



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE **106th** CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 145

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 1999

No. 38

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Through Your gifts to us, O gracious God, You have provided abundant blessings; of love and forgiveness, of hospitality and generosity, of justice and charity, of friendship and loyalty and of faith and trust. On this day we are aware of the most wonderful gifts of thanksgiving and praise that touch our hearts and truly make such a difference in our lives. We pray that we will live our lives in the spirit of thankfulness to You, our God, for the wonders and blessings You have given and also live with that same thanksgiving as we express our gratitude for those near and dear to us. In the spirit of thankfulness and gratitude 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. SCHAFFER. 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. SCHAFFER. 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 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

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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PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TANCREDO 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.

CLINTON RAID ON SOCIAL SECURITY

(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, I rise today to voice my outrage at the President's continual raid on Social Security. While this Nation's elderly are worried that Social Security will not be there when they need it, the White House budget plan for 2000 robs \$52 billion from Social Security surpluses.

Mr. Speaker, this is a trust fund, not a slush fund. The President thinks he can dip into Social Security to finance any big government spending project he can dream up. Not only will the President take \$52 billion for general spending from Social Security next year, he will continue to pilfer more than \$247 billion from the Social Security surplus for the next 5 years. With this kind of scheme, it is no wonder Social Security is in trouble.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican plan wants to lock up 100 percent of the surpluses in Social Security to save Social Security. The Republican plan wants to restore a sense of security to Social Security. In short, the Republican plan will maintain responsibility and discipline in government.

TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR DOAN VIET HOAT

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

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today and urge my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to an outstanding individual: Professor Doan Viet Hoat of Vietnam.

A journalist and a university professor, he has spent the last 19 of 21 years in a Hanoi prison for his efforts to bring freedom of the press and democracy to Vietnam. And despite all efforts by the Vietnamese government to prevent his writings from surfacing, his message continued to reach beyond his prison cell.

Professor Hoat instantly became a prisoner of conscience championed by Amnesty International and is a recipient of the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award and the Golden Pen of Freedom Award. This summer Professor Hoat was finally released after decades of government harassment and repression.

Mr. Speaker, today we honor Professor Hoat for his moral courage in the face of absolute tyranny, and I urge all of my colleagues to honor him. I have just brought a resolution to this House, and I hope my colleagues will all help to cosponsor the legislation.

DALAI LAMA TO VISIT SOUTH FLORIDA

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, 40 years ago this week the people of Tibet, in what is known as the Lhasa Uprising, revolted against the illegal and tyrannical occupation of their nation by the Communist Chinese. Unfortunately, their attempt to free their

homeland was defeated by the brutal force of the Chinese occupying force, forcing the spiritual leader of Tibet, the Dalai Lama, to flee into exile.

Today, their struggle for freedom continues and is embodied by the tireless efforts of the Dalai Lama, who travels the world seeking support for the autonomy of his nation.

The south Florida community is proud to receive the Dalai Lama on April 16 at Florida International University in Miami in his never-ending journey to preach the language of freedom.

In south Florida, the Dalai Lama will find unconditional support for his enslaved nation because a large portion of my community knows all too well the pain of having to flee one's homeland to escape Communist oppression. Their struggle and the message of the Dalai Lama reminds us all that although the Cold War is over, millions still suffer under the tyranny of communism.

Whether Tibet or Cuba, the world, and in particular the U.S., cannot forget the suffering of these enslaved people.

RESOLUTION TO HONOR PROFESSOR DOAN VIET HOAT

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

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to join the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ) in introducing this resolution in honor of Professor Doan Viet Hoat. It is a rare individual who is willing to sacrifice their own personal freedom for the sake of their fellowman, and when we do find such a person, it is important for us in Congress, and society at large, to recognize their achievement and the purpose of their struggle.

This journalist spent 19 of the last 21 years in Vietnamese prisons. Dr. Doan repeatedly was arrested for his efforts to bring about political change. He was offered his freedom if he renounced his political views, but he did not succumb to the will of his captors. Instead, despite the temptation of freedom, he continued to write, to smuggle out of prison essays, and to be a leader for freedom in Vietnam.

