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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

At times of conflict we pray for peace; at times of violence we long for serenity; at times of anger and hatred we hope for charity and respect; and at times of senseless acts, we pray for meaning and purpose. O gracious God, from whom all blessings flow, we plead for Your peace that passes all human understanding and we pray for the comfort of Your presence in our lives. Bless all who grieve, give strength to all who suffer, and keep us all in Your grace, now and evermore. 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 Washington (Mr. INSLEE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. INSLEE 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 Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the Committee of Conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 800) "An Act to provide for education flexibility partnerships."

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain 10 one-minutes on each side.

Will the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON) kindly assume the Chair.

HONORING YOSEMITE NATIONAL INSTITUTES ON EARTH DAY 1999

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Madam Speaker, what a better way to celebrate Earth Day than to honor the great example of a public-private partnership known as the Yosemite National Institutes, an organization that provides award-winning environmental education programs in America's national parks.

YNI now welcomes more than 32,000 participants each year to its three institutes in the magnificent natural settings of Yosemite and Olympic National Parks as well as the Golden Gate National Recreational Area.

Since its founding in 1971, more than 450,000 school children and adults have experienced YNI programs. The partnership between YNI and the National Park Service is commendable. YNI does not receive government funding, but performs a great percentage of the interpretation in each of the parks where it exists.

At YNI, learning occurs in an advocacy-free environment. Ideas and values are not forced upon students; instead, they learn important processes of applying critical thinking to questions and choices that will confront them now and in the future.

YNI is now celebrating 28 years of extraordinary service. I commend all of those who have contributed to this wonderful program and its achievements.

SHARING RESPONSIBILITY IN KOSOVO

(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, it is time. Time to arm the Kosovo Liberation Army, not send in ground troops. Let Europe send in the ground troops. It would cost less than one night of bombing to arm the KLA, and that is what we should be doing.

It is also time to indict Milosevic for war crimes, and it is also time to recognize independence for Kosovo, and NATO should support and defend those borders.

I think this is something very important, Madam Speaker. No doubt, America is a superpower, but America is not the only power, and it is time for Europe to step up and take care of problems in their own backyard.

LEARNING OUR HISTORY LESSON OF THE 1960'S

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, it is strange to me that doves and peaceniks, people who dodged the draft and protested the war, now want to wage war in Yugoslavia, while many defense hawks and former military veterans are raising voices of concern and objection.

As a Vietnam veteran, I cannot help but reflect on the mistakes being made by the Clinton administration with the war in the Balkans. The White House does not even want to call it a war; they prefer the term "conflict." Does that mean our POWs are now going to be called POCs?

There are some people who have yet to learn the lessons of Vietnam. The

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use of limited air strikes can only accomplish limited results. We are witnessing that right now. And having politicians select targets rather than letting military commanders fight the war they know and are trained to do is absolutely wrong.

When President Clinton first initiated the air strikes, we were told we would be in and out in a week or two, and that bully Milosevic would be put in his place. Well, now we are hearing the administration say that we might be in for the long haul, maybe ground troops, an ill-conceived plan obviously from the get-go.

The American people do not know what to believe as this war escalates. We need to learn the history lessons of the 1960's.

BANKING PRIVACY ACT

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

Mr. INSLEE. Madam Speaker, Americans are generally concerned about their withering rights of privacy, and my fellow Members will be shocked to learn how at-risk those rights are in regard to our banking records.

Serving on the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, I recently learned that we Americans do not even have the right to insist that our banks not disclose our personal financial information, our checking account, our savings account records to other companies, and other companies want these records so that they can market and sell us products.

Madam Speaker, I believe that America ought to have the right to simply inform our banks that those records are private records of to whom we write checks, from whom we receive checks. What is in our savings account is a private matter, and we ought to have the right to advise our banks not to share it with anyone.

