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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:

We pray, gracious God, that we are not judged by our attempts to do the works of justice or by our failures to be the people You would have us be, but rather by Your mercy and forgiveness and grace. We seek to do the right, but we also miss the mark; we wish to remember others with appreciation, but we can become too filled with pride to show gratitude; we can talk about the need for respect in our communities, but we can also speak words without any change in our deeds. May the words we say with our lips find meaning with what we believe in our hearts, and all that we believe in our hearts may we practice in our daily lives. In Your name 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PALLONE 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 announces that there will be 10 1-minutes on each side.

VOTE NO ON H.R. 45

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 45 is the nuclear waste lottery. We bet our homes, our property, the safety of our family, and then if one of these nuclear carnivals passes by our property, bingo, we get big bucks.

This is a lawyer's dream. Thousands of innocent people will get a large payment of taxpayer money because the transportation of this deadly radioactive waste will devalue and endanger their property. Mr. Speaker, let me explain.

Recently the New Mexico State Supreme Court ruled that Mr. John Komis of Santa Fe will be awarded more than \$884,000 in damages resulting from the devaluation of his property simply due to the transportation of nuclear waste past his property.

If H.R. 45 were to pass, almost 80,000 tons of nuclear garbage will be shipped across our Nation's highways, destroying property values across this country like a string of dominos falling in its path, and who will pay for this devaluation of private property? The American taxpayer will foot the bill to support a radical, extremely costly policy mandated by H.R. 45.

Mr. Speaker, this is a risk America cannot afford.

STRENGTHENING RETIREMENT SECURITY FOR MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

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

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, the Republicans have failed to make a commitment to use any of the Federal surplus to shore up the Medicare Trust Fund.

Medicare, as we know, is projected to become insolvent in 2008.

Democrats call for strengthening and improving Medicare by locking in 15 percent of the projected budget surplus over the next 15 years in the Medicare trust fund. Democrats would add at least a decade to the life of the Medicare Trust Fund while we work to enact long-term reforms to extend the life of the plan. Republicans, on the other hand, are pursuing broad-based tax cuts instead of saving Medicare, and they want short-term giveaways instead of long-term investments in the future.

The Democrats have the only plan that extends the life span of both Social Security and Medicare and strengthens retirement security for middle class families well into the 21st century.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S WOMEN'S PARK

(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. Madam Speaker, I would like to tell my colleagues and the visitors here today about a very special place in south Florida, the Women's Park. This is the very first park of its kind anywhere in the entire country that is devoted solely to the contributions that women have made to our community, our history, to our society and our lives. It is hoped that the many achievements made by women will be recognized throughout the entire year and not just now during the month of March, which is designated as Women's History Month. When the Women's Park opened in Miami in 1992, it was dedicated to all the women of the community in recognition of their diverse contributions to our quality of life.

Madam Speaker, I hope that the Women's Park in Miami will serve as

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an inspiration to celebrate the many achievements of women throughout our country, and if any of my congressional colleagues would like to start such a women's park in their communities, I will be glad to work with them so we can all celebrate the many achievements of women.

URGING SPEAKER NOT TO ALLOW VOTE ON TROOPS IN KOSOVO TODAY

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, the House of Representatives has become like a scene from Alice in Wonderland. Yesterday in the Committee on Ways and Means we were asked to bring out a bill by the Speaker with a recommendation that it do not pass because the Speaker wants it brought to the floor but does not intend to vote for it. Today, even more amazingly, we have a foreign policy issue where the President of the United States and the Secretary of State have asked that it not be voted on now while the peace negotiations in Kosovo are proceeding. Yet the Speaker brings it to the floor intending not to vote for it, and he is third in succession in the United States Government. It is the President, the Vice President and the Speaker of the House; the third most important man in the country is running foreign policy here while we are putting at risk our soldiers in Kosovo.

Now I ask you, Mr. Speaker, do not bring this issue to a vote today. It is irresponsible, it should not be done, it puts our soldiers at risk, and those of us who lived through the Vietnam era say do not do this again.