Last year the Vietnamese government released 7,000 prisoners, and Dr. Doan was among them. As a scholar in residence at Washington Catholic University, Dr. Doan remains committed to his fight for Vietnamese democracy. We are pleased he was finally able to receive the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award he won in 1995.

I hope that Congress will act swiftly to adopt this resolution of commendation.

THROUGH COMPOUND INTEREST, EVERY AMERICAN CAN BECOME RICH

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, Albert Einstein once said that the most powerful force on Earth is compound interest. Why this is not taught in our Nation's schools I do not know, but every child in America should be taught about the extraordinary power of compound interest.

There is a funny thing about compound interest. My friends on the other side know all about it. In fact, every single one of them is counting on the power of compound interest for the prosperity of their own retirement security. But we will never hear them talk about it.

Through the magic of compound interest, ordinary Americans who save can become rich. Let me repeat that. Through the magic of compound interest, ordinary Americans who save can become rich. This is not, of course, a get-rich-quick scheme. In fact, it takes years of discipline and patience, but it is mathematically guaranteed to work.

Mr. Speaker, Einstein was right. Let us give younger workers a chance to reap the benefits of compound interest, let us reform Social Security.

REJECT PLAN TO PRIVATIZE MEDICARE

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the Medicare Commission is expecting to hold its final meeting today. The commission's leaders are advancing a voucher plan called premium support that will end Medicare's guarantee of equal health care to the wealthy, the middle class and the poor. The plan would steer Medicare more into the private sector than at any time in its history. As former Speaker Gingrich infamously said, Medicare would wither on the vine. Privatize Medicare in order to save it.

Clearly, the private insurance market has not provided for the common good. A Nation with our wealth should not leave 43 million of its citizens without health care. The Labor Department shows unemployment still holding steady at 4.4 percent, a rate not seen since 1970. Meanwhile, the proportion of Americans without health insurance has increased from 14 percent in 1995, to 15 percent in 1996, to 16 percent in 1997.

Turning Medicare over to insurance companies, privatizing it in order to save it, will create two Medicares, one for the wealthy and one underfunded program for the poor and middle class. We should reject that thinking, Mr. Speaker.

RELEASE REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE ON U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY AND MILITARY/COM- MERCIAL CONCERN WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, as my friends on the left continue to try to scare senior Americans, perhaps they should heed developments that are truly terrifying to all Americans. I speak of the unlawful transfer of technology and espionage by Communist China against our government and against our people.

In today's Washington Post, the senior Senator from Indiana writes, and I quote, "Complicating matters are the campaign abuses involving China that have been attributed to this White House. Some of these abuses involved extraordinarily bad judgment by the President himself. It is imperative that the administration not yield to its impulses to place damage control above all else. We need the truth about what has happened and a program to repair our national security."

Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more. That is why this Congress, if this Commander-in-Chief will not unilaterally release the report of the Select Committee on U.S. National Security and Military/Commercial concerns with the People's Republic of China, this Congress should go into closed session and vote to release that report so the American people can know the truth.

DO NOT LOAN MONEY TO COUN- TRIES WHO VIOLATE OUR TRADE LAWS

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Check this out, Mr. Speaker. Foreign banks make bad loans to bad companies; then these foreign banks go belly up. They dial 911 for Uncle Sam, and Uncle Sam sends them checks for billions of dollars.

Billions to Russia, South Korea, Thailand, and now Brazil. And guess what? They all have something in common. Each and every one of those countries violate our trade laws.

Beam me up, Congress. Even Barney Fife can figure this out. If Congress does not stop this madness, the 1990s will end up looking just like the Roaring Twenties.

Before we tax our IRAs, I yield back a \$200 billion trade deficit in the international masochist fund.

MISCONCEPTIONS ON KEEPING SOCIAL SECURITY SOLVENT

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