To that end, Madam Speaker, I will shortly be introducing the Banking Privacy Act, which will give Americans the right to simply keep their records private, keep their private personal lives to themselves, to give Americans what they deserve.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

CONTINUING OUR FIGHT AGAINST CHILD ABUSE

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

Mr. FOLEY. Madam Speaker, when I look at my young nephews, I see the innocence and joy that only childhood can bring. This is the time of their lives that should be treasured and preserved. It saddens me to know that so many children are robbed of this innocence, or even worse, lose their lives at the hands of abuse.

Even while our overall crime statistics have declined dramatically, child abuse continues to rise. According to the Child Welfare League of America, five children and infants die each day from abuse and neglect. This is five children too many.

Last year I sponsored the Volunteers For Children Act, a bill that was signed into law by President Clinton. Volunteers For Children will help to protect children in after-school activities from being in the care of people with dangerous criminal records.

This is an important step, but it is not enough. We must attack child abuse at every opportunity, by investigating reported abuse thoroughly, by ensuring that children are not returned to abusive environments that they have been taken out of, and penalties for convicted abusers need to become much tougher. Furthermore, we must ensure that children have safe places to go whenever they are in danger.

Madam Speaker, as my colleagues all probably know, April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, and today has been designated Children's Memorial Day, a day to remember children who have been killed and to resolve anew to stop violence against children. I would hope that the spirit of this day and this month will carry on, and that we can increase our efforts to prevent these terrible and violent acts against innocent and defenseless young people.

WHAT AMERICANS CAN DO IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HATRED AND VIOLENCE

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, children are our future, and as our prayers remain with the families in Littleton, Colorado, in the shadow of the conflict in Kosovo, it is important that we acknowledge that we can do something. Yes, we can offer our prayers. We can commend those young people who were brave and courageous and helped their fellow students. We can give our most heartfelt affection and love to those who have lost their loved ones.

But we can do other things. I want to thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), as we just passed out of the Subcommittee on Crime H.R. 1501, which would include intervention on behalf of those children at risk who need mental health services, who are substance abusers, and who, in fact, can be helped.

We need to stop the proliferation of guns. We need to find out why the Internet allows us to have instructions to build bombs, and yes, we must teach our children not to hate. I do not think we can stand by idly and say we do not know what to do, we cannot do anything. We can lift our voices in prayer, but at the same time, we can fight against hatred, we can fight against

the misuse of the Internet and guns, and certainly we can help our children who are disturbed and need mental health services.

WORKING TOGETHER TO ACCOMPLISH GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

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

Mr. CANNON. Madam Speaker, I rise today on Earth Day to introduce legislation that will clean up a significant environmental problem in southern Utah: the Atlas uranium mill tailings. This legislation will begin the process of removing 10 million tons of low-level radioactive contaminants from the banks of the Colorado River.

These wastes sit just outside of Moab, Utah at the gates of the breathtaking Arches National Park where hundreds of thousands of people visit each year.

The Colorado River provides the sole source of drinking water for tens of millions of people in Arizona, Nevada and California. These radioactive wastes threaten that water supply.

Currently the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has responsibility for cleanup. My legislation will transfer jurisdiction from the NRC to the Department of Energy, where remediation and relocation can begin so as to avoid any further health risks and environmental degradation.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. Today on Earth Day, let us put aside our ideological differences and commit together to accomplish good environmental policy.

PUBLIC PAYS FOR BAD GOVERNMENT POLICY

(Ms. MCKINNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. MCKINNEY. Madam Speaker, the Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless in my home State of Georgia provides funds for housing and other services for the homeless in the Atlanta metropolitan area. But an amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BARR) to H.R. 1073 would delay funding to the Task Force and set a bad precedent in the distribution of funds for homeless services in the metropolitan area.

This amendment creates an administrative carve-out that supersedes current policy. In other words, this amendment is aimed at micromanaging HUD. And why would anyone want to do this? Because the Cobb Family Resources, an affordable apartment community in Cobb County, is run by the wife of the representative who introduced the amendment and who was able to get it passed out of the subcommittee.

Madam Speaker, it appears that the amendment is trying to give preferential treatment at the expense of