member, for the diligent and fair-minded way in which they have worked with all interested parties to perfect this legislation over the past 3 years.

As a new member of the subcommittee, I can sympathize with those of my colleagues who feel somewhat overwhelmed by this complex, arcane subject. Unfortunately, much of the information circulated over the past few weeks has been misinformation which has not made it any easier to get to the truth.

I cosponsored this bill because of the benefits it offers to every U.S. inventor and our Nation as a whole. Passage of this bill is absolutely essential if we are to maintain our leadership in technology and successfully compete in the global economy.

TAX RELIEF FOR AMERICA'S FAMILIES

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, 4 years ago Democrats in Congress passed the largest tax increase ever to hit the American taxpayer. As a result of 40 years of continuous tax and spend policies, voters decided to put Republicans in charge of Congress.

In the last Congress, Republicans made it easier for millions of families and hard-working Americans to keep more of the money that they earn. This Congress will be no different. We will maintain our commitment to reducing Government waste and to providing tax relief for millions more families and hard-working Americans.

Americans believe that no more than 25 percent of their income should be taken from them. Right now taxes at all levels consume more than half of an American worker's income. This is immoral and it is unsustainable. America's families and workers need tax relief so they can do more for themselves, their children and their communities.

EMERGENCY FOREIGN AID TO RUSSIA

(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, in 1994 Boris Yeltsin fell off a stage in Germany. He then was unable to get off a plane in Ireland. He then was on his way to a summit meeting where he begged for emergency foreign aid; and the White House complied, giving Boris and Russia \$12 billion in foreign aid and millions more to build houses for Russian soldiers.

In 1994, Boris, to get the money, promised no more weapons sales to Iran. Records now show that with American dollars Boris built planes, tanks, missiles and helicopters and sold them to Iran.

Beam me up here, Mr. Speaker. The only thing we should be sending Boris is a counselor from Alcoholics Anonymous.

The truth is, under the weight of all that emergency cash Congress, Boris

has fallen and he cannot get up. And if we have any money left over, let us use it in America, not Russia.

Think about that. And I yield back the balance of any money left over from these Ruskies.

MULTIMILLION-WORD TAX CODE

(Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, only in Washington do people systematically create a mess and then stand up before America and declare, I am just so proud of this mess that I have created.

That is right, Mr. Speaker, I am talking about the politicians who created our multimillion-word Tax Code. It just saps 40 percent of the family budget so that you cannot afford your own healthcare or any other necessity.

It is truly a bizarre Washington ritual where the politicians come to town year after year, make the Tax Code more and more complicated, more and more illogical and then leave town and tell their constituents how proud they are of their work in Washington, DC.

For 40 years my liberal friends on the other side of the aisle were in power. In 1995, that 40-year attack on freedom came to an end, but their legacy to the American people is a Tax Code of one gigantic, multivolume embarrassment, an embarrassment of which they are nonetheless enormously proud.

I, on the other hand, want no part of that legacy, Mr. Speaker. I, on the other hand, can only look to our tax system as a cruel joke that is the enemy of common sense.

CANNOT CUT TAXES AND REDUCE THE DEFICIT AT THE SAME TIME

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

Mr. GREEN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be here today and follow my colleague. I am not proud of this Congress either because we are a doing nothing Congress. But before we condemn the Republican leadership for their inactivity, I would like to remind my colleagues that it could be worse.

We could have a repeat performance of 2 years ago, when the Republicans were busy trying to pass legislation that cut taxes at the expense of Medicare.

While the Republican leadership missed yesterday's deadline for a budget resolution, we are still hearing that my colleagues want to pass tax cuts again. In fact, we have Senate Republicans demanding cuts in Medicare and House Republicans wanting to eliminate estate taxes.

A great plan: We will cut your taxes after you die, but we are going to take your Medicare away from you while you are alive.

We cannot cut taxes and reduce the deficit at the same time.