REASONS TO HAVE GRAVE CONCERNS ABOUT THE STEWARDSHIP OF FOREIGN POLICY BY THIS ADMINISTRATION

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

Mr. HAYWORTH. Madam Speaker, we just received two instances of the MO of the liberals on the Hill. It is fear and smear first, scare the elderly about Medicare, then come back and attack the new Speaker of the House.

Very interesting. We have been down this road before.

But as my colleagues know, Madam Speaker, there is a reason to have grave concerns about the stewardship of foreign policy by this administration, especially Madam Speaker, when this administration, the Clinton-Gore team, took campaign cash from the Communist Chinese and then ignored the warnings of the intelligence community with reference to nuclear espionage.

Madam Speaker, it is incumbent upon this House to exercise its oversight capabilities to make sure that

our genuine interests are, in fact, protected, because Madam Speaker, if the administration is more susceptible to Chinese campaign cash, then this House must protect the American people.

WE PLEDGED AN OATH TO UPHOLD THE CONSTITUTION, NOT THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Madam Speaker, even though Article 21 of GATT clearly states any Nation can take action when their military security is threatened, the White House has vowed to veto any bill on steel imports.

Beam me up.

We cannot defend America with plastic and Styrofoam. It seems the White House is more concerned with violating the World Trade Organization than they are in violating America's steel workers.

Let me remind Members of Congress we pledged an oath to the Constitution of the United States of America, not the World Trade Organization.

I yield back all the bankruptcy, despair, downsizing, layoffs and foreclosure of America's steel workers.

WE MUST STOP DRUNK DRIVERS FROM DESTROYING THE LIVES OF INNOCENT PEOPLE

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

Mr. CLEMENT. Madam Speaker, this past week I lost a true friend as well as my chief of staff, Alex Haught, who was killed in an automobile wreck in Nashville, Tennessee, the victim of a drunk driver.

Perhaps the only thing more shocking than the suddenness of Alex's death was the information about the reckless individual who got behind the wheel of the 2-ton van that slammed into Alex's car. In the past 20 years he had been arrested over 70 times for crimes, including frequent public drunkenness, he had been convicted of driving while intoxicated, and his license had been revoked for over 8 years. Worse yet, he had gotten out of jail having served only 3 days of a 10-day sentence the day he killed Alex.

This sickens me, Madam Speaker. Our system has broken down at every level, the local, State and Federal. We must revisit laws at every level of government to find ways to keep drunk drivers from destroying the lives of innocent people. In addition, we are going to have to look at some harsh measures that we have never looked at before.

Are we going to keep operating the ambulance in the valley, or are we going to build a permanent fence to

help our people, to help our families, to help our loved ones and to ensure that this senseless loss of life does not happen again? I assure Alex that we are going to look at those laws at the local, State and Federal level and do everything we possibly can to use you as well as others as an example that the time has come that we have got to get these drunk drivers off the road. God bless you, Alex.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FAMILY FARM PROTECTION ACT

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

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, on Monday I was back in northeastern Wisconsin unveiling what will be my first bill before this House, a proposal that I call the Family Farm Protection Act.

Now this simple plan exempts farmers from a Federal capital gains tax when they sell their farm to a family member when they try to keep their family farm within the family.

Now, while the U.S. economy is booming, our family members, some of the hardest working people in America, face a tragic crisis. Traditionally, when a farm crisis comes along, we in the Congress look at ways to create more programs, to build more government help. All too often we forget that it is the government itself which is at the heart of many problems that our farmers face. My proposal removes an onerous tax that forces families out of farming and is contributing to the destruction of our Nation's lifelong agricultural heritage.

I ask my colleagues to join me in this effort and to become original cosponsors of the Family Farm Protection Act.

SENIOR CITIZENS' FREEDOM TO WORK ACT OF 1999

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

Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, it is imperative that we pass the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 1999. The proposed measure would eliminate the Social Security earnings limit for retirement age Americans. We must end the practice of penalizing seniors and discouraging work. With their wealth of information and experience, senior citizens are truly vital to the stability of our work force and the development of the work force of tomorrow.

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The current limit takes away retirement benefits from those who have rightfully earned them through a lifetime of hard work. We should not be punishing our senior citizens for continuing to work but, rather, encouraging them. That is just common sense.