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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

The Scriptures tell us that for everything there is a season and a time for every matter under Heaven. We pray, almighty God, that we will use our time with vitality and enthusiasm so that we are stewards of the days we have been given to be Your people and do those good works that flow from a grateful heart. We admit that we do not always use our days in ways that reflect Your will for us, but we earnestly pray that we will experience in our daily tasks the joys and opportunities of love to You, O God, and doing what we can to be of service to the people all about us. May Your peace that passes all understanding, be with us this day and every day, we pray. 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. McNULTY. 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. McNULTY. 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 of 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The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.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 Missouri [Mr. BLUNT] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BLUNT 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

The SPEAKER. The Chair will recognize fifteen 1-minutes on each side.

WHITE HOUSE VIDEOTAPES

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

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, let us go to the videotape. There we can see President Clinton schmooze with John Huang and Roger Tamraz at fund-raisers held at the White House. The White House staff has videotaped 44 or more of these events, probably to help secure President Clinton's place in history.

I hope the White House has videotaped other history-making scenes by this administration, like when President Clinton supported the Internal Revenue Service over the taxpayers by threatening a veto of commonsense efforts to reform the IRS. That gesture will be remembered by every taxpayer in America. I hope the White House has videotaped the Vice President's claim that there was no controlling legal authority when he described why he broke campaign finance laws. Some Members of this House might want to keep that videotape really close at hand.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to this White House, I say let us go to the videotape.

SUPPORT THE VENTO-RAHALL AMENDMENT TO THE AMERICAN LAND SOVEREIGNTY PROTECTION ACT

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

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, today we have a chance to vote on a good amendment, the Vento-Rahall amendment. We have the so-called American Land Sovereignty Protection Act which breaks really two treaties and repeals a protocol with hundreds of nations. The United States has led efforts of hundreds of nations to, in fact, provide the conservation and recognition of our areas.

But in this bill, last night we were able to offer an amendment which deals not just with conservation but deals with exploitation. We think if the Congress is going to approve the conservation measures in this Congress, it ought to also approve foreign firms that seek to exploit this, exploit our resources, and there are many of them. We know under the 1872 mining law that Canadian, United Kingdom, Danish, and Australian firms are coming in here and getting billions of dollars worth of important assets for mere thousands of dollars.

The Vento-Rahall amendment today gives us a chance to vote on that, to vote to provide parity; that is to say, if we are going to have conservation votes, we ought to have votes when we have exploitation.

MORE ON THE IRS

(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, the IRS wants to repent. They know they have been a little hard on Americans, but they are sorry and they will not do it

□ 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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anymore. The IRS is starting to begin to sound like campaign reform.

It starts out, "We did not do it. Nobody saw us. You cannot prove anything. We did not do it." Then the truth starts to become apparent and the excuses change. "Ok, we might have had some problems but it was not wrong." Then it is, "Yes, we did it but we will not do it anymore."

That is about where the IRS is today. They have done something wrong. Quotas for their IRS agents, singling out individuals like Paula Jones, harassing small business men and women, striking fear across America.

And some people like Martin Grimes of Wichita, an RV salesman, are just plain mad. In his last \$3,500 check that he got for commission, \$1,400 of it went directly to the IRS. Mr. Speaker, there are many good people who are working at the IRS who have been put in a very bad situation by their management. It is time to cut the IRS code and flatten the tax.

SUPPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, Democrats strongly oppose spending taxpayer dollars on private and religious schools and have argued for making the necessary improvements in public schools instead. This week the Republicans hope to pass a bill that would make Washington, DC the first victim in a grand scheme to undermine public schools through taxpayer funded vouchers for private or religious schools. As much as \$45 million in Federal funds would be made available to pay for private education for about 3 percent of the District of Columbia's students.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion it makes no sense to take away \$45 million that could be made available to the city of Washington to improve basic skills or to fix deteriorated buildings in the public schools and instead use this money for private schools. With 9 out of 10 children in America attending public schools, Democrats understand that we need to rebuild and reform public schools, not destroy them and waste public funding on private schools. I hope that my Republican colleagues will join us in moving a positive agenda for public education rather than wasting our time on vouchers.

IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE POSITION ON FOREIGN OPERATIONS BILL

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

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday this body instructed our conferees working with the Senate on the foreign operations bill to stay with the House position that relates to taxpayer dollars spent for abortion. Abortion is an

issue that there are many differences of opinion of on the floor of this House, but there has generally been broad agreement that taxpayers' dollars should not be spent for abortions in the United States. We need to ensure that that same policy is extended beyond our borders and with taxpayers money that is sent to other countries.

Certainly it was disturbing just a few days ago when the Vice President said that the biggest environmental danger in Third World countries was too many children, too many children in Mexico, too many children in Africa, too many children in Asia. That should not be the position of our Government. Our conferees need to stand firm. Taxpayers' dollars should not be used for abortions in America. They should not be used for abortions overseas.

COINCIDENCE

(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, Patricia Mendoza heckled the President; she got audited. Kent Brown sued the First Lady; he got audited. The National Center for Public Policy criticized the White House; they got audited. Billy Dale got the White House mad; he got audited. Paula Jones refused a cash settlement; she got audited.

If that is not enough to tax your disgust, Shelly Davis, the author of Unbridled Power, who testified about IRS abuses before the Senate, got a notice in the mail yesterday; she is being audited.

Unbelievable. After all this, an IRS spokesman said, coincidence, all coincidence. I say, Mr. Speaker, the IRS has turned into a bunch of political prostitutes.

I want to apologize to all the hookers in America for having associated them with the IRS. I say beam me up, dot com, coincidence this.

A COMMISSION TO OVERSEE THE IRS

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

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, I associate myself with the general comments of the gentleman from Ohio. He is absolutely right, Mr. Speaker. In light of the hearings we had on the IRS, it is clear that there is immediate need for reform.

We Republicans have joined with some Democrats in urging a citizens oversight commission for the IRS. Incredibly, the White House has opposed this. The President's Chief Economic Advisor, Gene Sperling, called the proposal for citizen oversight of the IRS "a recipe for conflict of interest" and "a serious step backward". The President's comments were even worse than

those of his advisor. He said, "I believe the IRS is functioning better today than it was five years ago." The President claimed that a citizens commission to oversee it would mean "less accountability" and "less trust in the agency."

I cannot conceive of how the IRS could possibly have less accountability and less trust from the American people than it does today. This administration has its head in the sand on this issue. The IRS must be held accountable by taxpayers and citizens, not by the White House and bureaucrats.

CRUMBLING SCHOOLS

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

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Speaker, we have the privilege here in America to live in what is arguably the wealthiest country in the world. In fact, when we compare the wealth of our country with other countries in the span of human history, we are probably easily among the wealthiest. We are fortunate to live in a country that offers that kind of well-being.

Yet across America our school buildings are crumbling. Fourteen million American students this morning went to school in crumbling school buildings. Education in my view is not only a proper role for government, it is a moral imperative for those of us who are involved in government. It is a scandal and it is a shame that in one of the wealthiest countries in human history we can allow crumbling school buildings to exist in the United States of America.

This Congress recently passed an appropriation for \$21 billion for B-2 bombers, B-2 bombers that cannot even fly in the rain. Yet this very Congress denied \$5 billion to help improve our crumbling school buildings. We must get our priorities straight. Public schools need the help of the Federal Government and crumbling school buildings are a national scandal.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

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

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House today, to be followed by my good friend, the gentleman Michigan [Mr. DINGELL] to discuss the need to reauthorize the Endangered Species Act. I believe the time is now to reauthorize this granddaddy of all environmental laws.

It is vital that any piece of legislation that is developed is done so in a bipartisan way. I want to congratulate also the Senate in their effort to craft such a bill. This process must recognize the needs of people who are impacted by ESA as well as the issue of declining species.